

DURHAM'S SELF-HELP AND THE FINANCIALIZATION OF THE BULL CITY:
DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT DISPLACEMENT?
OR DISPLACEMENT WITHOUT DEVELOPMENT?

Emily LaDue

A DISSERTATION

in

Communication

Presented to the Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania

in

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2018

Supervisor of Dissertation:

John L. Jackson, Jr., Ph.D.
Dean, Social Policy and Practice
Richard Perry University Professor
Penn Integrates Knowledge Professor
Graduate Group Chairperson:

Michael X. Delli-Carpini, PhD
Walter H. Annenberg Dean, Annenberg School for Communication
Professor of Communication

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Carolyn Marvin, Ph.D.
Frances Yates Emeritus Professor of Communication

Dr. Victor Pickard, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Communication

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This dissertation is dedicated
to my grandma, Ida Marie Corbett (1921-2017),
to El Kilombo,
to the EZLN,
and to all who are struggling for dignity, justice, and freedom in our lives, in this world.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As the EZLN says, *Para todos todo, nada para nosotros*. This dissertation would not have been possible without the brilliance, work, study, support, guidance, love, and struggle of El Kilombo in Durham, NC. From the early days of fighting against the war in Iraq, to reading groups, the community center, and the many projects today, my hope and persistence comes from the work we do in common. To all of us, to all we fight for, to many years of building a world where many worlds fit. Thank you to the greater EK community over the years, all authors of this work. To the EZLN, who continue to inspire the world in their construction of something other, something bigger, and something worth fighting for. Thank you for your coffee. To the CNI, thank you for cracking walls. To tearing down the walls. Viva!

This dissertation also would not have been possible without the unwavering and unconditional support of my advisor, Dr. John L. Jackson Jr. Thank you, for sharing your mind with the world, and for sharing your brilliance and your time with me. Thank you, for always backing me and reminding me that I know what I am doing. Thank you, for reminding us all of the humanity in ourselves and our work, and the unceasing support of all of your students, and for teaching me how to think through moving images. While this project was ultimately not a film, when it becomes one, your fifteen years of support will be a part of its final cut.

Thank you Dr. Carolyn Marvin for your tough love, of me and others. Thank you for teaching us, and taking the time to struggle with how to do that better, always. Thank you for pushing me to do better, to think harder, and for trusting my mind. The time we spent together working on the FDR and Hunting Park project is now is now part of the best of my memories at Annenberg. Thank you Dr. Victor Pickard, for backing me and my work and taking me on in this project. Thank you for fighting for justice and media that breaks the unthinking of disinformation.

Thank you to Micah Kordsmeier, Dan Levine, Tucker Bartlett, Emma Haney and all of Self-Help for the time you spent answering my questions for this project. Thank you to all of the subjects of this dissertation for your honest interviews and trusting me with your words.

Thank you Dean Michael Delli-Carpini for supporting the work of our student body and being a role model of a scholar and leader. Thank you to my other advisors, teachers, and mentors during my graduate and undergraduate studies: Dr. Guobin Yang, Dr. Barbie Zelizer and the Scholars Program in Culture and Communication, Dr. Marwan Kraidy, Dr. Sharonna Pearl, Dr. Deborah Thomas, Dr. Tom Sugrue, Dr. Sandra González-Bailón, Dr. Lisa Mitchell, Dr. Ann Norton, Dr. Litty Paxton, Dr. Diana Mutz, Dr. Wahneema Lubiano, Dr. Ken Surin, and Dr. Victoria Lodewick. Thank you Dr. Adolph Reed for pushing me to study Self-Help, for your scholarship, your insight, and your mentorship.

Thank you to Office 133. I would have never survived without Office 133! To Deb Lui, for always helping me organize a mess of disorganized thinking. To Omar Al-Ghazzi, for our daily lunches, for your love, and for your clear thinking. To Sandra Ristovska, for your love, your incredible scholarship, and for fighting. To Natacha Yazbeck for your solidarity and fight to do what you know needs to be done. To Doron Tassig, for your humor, kindness, your example of how to live a fulfilling life and be a scholar, and for putting up with my boxes in the office. To Alex Williams, for advancing the study of inequality in the media and being lovely.

Thank you to my cohort and adopted cohort at Penn: Aaron Shapiro, for your brotherhood and sharing your home with me; Corrina Laughlin, for your sisterhood; Sara Mourad, for your love, brilliance, and letting me teach you yoga; Lyndsey Beutin, for your insight and that night we watched Duke win the championship; Kevin Gotkin, for your mind; Alex Sastre, for being a shining star and exemplar Virgo; and Kate Zambon, for your friendship, support, and hard work. Thank you Rowan Howard-Williams, Dror Walter, Stella Lee, Lori Young, Chris Cimaglio, Sun-ha Hong, Nick Gilewicz, Rosemary Clark-Parsons, John Vilanova, David Conrad, Elena Maris, Tim Libert, Joanna Siegel, Carly Regina, Joseph Wuest, and Matt Berkman, especially for the comps love. Thank you to the whole Gregory GA and RA crew. Thank you to the staff at The Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania in room 200, and to the housekeepers and security guards for your work, your dignity, your warmth, and your support. Thank you Emily Plowman and Kelly Fernandez, and librarians Sharon Black and Min Zhong.

Thank you to my family. I hope you all think it's cool that we have a Dr. LaDue. Holly, for everything. Hope, for always believing in me. Tim, for being there when I need you. Joe, for your unconditional love. Mom, for raising me to see the oppression and bullshit of the world, and for thinking I am so smart. Dad, for always being proud of me no matter what and for taking me in. Bonnie and Frank, for choosing to be my parents, caring for me, and caring for Julius. And all of my aunts, uncles, and cousins for making our family so warm. Grandma and grandpa, thank you for raising me, you are always within and among us.

Thank you Jasmine Salters, for everything, including listening to me complain and not getting worried watching me break down from time to time. I would not have made it through this without you – to many lives and love together. Thank you Vijay Varma, for being here forever, seeing me through my struggles, and for sharing your mind with me. Thank you for sharing your family with me and letting me into your world. Chinedu, Adaora, Chet, Amma, and Acha – thank you for being family. Thank you to my GLT sisters and your growing families – Jessica, Cait, Jack, Lisa, Rodier, Courtney, and Mary Ann – for being the ground I walk on, having my back no matter what, believing in my mind, laughing for hours, taking me in over and over, and practicing loving criticism since we were 7. Thank you Kelly for being the best, thank you Brian for your love, support, contributions to this study, and thank you Zach for your clean shower. Thank you Endrow for your love, and for reminding me to chill and slow down. Thank you Gary Hawkins for your love, creativity, and wisdom. Thank you Raeshma Razvi and Raj Patel for supporting me. Thank you Alexis Newman, Josh Gibson, Shambhavi Kaul, Steve Milligan, Bluford Thompson Jr., Emily Shenkin, Amy Rullis, and Amithyst Castro. Thank you for the love, support and reinvigoration of my co-counselors, and my yoga teachers (Suzanne, Nikos, Ammie, and Schulyer). And Julius, for still sleeping under my bed and following me around.

Thank you to our Get-Up union organizers! Thank you to our Duke Faculty Union!

Thank you to my proofreaders. All mistakes and incoherence are on me.

ABSTRACT

DURHAM'S SELF-HELP AND THE FINANCIALIZATION OF THE BULL CITY: DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT DISPLACEMENT? OR DISPLACEMENT WITHOUT DEVELOPMENT?

Emily LaDue

Dr. John L. Jackson, Jr.

This dissertation is an ethnography of the nonprofit institution, the Center for Community Self-Help, and the development media in Durham, North Carolina that together work to support rent-intensifying pro-growth development in the city. Self-Help discursively, financially, and geographically manages rent-intensifying development in Durham by partnering with the city and other institutions, principally Duke University, to manage community relations, shepherd state and federal tax credits and other public financing, and act as a symbol of progressive politics. Through innovative methods developed over a five-year media and institutional ethnography of Self-Help in Durham, this case study examines development media: the discourses, institutions, actors, and publications that work to support pro-growth development in the city by various means, including critiquing the very development that they support. This case study seeks to answer how it is that as critiques of gentrification propagate and the institution Self-Help grows – backed by progressives and other nonprofits in the city and identified as a developer seeking to close the wealth gap – inequality in the city also continues to grow. The findings show that despite Self-Help's claims to supporting community, promoting affordable housing, bringing in jobs, honoring a black working class history, supporting a better future for all, and cooperating and partnering with other institutions, their real estate development work leads to further inequality and dispossession of the poor, majority African-American and Latino populations in the city. Moreover, the discourses used to justify their developments actually act as a mechanism to allow this development to take place more efficiently by rationalizing the use of public funding for projects that support private wealth. This study concludes that urban development as we know it, even when taken on by institutions claiming to address inequality, rely on speculative development models that use our public resources to grow wealth for those who already have it.

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INTRODUCTION

Reality changes; in order to represent it, modes of representation must change.

—Bertolt Brecht, 1938¹

Social science can do little, if anything, to help resolve the structural tensions and contradictions underlying the economic and social disorders of the day. What it can do, however, is bring them to light and identify the historical continuities in which present crises can be fully understood. It also can – an must – point out the drama of democratic states being turned into debt-collecting agencies on behalf of a global oligarchy of investors, compared to which C. Wright Mills’ ‘power elite’ appears a shining example of liberal pluralism.... In fact, looking back at the democratic-capitalist crisis sequence since the 1970s, there seems a real possibility of a new, if temporary, settlement of social conflict in advanced capitalism, this time entirely in favour of the propertied classes now firmly entrenched in their politically unassailable stronghold, the international finance industry.

– Wolfgang Streeck, 2016²

Inequality is increasing globally, including in Durham, North Carolina, despite the city’s current ranking as the seventh best city to live in the country based on quality of life and the job market.³ In fact, Durham sits near the top of over 1,540 accolades measuring its desirability for business, culture, economy, education, food and drink, health and medicine, lifestyle, sports, and tourism,⁴ such as one of the “most educated cities,” “one of the top 5 destinations to retire,”⁵ and “the No. 5 metro to attract corporate facility investments in their population tier.”⁶ Durham sits high on measures of inequality. Between 2010 and 2013 in Durham County, income has grown 1.4% for the top 1% of the population, and decreased 2.4% for the rest of the population; and in the Durham-Chapel Hill Metro Area, income has risen 4.5% for the top 1% and decreased 1.1% for the rest of the population.⁷ Half of the county’s renters cannot afford their rent, and, “the hourly median wage falls short of what’s needed by 80%.”⁸ These rankings do not show, however, what

¹ Bertolt Brecht, “Popularity and Realism, 1938” <http://mariabuszek.com/mariabuszek/kcal/Expressionism/Readings/BrechtPopReal.pdf>.

² Wolfgang Streeck, *How Will Capitalism End?: Essays on a Failing System* (London: Verso, 2016).

³ Chika Gujarathi, “Raleigh and Durham, North Carolina Metro Area,” US News and World Report, accessed November 8, 2017, <https://realestate.usnews.com/places/north-carolina/raleigh-durham>.

⁴ Durham Convention and Visitors Bureau, “Durham Accolades,” current, <https://www.durham-nc.com/media/accolades/>.

⁵ Kathie Lee Gifford and Craig Ferguson, “Learn the 5 Top Places in the US to Retire,” *Today.com*, March 21, 2017, <http://www.today.com/video/learn-the-5-top-places-in-the-us-to-retire-craig-ferguson-guesses-no-1-902907459774>.

⁶ Gary Daughters and Adam Bruns, “The Top Metros of 2016 Come in All Sizes,” *Site Selection Magazine*, March 2017, <http://siteselection.com/issues/2017/mar/top-metropolitans-of-2016.cfm?s=mp>.

⁷ NC Justice Center, “Economic Snapshot: Durham County,” County Quick Facts (North Carolina Budget and Tax Center, April 2017), http://www.ncjustice.org/sites/default/files/BTC/County-Economic-Snapshot/2017/DURHAM_2017%20County%20Snapshots_Final.pdf.

⁸ NC Justice Center.

was left in the wake of the development – the families that have been displaced, communities pushed out of the city, stable working class jobs lost, homelessness, unemployment, and the decades of disinvestment and instability in the city that created the drop in property values enabling the mass profits from property investment. In this dissertation, I examine the institutions and processes that lead to further inequality in the city while grounding their missions in a rhetoric of improving the lives of all of its residents.

I begin Chapter 1 with a tour of Durham's urban development, not through what has been most visibly promoted in *Vogue*, the *New York Times*, *Better Homes and Garden*, *Garden and Gun*, airline magazines, and countless blogs and local news and lifestyle media - the menus of the new restaurants, décor of cafes, hotel amenities, loft condos, and home remodels; but through glimpses into the political and economic mechanisms that brought this development to fruition, specifically those that involve the Center for Community Self-Help, a Durham-based credit union and developer. This introduction is an extended montage of these different development sites, zooming in to each location as a brief introduction into the urban development landscape of the city, written more as if they were the introductory scenes to a film, which eventually, they may be. There are now several more sites that could be included in this montage, which are mentioned in other vignettes and ethnographic data throughout the rest of the study. This research is primarily based on data collected through filmed interviews, planned events, development site visits, community and neighborhood meetings, grand openings and ribbon cuttings, city council sessions, and routine days in Durham and some surrounding areas. All of the footage is focused on the unequal development of the city, which has been accelerating since the mid-1990s.

As every house on my former street in Durham was being bought for cheap or foreclosed and auctioned, redeveloped, and sold for sometimes five times the amount of the previous sale, down the street the community organization El Kilombo (EK) and their community assembly were fighting against the privatization of the neighborhood park. By 2010, EK had evolved since its start as a collective reading group trying to understand what doing politics and structural change

could mean in 2003, to a community center and community assembly made up of students, and Latino migrant and African American poor and working class Durham residents centered in the neighborhood of Old North Durham, organized around a community center. In their own words in 2015:

The community center has been home to tens of thousands of hours of community programming, including free health clinics, dental clinics, physical therapy clinics, homework tutoring, art classes, theater programs, youth video workshops, media workshops, computer literacy classes, English classes, Spanish classes, community research seminars, public events on race and urban development, free legal counsel for families in the neighborhood, know-your-rights workshops, and nearly a decade of weekly community dinners—all generated by and for the community on a shoestring budget with no paid staff. In sum, the community center became a veritable seedbed for community-based knowledge production and self-organization. This from the very beginning also made it a hub for collective opposition to the heightened levels of anti-blackness, displacement, growing social inequality, and consequent police violence that many today recognize plague our city.⁹

This statement was written in 2015 announcing both the close of the community center in the face of unaffordable rent and the displacement of nearly the entire community, and their continued struggle in the face of this. The full neighborhood struggle is documented.¹⁰

EK had turned their attention to neighborhood politics regarding development and gentrification in the area. Their member base of poor and working class Latino immigrants and longtime African American residents was being relocated slowly as the area became whiter, hipper, and more attractive to what was being called the “creative class.” My conversations with members of EK began to pull me back to politics, and I thought I could be most useful in the ongoing struggle by offering my video production skills. The struggle over territory in the neighborhood was being waged over a large park located in the backyard of EK community space and in the heart of the neighborhood. The neighborhood and EK also held huge May Day neighborhood festivals to bring people together for a day of community building, games, and music. Day to day, the residents of the neighborhood used it for family gatherings, picnics, sports, general hanging out and playing, and as a de facto gathering space for any event. It was also where organized Latino soccer games were played, by youth and adults. Durham City Council

⁹ El Kilombo, “The Beginning of the End, Or the End of the Beginning?,” *ElKilombo.org* (blog), September 22, 2015, <http://www.elkilombo.org/the-beginning-of-the-end-or-the-end-of-the-beginning/>.

¹⁰ DCUJ, “Durham Coalition for Urban Justice,” 2012, <https://durhamcoalitionurbanjustice.wordpress.com/>.

had passed a resolution in 2005 promising to fix drainage problems and other issues in the park, but never put the funds into the park to make it happen.

Meanwhile, a local charter school that opened in 2002 that also bordered one end of the park built a playground with private donations, and began negotiating with City Council to pay for the park upgrades in exchange for agency over what the upgrades would look like. Central Park School Children is run by a board including the most prominent developer in the area, Bob Chapman, who used his New Urbanism ideas of attracting the “creative class” and building “walkable cities” to convince the city to sell him certain properties for just hundreds of dollars, or sometimes, just a dollar, to build restaurants, an event and yoga space, and the school. The Self-Help Credit Union also funded the school, providing loan money in addition to the public dollars to build the school and pay rent. While most activists in Durham were years from thinking about gentrification, EK had a pulse on the direction of the city. A neighbor and longtime activist learned of these plans and began what EK refers to as “the park struggle,” determined to keep the space a public resource and asset for the community, and wary of private funding that could close the park off to the neighborhood. The charter school began holding a festival in the park as a fundraiser, a few weeks after the neighborhood festivals. The demographics were wildly opposite. Parents in the school and their families, majority white, and government officials and other official arts and cultural organizations in the city attended the Strawberry Festival held by the charter. EK’s festival was held on May Day and run by and attended by the families who lived in the neighborhood, all Latino and Black, and their friends, as well as the Latino youth soccer league that held a special tournament those days.

In 2010 and 2011, as the charter school tried to pass legislation behind closed doors, calling for an overhaul of the layout of the park by adding nature trails for the elementary students and a smaller soccer field that was presented as appropriate for children, all funded by developer donations and the school, members of the neighborhood organized and came out in full force. Emails were uncovered proving developer’s interest in bypassing public input on the future of the park and city officials’ near agreements, neighbors and their children worked together to prove

the ways they used the park and its importance to the community, and research ranging from the importance of parks to public health to Durham's history of closing basketball courts in black neighborhoods was conducted. Political lines were drawn dividing the left in Durham, and children were invoked at every turn – the neighborhood kids came out and protested for their play space, while supporters of the school's plans repeatedly positioned LQ's efforts as against the children. Email and Facebook pages were hacked, benign friendships were politicized, and suddenly, citizens began wondering if it was possible that the government was favoring wealthy white children over poor Black and Latino children.

Over time, the city began holding meetings at the public library taking to record ideas and feedback about the park. They claimed these three meetings were neutral and moderated by neutral parties, but the Durham Parks and Recreation department and the City Council chose moderators from within the City. At each meeting, hundreds of neighbors flooded in with signs and precise ideas and demands, and EK aided their organizing efforts and worked to mobilize the left in Durham to get behind the struggle.¹¹ Many did. EK and their constituency demanded that the park keep its full-size athletic field and follow the plan from 2005 that promised improvements to the park's infrastructure. Overwhelmed, the moderators write down ideas and demands on large white pieces of poster board, and the ideas fell on the charter school redevelopment side or the keep-the-promises-full-size-field side. No one knows what happened to these white boards, and the masses of people were never discussed. On multiple occasions, the meetings got shut down when the moderator decided they were too hectic.

In a special town hall session of City Council moderated by Parks and Recreation, held at the Durham Armory, a large hall, a similar atmosphere was felt, where the authorities ignored the over 300 residents marching from Old North Durham with signs stating "We Want a Full Size Field," and did not even address the fact that so many people showed up.¹² A dozen speakers signed up and spoke in favor of the field, speaking on behalf of soccer leagues, the

¹¹ NC Justice Center, "Economic Snapshot: Durham County."

¹² Durham Coalition for Urban Justice, *Old North Durham Park Meeting* (Durham, NC, 2011), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2n3BGZ7gq90>.

neighborhood, youth in the neighborhood, parents, and long time and recent residents – many with research about the city’s dire lack of sports fields. City Council members simultaneously applauded and ignored the speakers – invoking the ideal of democracy at work. Three representatives from the “Friends of Old North Durham” group spoke as “concerned citizens,” in favor of redeveloping the park, citing the need for better amenities for the children of Central Park School for Children, and insisting that the other children in the neighborhood would be beneficiaries as well. The city congratulated itself for a successful town hall, and told the public that they’d take this all into account and make a new plan. The neighbors were told their voices would be taken just as seriously as the school’s.

They did develop a new plan, which has resulted in the park being closed during peak soccer season months and open for events hosted by the school.¹³ The neighborhood’s demands to know why the original 2005 resolution was never implemented were never honored, leaving them to wonder about the gaps in the new legislation leaving open the possibility of private development in the future. The Mayor and City Council assigned Steve Schewel, a popular councilman and now a mayoral candidate, a former professor at Duke’s Public Policy Center, and founder of the city’s free independent newspaper, the Independent Weekly (which has since been bought by a national company), youth soccer coach, and beloved member of the political action committee, the People’s Alliance, to rewrite the plan for the park. In another town hall, the councilman presented his plan, kept it close to but not an entire full size field and promised to fix draining issues. As mentioned, the plan was vague and inconclusive about the future of the park and legally did away with the original 2005 resolution, which would have mandated that park have a full-size field and all parcels fully open to the public. He was complemented and praised by Friends of Old North Durham, local media, and several activists for hearing both sides and coming up with a plan. The park closed for a year from August 2013-2014, opening back up on the first day of the charter’s school year. While members of EK keep a close eye on developments with the park, the neighborhood over these years 2005-today has systematically

¹³ Members of the soccer league and El Kilombo receive regular email updates about openings and closures of the park. This is information reported in those emails.

been dispossessed from a majority poor and working class Latino and Black population to a young, working and professional class white population. Seven new bars and restaurants and counting, now popular local brewery called Fullsteam, a music club called Motorco, a local maker hub selling crafts and jewelry, a yoga studio, a yoga store, a Cross Fit gym, and a few other small businesses have opened up, and new residents began calling the area, Geer Street neighborhood (the main corridor), Rigsbee (where Motorco is located), or, the DIY neighborhood.¹⁴

One way to classify the neighborhood is as a modified version of “an urban playscape,” a term and theoretical model that Paul Chatterton and Robert Hollands developed to refer to space in the city characterized by a cultural economy dominated by the simultaneous production, regulation, and consumption of the space by young people and corporations. Their formulation points to the inequalities between wealthier young people and marginalized young people, and while their arguably simplistic notions of diversity and difference rest on whiteness/wealth and ethnic/female/gay, this neighborhood in Durham is another form. It is a playscape that incorporates the only gay bar in Durham, a local alternative music club, a local brewery, and several other bars and restaurants, studios, and gyms that are owned by local or regional entrepreneurs. When asked to describe Durham or why it is appealing, nearly every white person I have interviewed has stated that it is gritty and real, and not as shiny as nearby Raleigh or snobby as nearby Chapel Hill. In a branding session at the Durham Visitors and Convention Bureau in 2014, McKinsey and Co, an international advertising firm based out of Durham, offered a new theme for the city: “Fresh Daily” with a logo of a spilled ink blot/smudge/stain. Durham is branding itself as a gritty, entrepreneurial, diverse city – loaded concepts that have historical signifiers, often based on the city’s history of disinvestment and racist planning. The idea of a “fresh Durham” shows the efforts to rebrand the area, and Old North Durham has come to

¹⁴ As neighborhoods change in population in gentrifying neighborhoods, names are often systematically changed as well, to distance the reputation of the old neighborhood, often associated with crime and poverty, from the new image the new investors, homeowners, and developers are looking for. For example, there was a neighborhood referendum against changing the name of the Point Breeze neighborhood in Philadelphia to Newbold, resulting in a compromise to call it “East Point Breeze” see, <https://philly.curbed.com/2016/8/25/12639022/newbold-new-name-east-point-breeze-neighbors-philadelphia>; other examples include NoDa in Charlotte, SoHo and NoHo in New York.

represent this rebranding. The urban playscape of the neighborhood, has been dependent upon the cultural, racial, and economic landscape that existed before development. Archival tax data, footage I have taken while working with and learning from EK over the past several years, interviews with former and current residents that I have conducted and will be conducting, and forthcoming interviews with developers will be necessary to fully tell that story in a completed film project. This study is an elaborated piece of that research.

There is a lack of footage of accounts from the owners and patrons of the new businesses in this neighborhood. I attempted to interview the owners of a luxury café, Canela/Cocoa Cinnamon, but they declined twice because they said their business was too young and unstable, and ostensibly, prone to vulnerabilities. When I approached them, I asked if they would be interviewed for my dissertation research about the neighborhood's quick development. I wondered why they would not want to be interviewed, but take several days over email, after meeting them in person first, to ponder the inquiry. Perhaps because I have not yet been turned down forthright for an interview, this instance has left me questioning both their reasons for refusing and if there was something problematic that I presented to them. This instance brought to the forefront insecurities of various individuals, businesses owners, and institutions in the city, and insecurities that I have when conducting my research about when and how to be up front that I am critical of yet empathetic to the way we are all making sense of the city and getting by. The film will be an analytical documentary using Durham as a way to understand, see, and challenge the direction of the politics and economies of our cities.

The population that organized and fought for the park has been nearly entirely relocated further east in Durham as of 2017, and even the music club is under threat gentrified out by a new condo. Now, as discussed above, most visible activists in Durham's visible left and even some liberals in Durham are having debates, talks, op-eds, and conversations all over the city about gentrification, as in downtown million dollar condos and a new 26-story skyscraper are built. However, these conversations fall back on the idea that gentrification is distinct from development; and that the city should continue moving in the direction it has been, but with more

of an eye towards equalizing the development. In this dissertation, I challenge this idea, and argue that development is always pro-growth, resulting in inequality, displacement, and dispossession, effects usually attributed to gentrification, a process incorrectly viewed as a byproduct, rather than intrinsic, to development.

I started working with EK to take video footage for documenting this park struggle for public education, and later, for a film produced by EK about the inherent inequality of Durham's urban development. The focus of this dissertation and its data emerged from EK and their seminars, community space, and constant analysis of the reality of unequal development in Durham. EK had already been researching this development for several years, and hearing of and witnessing its destructive effects from the neighborhood assembly, constantly redeveloping an analysis of the crisis in the city. Beginning around 2010 and more intentionally as research since 2013, together we filmed several encounters we had with an event, space, or person related to Durham's redevelopment, and began conducting intentional interviews about this development to document and continue understanding how it was taking place at the levels of government, developers, and major institutions in the area. This footage is much of the critical ethnographic data for this dissertation. This dissertation will in turn help shape and form the collectively-produced video project from the footage.

The Old North Durham park struggle represents the concessions given to people struggling against gentrification and the long term development plans that happen slowly, and as if they are inevitable. As residents fought for their park, their landlords were selling their homes. One major development in the area was done by a nonprofit associated with a Protestant church network, to house families with children with disabilities near to one another. They received public and foundation dollars to buy out the owners of an apartment complex housing dozens of Latino families that were displaced. The families and EK approached them to consider not buying, or keeping one or two buildings for the families living there, but they would not consider the concession. Meanwhile, the park closed indefinitely for repairs, and the neighborhood kids and families held their events inside private homes or didn't hold them at all. Schewel is running for

mayor as the progressive candidate, and the neighborhood continues growing, including an apartment complex with nearly 200 units whose residents have made the news for complaining about noise from the first wave of gentrifiers.¹⁵

The park struggle is a visually compelling and dynamic narrative that acts as a lens to understand the struggle of gentrification in neighborhoods. When I began filming, we thought about the park struggle being the center of the film, but have been thinking about it now as the prequel. It sets the stage for the relatability of the project to people who understand best the importance of territory, space, and struggle. It is evidence that they do not need to hear this story to be informed of what it is like to fight against the government, because they lived it and know it. It is still an educational starting point, and useful for others working through contestations over space in their own neighborhoods, and as reminder in the city that gentrification is not new, it has been happening for decades now. Perhaps most importantly, it is a struggle that was led by residents of a neighborhood defending their right to public space, and a struggle that has taken new shapes and been dissolved by simultaneous developments in the city. For the residents and for El Kilombo, it was an education in the limits of making appeals to city officials and a lesson in the energy spent on campaigns directed at the local government. It is an example of how the city views and listens to certain publics, ignores others, and follows a long history of urban renewal, and of the government and private capital destroying community in hopes of attracting capital. It is a story that has an anticlimactic non-ending that serves as a glimpse into what is both so easy and hard to see. The story sets the stage for a larger analysis of the city, and the story above will be presented through the corresponding footage and lead into this. My idea for a working title for the film currently is: "This is not gentrification." This was heard, and still is sometimes heard, repeatedly in Durham over the past twenty years. But mainly, people now feel that the development has taken a life of its own and are looking to "Keep Durham Dirty," a local discourse that gets unpacked in this study.

¹⁵ Katie Jane Fernelius, "Batalá Durham's Central Park Standoff with Liberty Warehouse Residents Is Gentrification in Motion," *Indy Week*, August 2, 2017, <https://www.indyweek.com/indyweek/batala-durhams-central-park-standoff-with-liberty-warehouse-residents-is-gentrification-in-motion/Content?oid=7313700>.

The footage provides data that I use to inform and clarify other media being produced in Durham, what I call development media –that which supports and produces the discourse and environment of profit-driven development in the city, but presents the development as good for everyone. Much of the content of the footage demonstrates this development media at work. In these interviews, administrators, developers, architects, planners, government officials, project managers, and business owners speak this discourse, and this raw footage is development media itself. Footage of new construction, ribbon-cutting events, city council meetings, public presentations, neighborhood meetings, and neighborhood change over time show this media at work. Much of this footage is also of several people, groups, and institutions that seem to be working against their own interest, residents supporting their own displacement, politicians supporting measures that do harm to their constituencies, and in the case of Self-Help – the focus of this dissertation – an institution seeking to end injustice and inequality but working at the cutting edge of gentrification, which itself is a process at the cutting edge of a neoliberal capitalism, drastically increasing inequality. The remaining footage, of those critical of this development, struggling against displacement, racism, unemployment, and inequality, is a distinctly different kind of media from development media, which perhaps, if put to work as an educational and organizing tool, could be media for organized resistance. In addition to being a study of a particular institution in Durham, this dissertation is about what we talk about when we talk about gentrification, and an attempt and analysis of the actual struggles and actually existing processes that often evade our full comprehension and vision.

This dissertation is not a film because the film will be a project of collective authorship and distribution with EK for its use and content, rather than an academic pursuit. Instead, this dissertation is a much-needed study of how this development has been taking place in Durham over the past couple of decades. Thus, the data from my footage that I use is weighted towards the interviews and footage that demonstrates development media, and development media at work, and is an ethnography that instead studies up, or perhaps from my individual standpoint,

studies across.¹⁶ I write from a place learned from my study in school and out of school, and importantly, through study with EK. EK's analysis is from a decade of listening to and learning from those under attack, left out of urban development except as convenient securities, and threatened by poverty, racism, violence, and displacement; and struggling for dignified, autonomous, self-determined community institutions built together from below. This analysis from EK is considered a collective voice, and this analysis is present throughout the dissertation, and most thoroughly expanded in Chapter 4.

The ethnographic data in this dissertation – the combination of this footage, the development media produced by various sources about Durham, and the thinking of a community organization make a less popular, less optimistic argument about Durham's "renaissance:" that despite a rhetoric that includes equal opportunity, affordable housing, development for all, and poverty reduction, the only urban development of businesses, housing, and infrastructure that is happening, and in fact, that is possible through our current institutions, is development that increases inequality. Moreover, as the visible signs of wealth and quality of life disparities have become impossible to ignore, and the ability for capital to actually grow has become an illusion, this development now relies on its own critique, a critique of uneven development,¹⁷ to flourish. Beside the recognizable actors typically seen as contributing to urban inequality – HUD, urban and municipal government, developers, banks, even universities – sit less visible institutions that claim to assist those struggling to make ends meet, while ushering in and managing rent intensification, displacement, and loss of public resources for the poor.

In the 1990s and 2000s, city leaders thought that gentrification would still save the city, but now they have realized that it has not saved the city. So, we see all of this media hype wishing they had something sooner to account for this – but what they did earlier was the exact development that exacerbated the inequality they are witnessing now. The celebrated

¹⁶ Durham Coalition for Urban Justice, *Old North Durham Park Meeting* (Durham, NC, 2011), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2n3BGZ7gq90>. Additionally, Dr. Carolyn Marvin encouraged me to consider that I am in fact studying "across" – as a graduate student attempting to understand development and present this data, my standing is more on the same plane as my subject.

¹⁷ Neil Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space*, 3rd ed (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008).

revitalization of Durham would not have been possible without displacement. Today, city leaders in Durham must run on campaigns for all – “Durham for All,” “One Durham” that are trying to claim that the wealth dominating the center city today is possible to share if only some affordable housing units are peppered throughout the unaffordable ones, as one example. In the most recent election of 2017, municipalities celebrated the victories of progressive candidates in city and state seats, including in Durham, where now, every member of City Council identifies as progressive including the newly elected mayor, Steve Schewel. Schewel, like these new political representatives, is promising some relief from the intense pressures of survival in their cities, including police accountability, affordable housing, and lack of jobs. This year, the mayoral race grows out of this tension, or confusion as well. The viable candidates are Steve Schewel, Durham’s longtime personified symbol of progressive politics, who founded the Independent Weekly newspaper, served on the School Board for years, has been on City Council for over a decade, teaches Public Policy at Duke, speaks Spanish, and coaches soccer; all credentials that have been used to defend his authority in various community struggles.¹⁸ Creating the most stir but ultimately defeated in the primary was Pierce Freelon, who is a hip hop artist; educator; founder and director of Blackspace, a music and digital entrepreneurial hub for African American youth; media producer; former appointee to the North Carolina Arts Council, and father and husband who was frequently seen pushing a stroller around Durham. He is the son of acclaimed jazz singer Nneena Freelon and architect Phil Freelon, whose firm, the Freelon Group, designed several buildings with private and government contracts in Durham, and designed the new Smithsonian’s African American History Museum. What may seem like politically irrelevant details – such as Schewel’s coaching soccer and Freelon walking around Durham with his children, are used by both campaigns to demonstrate each candidate’s commitment to youth, parenting, and the future of Durham. The candidate who ultimately ran against Schewel is Farad Ali, who has previously served on City Council and has been on the boards of an led dozens of minority

¹⁸ See for example, Durham Coalition for Urban Justice’s “Updated FAQ to Debunk Myths:” <https://durhamcoalitionurbanjustice.wordpress.com/> and City Council Park Meeting, 11/16/11: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2n3BGZ7gq90>.

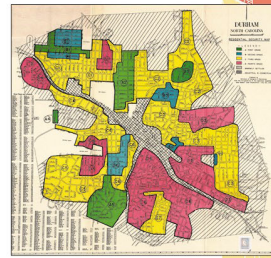
economic development organizations, coalitions, and companies. Ali also serves on the board of The Center for Community Self-Help, as a business professional he works behind the scenes of the institution. He is part of the old democratic machine politics of the city, supporting business and, in effect, similar policies to the new progressives, but lacking in the appearance of being “progressive.” Self-Help demonstrates this appearance of progressivism while acting squarely in the interests of business. Ali and this old order, is represented locally by the Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People. Freelon, and other city council members such as Jillian Johnson, are represented by a new group of activists in the city who claim and perhaps desire radical solutions to problems of inequality, but in effect, support the work of Self-Help and cannot find any other alternatives besides advocating for development for all – believing it is possible to have rent-intensifying development and improve the lives of the poor all at once. They are led by mayor-elect Schewel, are represented by the People’s Alliance. This dissertation examines Self-Help as an institution representing the impossibility of pro-growth development and inequality, but the strong belief and power of the idea that both are possible.

CHAPTER 1: Gentrification and Disinformation in Durham, NC

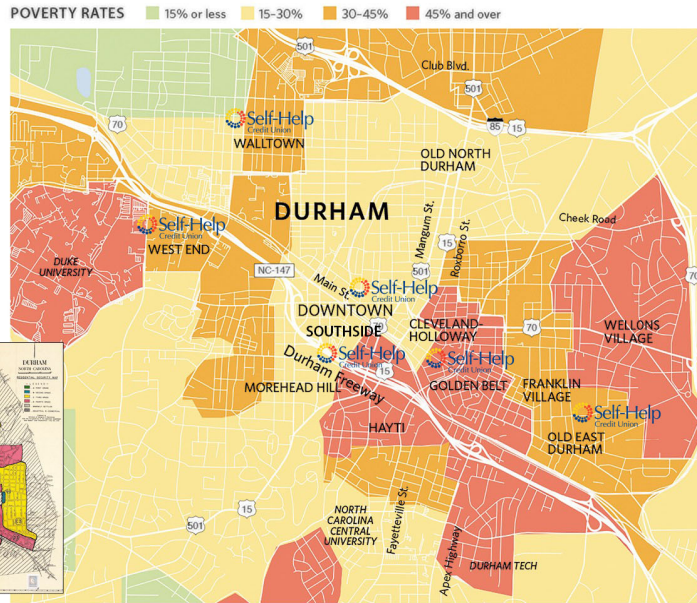
1.1 Scenes from Durham's Development: Institutions of Inequality

POVERTY IN THE BULL CITY

The map on the right shows the poverty rate by census tract, using data from the 2015 American Community Survey's five-year estimates. (One note: the area around Duke University shows high poverty because its residents are largely students with low or no incomes.) Below is the 1937 redlining map from the Home Owners' Loan Corporation, showing in red the African-American neighborhoods where banks refused to lend money. Some redlined neighborhoods still struggle with high poverty and low homeownership rates today.



COURTESY N.C. STATE ARCHIVES



© 2017 MAPS FOR NEWS, HERE

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU; GRAPHIC BY SHAN STUMPF

Figure 1: Map of Downtown Durham neighborhoods labeled according to poverty levels and Self-Help areas¹⁹

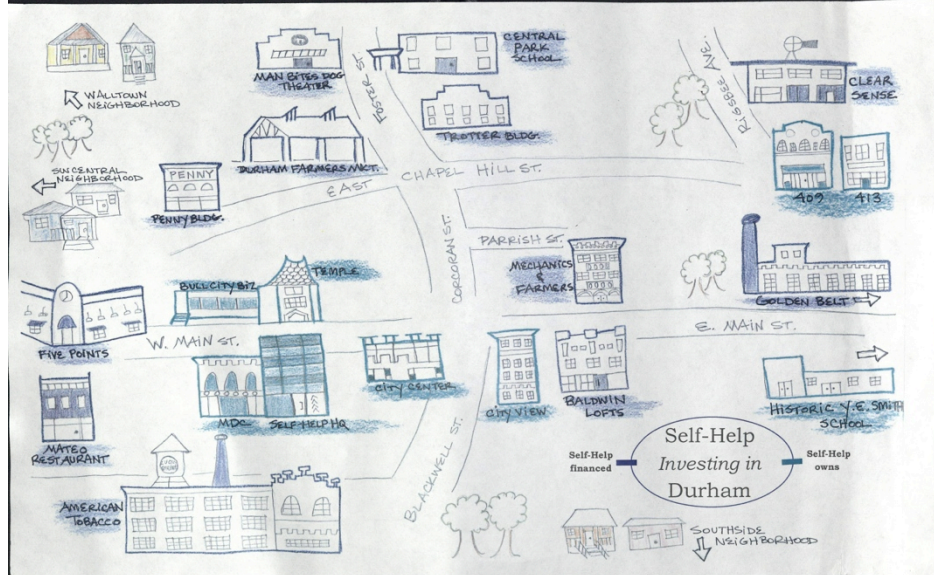


Figure 2: Map of Self-Help's buildings, published and printed by Self-Help in 2014²⁰

¹⁹ https://media1.fdnms.com/indyweek/imager/u/original/6711285/6.14_feature_pg12_map.jpg, published by the IndyWeek, with modifications by author (LaDue)

²⁰ Map produced by Self-Help Credit Union, obtained at Grand Opening of the Durham Co-op Market in 2015

1.1.1 The Detention Center and DPAC

On December 21, 2015, Mayor Bill Bell counted down with a crowd of a hundred people as he lit a new digital marquee for the Durham Performing Arts Center (DPAC), in a ceremony outside the building. The marquee is positioned such that its flashing digital screen sends light into some of the slit windows of the cells that face the street. As the hundred or so people of DPAC counted down to the illumination of the new screen advertisement for the upcoming performance of *The Nutcracker*, across the street family members hurried in and out to catch the 90-minute evening visitation window at the jail. In a report self-published by the Center for Community Self-Help in Durham, the writers bring attention to the shared corner of the Durham Performing Arts Center and the Durham County Detention Center, critically remarking that “construction of the jail passed as economic development in downtown Durham in the mid-90s, when American Tobacco sat vacant and most developers and investors were still steering far clear of the Bull City.”²¹ At that time Durham, functioned largely as what geographer Loic Wacquant calls the “neoliberal carceral state;”²² the managing of the surplus population of out-of-work residents, disproportionately African American and Latino, by criminalizing and incarcerating them. Durham had yet to invest in the amenities such as DPAC to attract a population of wealthy and elite professionals, the small percentage of people that hold over 14% of the wealth in the increasingly bifurcated class system in Durham.²³

Residents and visitors leaving Downtown Durham via the Durham Freeway drive in between the two structures, an architectural and institutional symbol representing the extreme inequality in wealth and quality of life in Durham, as DPAC sits across the street from the Durham County Detention Center at the edge of downtown. Vans carrying inmates and police cruisers turn to the left to the jail, and performers’ tour buses line the right side of the street. DPAC faces downtown, revealing its interior stories through glass walls and glimmering lights; while the cells of the concrete Detention Center are represented by small slits, too high for inmates to see out,

²¹ Amanda Frazier Wong and Sarah Wolff, “New Markets Tax Credit Impacts: A Case Study in Durham, North Carolina” (Self-Help, March 2010).

²² L. Wacquant, “Deadly Symbiosis: When Ghetto and Prison Meet and Mesh,” *Punishment & Society* 3, no. 1 (January 1, 2001): 95–133, <https://doi.org/10.1177/14624740122228276>.

²³ NC Justice Center, “Economic Snapshot: Durham County.”

too narrow for the public to see in. The Detention Center sits on the back side of the newly constructed Durham Justice Center, an eleven-story courthouse with extra rooms for future expansion, and an underground tunnel that enables direct access between the jail and the court so that prisoners may be transported without ever leaving the building. The façade faces away from downtown, standing guard and looking over the historically black neighborhoods to the south. Visitors and prison staff hurry or pace in and out of the jail entrance. Every couple of weeks a protest is held in hopes of improving the worsening conditions inside. In Durham, like the rest of the United States, there is a widely disproportionate number of African American men and a rising number of African American women in jail.²⁴ Next door at DPAC, the average cost of a ticket to a show is \$75 and visitors come in from all of the surrounding cities, an attraction in Durham meant to bring in the wealthy to spend money. In addition to sharing a corner, both of these multimillion dollar buildings were paid for with Certificates of Participation, what is now a common funding structure of unrestricted public debt able to be accrued without a public vote.

1.1.2 The New Market: American Tobacco Campus

Behind DPAC sits what is now called American Tobacco Campus, comprised of seventeen warehouse and factory buildings that were built from 1874 through 1955, to accommodate what was then over 3500 workers processing first rolling tobacco, and then by 1958, cigarettes.²⁵ A conglomerate tobacco company formed by James B. Duke in 1899, and trust-busted into four smaller companies in 1911 including Bull Durham, the American Tobacco Corporation operated in Durham until 1987. It amassed wealth along the way by underpaying and abusing farm and factory workers, union busting with help from Northern financiers not wanting to narrow their profit margins, launching the first national advertising campaign with Bull Durham billboards, maintaining high tobacco sales even during the Depression, and eventually, laying off most of its increasingly expensive unionized workforce as automated cigarette rolling machines replaced jobs. In 1987, with labor less important for cigarette production and declining sales,

²⁴ Durham Sheriff, "Sheriff Inmate Population," n.d., <http://www2.durhamcountync.gov/sheriff/ips/default.aspx>; Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, 2011.

²⁵ "Hill Warehouse - Blackwell's Durham Tobacco / American Tobacco Co," *Open Durham* (blog), n.d., <http://www.opendurham.org/buildings/hill-warehouse-blackwells-durham-tobacco-american-tobacco-co>.

American Tobacco closed its Durham warehouses and consolidated to its company town of Reidsville, NC, where it dominated the local economy and political seats. In 1996, American Tobacco left the state for cheaper real estate and labor in Macon, Georgia.

From 1987 until 2004 the American Tobacco warehouses sat vacant, save “a tree growing through the ceiling” inside the massive 14.6 acre multi-building structure.²⁶ Various developers attempted to purchase and redevelop the property through the 1990s, but the financing for what was to become a national reinvestment in urban centers was not yet available in Durham. In 1994, Kevin Costner and Susan Sarandon starred in *Bull Durham*, a film about the Durham Bulls minor league baseball team. Shot entirely in Durham, the film had surprising box office success, bringing national interest in the baseball team and in the quaint city depicted in the film. Local media conglomerate and broadcaster Capitol Broadcasting Company (CBC) then bought the Durham Bulls, and quickly began planning for a new stadium. Across the country in the mid-90s and into the 2000s, professional sports stadiums served as lucrative investments, bringing in sizeable tax exemptions under the auspices of being local job creators while using public financing and tax breaks.²⁷ While the mostly middle class voting public in Durham voted against the referendum for the new stadium downtown, wanting instead more of their money to go towards education in the suburbs, City Council still made it happen. This set the precedent for the construction of future projects with the use of public-financed but not public-decided Certificates of Participation, the same mechanism used for DPAC and the Justice Center.

In fact, the new Bulls Stadium was one of the major recipients of capital that boosted Durham’s investment ratings further and launched this type of development. As a result in 2001, CBC was able to acquire the financing necessary to buy and redevelop the American Tobacco warehouses in a \$43.2 million venture. They did this with the assistance of Duke University, which was looking to turn Durham into a competitive world-class city attractive to major researchers, doctors, and private firms. Duke committed to renting half of the available office space in American Tobacco, guaranteeing a secure capital flow and population infill needed to

²⁶ Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, 2011; Durham Sheriff, “Sheriff Inmate Population,” n.d., <http://www2.durhamcountync.gov/sheriff/ips/default.aspx>.

²⁷ Kevin J. Delaney and Rick Eckstein, *Public Dollars, Private Stadiums: The Battle over Building Sports Stadiums* (New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press, 2003).

other potential tenants. There was still not enough financing, however, until the Center for Community Self-Help gave the CBC a \$40 million loan. Self-Help acquired this financing through a new federal tax credit program, New Markets Tax Credits. Self-Help itself worked directly with the US Treasury to help design the New Markets Tax Credits Program as part of the Community Renewal Tax Relief Act of 2000, to encourage the redevelopment of US cities.

Named the “top development deal of the decade”²⁸ by Triangle Business Journals, CBC commissioned its own documentary about it, called *Because No One Else Would*, framing the development deal as a benevolent public good bolstering the Durham economy.²⁹ Today, CBC describes their property as the “entertainment district” and the epicenter of Durham’s renaissance.”³⁰ American Tobacco houses the most expensive office space in the region, eight restaurants, an Aloft hotel, a theater, an NPR studio, an entrepreneurial hub, a private basketball court, a dedicated NGO office space called Mission Post, several Duke offices, two parking decks, and a stream, and hosts events such as high-end music and film festivals and weddings.

1.1.3 Flipping Golden Belt

Just east of downtown sits a seven-acre former industrial space, half the size of American Tobacco. These former factories of the Golden Belt Manufacturing Company were once the center of Durham’s former textile industry, that in the first half of the twentieth century produced the cotton bags to hold Bull Durham rolling tobacco. In the early 1930s, workers successfully organized for better pay and working conditions, and shut down the company several times in union strikes. The gains they won were lost when sales of rolling tobacco declined, and automation took over many textile jobs. Parts of the factory stayed open with limited production until 1995, but the neighborhood surrounding Golden Belt faced increasing unemployment and limited public infrastructure support, and the white working class and working poor who lived there left the city for work elsewhere, moved out to suburbs if they could afford it, or moved back to old family farms mainly in the North or East. Meanwhile, Latino immigration

²⁸ Staff reports, “Deals of the Decade Transformed Triangle,” *Triangle Business Journal*, February 1, 2010, sec. Commercial Real Estate, <https://www.bizjournals.com/triangle/stories/2010/02/01/focus3.html>.

²⁹ Tim Finkbiner and Dan Oliver, *Because No One Else Would*, 2014, <http://americantobaccomovie.com/>.

³⁰ Tim Finkbiner and Dan Oliver.

increased and several African American families who were displaced from urban renewal moved into the neighborhood, contributing to the declining financial value of the area along with the disappearance of public investments in the neighborhood.

In 1996, the last owners of the Golden Belt textile factory donated it to the Durham Housing Authority, who used part of the space as a business incubator, which failed due to a lack of funding. In 2006, the city sold the property to the development firm Scientific Properties, a self-designated “community development enterprise,”³¹ who were able to purchase the seven acres from Durham Ventures Inc, the purchasing entity for the Durham Housing Authority, for \$2.65 million, or under \$9/square foot. This put the city at a loss for the property, after investing over \$3 million on their own failed rehabilitation efforts. Scientific Properties envisioned a \$26.3 million project with artist studios, galleries, and loft apartments; self-care amenities such as salons, yoga studios, and a tattoo shop; a wedding venue; and city and private offices, but they were only able to secure half of the funding for this project. The remaining \$12 million was secured by the Center for Community Self-Help with public financing assistance through New Market Tax Credits. Within a decade, this redevelopment, combined with a new designation of the neighborhood as a historic site, set in motion the rapid flipping of properties and lucrative returns on investment.

Speculation on properties increased, with developers buying out landlords and renovating houses. The neighborhood organization, formed in the wake of this most recent redevelopment by mainly new homeowners, voted to make the area a federally designated historic district in order to further increase property values and create tax breaks for historic renovations on the properties that were originally bought at foreclosure prices. The “historic” designation mandates that all renovation and construction must meet historic codes, a process which require substantial investments, while enabling the residents and developers who can afford it, to more easily receive historic tax credits on their renovations. The historic designation was based exclusively on celebrating Durham’s industrial textile past and this working class neighborhood, and erased the most recent past of disinvestment that had enabled the reinvestment to occur in the first

³¹ Lanier Blum, Self-Help, “What’s At Stake? Housing for Low-Income People in Durham,” September 23, 2010, <http://durhamopeningdoors.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/AH-whats-at-stake-report-9-23.pdf>.

place. It capitalized on the nostalgia of the working class history of the mill village while effectively displacing the poor and working class residents that were living there, and contributing to the accumulation of actual value for new and old individual property owners. In July 2017, Scientific Properties sold the property for \$19.5 million to a New York developer, making a \$2.55 million profit off the sale, in addition to a decade of rent from residents, businesses, and government offices.

1.1.4 Charters, nonprofits, and new homeowners in East Durham

Surrounding Golden Belt and continuing further East is Durham's newest development zone, which had been one of the poorest census tracts in the city until just last year. In 2009, when home prices had just begun increasing to eyebrow-raising levels in some near-downtown neighborhoods, East Durham was featured as one of *This Old House's* "best old house neighborhoods in the South."³² The article described East Durham as a neighborhood formerly "overrun by drugs and crime" but on its way to becoming "the most sought after" housing stock in Durham with its "sturdy bungalows, Folk Victorians, and four squares" – a housing stock built by mill owners or leaders in Durham's booming African American financial and business sector, known as Black Wall Street.³³ Speaking to potential homebuyers, the article stated:

Thanks to its coordinates on the famed Research Triangle, a locus for universities and high-tech companies, Durham has seen home prices increase in the past few years. And those looking to live in the city are seeing East Durham with fresh eyes. Houses are a steal, and the neighborhood is an ideal place for professionals commuting to Research Triangle jobs. Any rehab work you do will be eligible for North Carolina's historic preservation tax incentive, which provides a 30 percent credit for the rehabilitation of non-income-producing properties.³⁴

The tax credits act as incentive for new buyers wanting to renovate, but the longer term residents in the neighborhood are renters or homeowners unable to afford renovations that would allow for the receipt of these tax credits. Slowly, new residents began moving in, calling themselves pioneers and expressing their desires to improve the neighborhood.³⁵

³² Keith Pandolfi, "Best Old House Neighborhoods 2009: The South," *This Old House*, 2009, <https://www.thisoldhouse.com/ideas/best-old-house-neighborhoods-2009-south/page/10>.

³³ Keith Pandolfi.

³⁴ Keith Pandolfi.

³⁵ February 5th, 2017 *Durham City Council Meeting*, Digital Video and Audio (City Hall, Durham, NC, n.d.).

In 2013, Self-Help, which had already been giving grants to charter schools for nearly a decade, became a landlord to a charter school for the first time. It purchased a former public elementary school building that had been closed since 1967 in order to house a growing K-8 charter school called Maureen Joy, using local funding, federal tax credits, and public charter financing. Maureen Joy is one of the oldest and largest charter schools in the state. The move to East Durham was a significant symbolic marker of new investment and change in the neighborhood, instigating real estate interest among higher-income populations. In 2014, the city brought together local and federal financing to pay for a \$4.8 million streetscape project, “to send a message to future business owners that this is a great place to come and do business. But in addition to that business feature, we wanted to be an exercise in good community investment, community engagement as well” in the East Durham neighborhood.³⁶

In 2014, Self-Help purchased two other properties and began redeveloping them to rent to a second charter school and a nonprofit hub. Lacking the money to finish the renovation of this site, Self-Help asked the City of Durham for a \$700,000 grant to support the renovation of their property. Despite skepticism from residents in the neighborhood about Self-Help’s long term intentions and goals for the neighborhood, City Council unanimously approved the grant, repeatedly referencing their faith in Self-Help in keeping the community’s best interests in mind, and contrasted their intentions from private developers. The grant was a mixture of federal Community Development Block Grant³⁷ dollars and HOME funds from the federal government. In East Durham, housing prices continue to rise, homes continue to be bought by young white professionals, and more businesses serving the incoming white, middle class community continue to open as black and Latino renters are pushed out.

1.1.5 Hotels Over Housing in Downtown

In 2015, city council was presented with a proposal for developing an affordable housing apartment complex on a government-owned site next to the city bus station in the heart of

³⁶ Keith Chadwell, deputy city manager, in Emily LaDue, *Angier-Driver Streetscape Ribbon-Cutting*, Digital Video and Audio (Durham, NC, 2013).

³⁷ Community Development Block Grants were started in 1974 to give cities access to capital for economic development programs.

downtown. Self-Help, Durham CAN (Congregations And Neighborhoods in Action),³⁸ and “progressive” Councilman Steve Schewel presented the idea for the proposal (the proposal itself was never written), which the city council rejected, despite its ongoing pledge towards affordable housing in an increasingly expensive downtown. Mayor Bill Bell stated: “I don't want another Cabrini Green. I don't want to warehouse poor folks.”³⁹ In likening a proposal for affordable housing to Cabrini Green – the infamous Chicago Public Housing Complex that was neglected by the state, subsequently overrun with gang violence, and has since become synonymous with the failure of public housing in the US – Bell was dismissing the very idea of publicly supported housing and effectively blaming public housing for problems of urban poverty. The subtext in his statement was that actual affordable housing for the poor was not an option for downtown Durham, but something that sounded progressive would be ideal.

A year and a half later, City Council received the only application from their Request For Proposals for development of the site: a mixed-income, mixed-use development built by Self-Help with the minimum required low income housing units to receive Low Income Housing Tax Credits. The city's memo after receiving the proposal stated:

An evaluation team consisting of representatives from several departments and organizations (Community Development, Office of Economic and Workforce Development, Finance, General Services, Equal Opportunity and Equity Assurance, County of Durham and Downtown Durham Incorporated) met and evaluated the single proposal... the [joint venture] received a score of 39.5 out of a possible 100 points.⁴⁰

Despite this low evaluation score, and Self-Help never having built or developed an affordable housing unit, City Council expressed their faith in Self-Help to complete the project because of their history working with the organization, and unanimously approved the plan.

The other investments that Self-Help has been making downtown are the dozens of small business loans, in the form of federally-backed 504 loans for property and capital to start or to

³⁸ Durham CAN is a Saul Alinsky-styled, Industrial Areas Foundation organization, which in Durham focuses most of their energy on affordable housing options.

³⁹ February 8, 2017 *Durham City Council Work Session*, Digital Video and Audio (City Hall Council Chambers, Durham, NC, n.d.).

⁴⁰ Reginald J. Johnson, Director, Department of Community Development, “Proposed Jackson/Pettigrew Street Development RFQ Update,” City of Durham Ordinance (City of Durham, February 9, 2017), http://cityordinances.durhamnc.gov/OnBaseAgendaOnline/Documents/ViewDocument/WS-Published%20Attachment%20-%2011662%20-%20MEMO%20-%20PROPOSED%20JACKSON_PETTIGREW%20STREET%20DEVEL.pdf?meetingId=183&documentType=Agenda&itemId=3698&publishId=13026&isSection=false.

expand existing businesses to stores, restaurants, and small start-ups, primarily upscale ventures that serve the new incoming wealthier populations. These businesses help to create the environment of niche restaurants and shops, breweries, and whiskey bars in Durham that is desired by the professional class being attracted by Duke, the city, and major investors. Self-Help used direct subsidies through New Market Tax Credits to support one of these ventures, the 21c Museum Hotel, an upscale hotel and art museum concept, with rooms starting at \$250/night, or more than the daily wage for a family making the area median income. Self-Help also owns three buildings downtown; one houses their Credit Union; another houses the policy and research branch of the organization, the Center for Responsible Lending; and the third rents offices to non-profits.

1.1.6 Duke Takes Walltown

Back in 1994, Duke University was in the midst of a crisis of public image in Durham, where employees called it “the plantation” due to the segregated workforce of hourly wage Black service employees and a salaried, largely white faculty and professional workforce. Coupled with years of public disinvestment in the city, the university’s hometown earned a reputation that they feared was taking potential hires and students to other universities. Duke’s then-President Nan Keohane, started a campaign to improve Duke’s image and relations with Durham, as did many elite universities sitting in the middle of poor cities at the time, notably the University of Pennsylvania, Columbia, and Yale. It looked to Walltown, a working class African-American neighborhood that had traditionally been the home of Duke employees and that bordered the University campus to the north. While other neighborhoods could more directly blame deindustrialization, the image of Walltown’s poverty was directly linked to Duke’s neglect in the city’s memory.⁴¹ While Duke was increasingly successful and growing, its employees were struggling to make ends meet. In 1990, household income in the neighborhood was \$11,000 below the city median and 26% of residents were living below the poverty line.

⁴¹ Emily LaDue, *Interview with John Burness*, Digital Video and Audio (Sanford Public Policy Center, Duke University, 2013).

In early 1994, current 16-year Mayor Bill Bell was not yet Mayor and had just lost his seat for two years after a 26-year term on the Durham Board of County Commissioners. He and another community leader were hired by Duke's newly hired Vice President for Public Relations, John Burness, to "go out on our behalf and talk to the leaders in these neighborhoods." Duke gave Self-Help \$2 million to land bank houses and sell them to new families in the area, because Self-Help knew how to manage community relations, and had "an ability to walk through the minefields" of accumulated antagonism towards the University from its workers.⁴² Residents of Walltown have described how Self-Help came into the neighborhood on behalf of Duke to "divide and conquer" the residents in order to force Duke's "ownership of the area."⁴³ As a result, all of the residents that Duke said it was intending to help have been slowly priced out of the neighborhood, and the refurbished houses sold to graduate students and young professionals. Now, only 15.8% of the households in the neighborhood live below the poverty line, not because poverty in Durham has decreased, but because poorer families have been forced to leave because of the rising cost of living, and wealthier families have been buying the homes and moving in.⁴⁴ For example, since 2000, the median household income in the Walltown neighborhood has risen 52.4%, double that of the rest of the city, and is nearly double for white families - \$41,000, from that of black families - \$21,000.⁴⁵ The Walltown project is used repeatedly as a demonstration of Duke's commitment to Durham, and the lessons that they and Self-Help learned are repeatedly used to amass properties and build financial and social capital from Durham neighborhoods.

1.1.7 A Sharper Strategy in the West End

Self-Help continued its partnership with Duke through the 2000s in the formerly working class, primarily African American West End neighborhood. Duke provided the capital for Self-Help to redevelop the area, most notably by building a high-end grocery store, the Durham Co-op Market. The development has been part of a displacement of lower income residents in the

⁴² Emily LaDue, *Interview with John Burness*.

⁴³ Walltown Resident, July 22, 2017.

⁴⁴ Self Help, "Neighborhood Transformation: Impacts and Lessons from the Walltown Homeownership Project," 2008.

⁴⁵ US Census, "Durham, North Carolina Income Map, Earnings and Wages Data" (City-Data, 2013 2000), <http://www.city-data.com/income/income-Durham-North-Carolina.html>.

neighborhoods. A March 2017 article in the Durham *Herald-Sun* entitled, “A flourishing West End sees real estate prices soar” quotes the Durham Co-op Market manager Leah Wolfrum addressing this contradiction, which she also addressed in her interview with me in 2015 just after the opening of the Market: “[Wolfrum] added that you could describe the Co-op as ‘placemaking and revitalizing’ and ‘gentrifying and destabilizing’ all at once. ‘We are very conscious of both sides of that coin,’ she said.”⁴⁶ In an attempt to resolve that, the Market offers a once-a-week \$3 dinner and hosts outdoor barbecues and parties “for the community.” However, the community that these events and dinners serve is the community of new residents *looking* for community in their new neighborhood, or the majority white, middle class residents that moved in when property was half the price it is now, now excited that they now have a grocery store in their neighborhood. At each event at the Market, the majority of people in attendance had either just moved in, were coming to the event from their own neighborhood, or had been homeowners in the neighborhood for 5-10 years, showing the success of Self-Help and Duke’s commercial anchor strategy at attracting wealth to the area.

Many of these consumers bought homes as part of Self-Help’s land banking efforts. As Self-Help continued its work acquiring and selling properties in Walltown, Duke moved to other neighborhoods in Southwest Central Durham, the area between downtown and Duke’s other campus. Burness stated:

A lot of the work was symbolic, but important in giving a sense that movement was happening. That was Walltown. Then we had the Southwest Central Durham [includes the West End], where there were multiple neighborhoods.... And tons of vitriolic anger directed at Duke. The reputation for this community getting its act together was real bad. So we said, you have to drive it. We’re here to say that to you. We want to be a partner... Affordable housing was the main thing. Kent Street and around there, boarded houses around there, but now there is a huge change.⁴⁷

The change that Burness is referring to is a change in the appearance, population, and property values in the neighborhood, which according to him, was a huge improvement in their strategy in Walltown, because private development followed their investments rapidly and drastically, and they learned new community relations tactics. This was due in part to a change in Duke and Self-

⁴⁶ Zachery Eanes, “A Flourishing West End Sees Real Estate Prices Soar,” *The Herald-Sun*, March 13, 2017, sec. Business, <http://www.heraldsun.com/news/business/article138187073.html>.

⁴⁷ Emily LaDue, *Interview with John Burness*.

Help's strategy, responding to what they had learned in Walltown and working more efficiently. Instead of Self-Help land banking and flipping as many houses as possible with Duke's financial backing as in Walltown, Duke quietly gave Self-Help \$9 million to redevelop a massive anchor commercial plot at the most visible location in the neighborhood that once housed a community center. They built the building now leased to the new Durham Co-Op Market, which as mentioned above, is run by and caters to a largely white, upper middle class clientele and attracts the same population to the neighborhood.⁴⁸ While appearing to be an asset for the community, it actually functions much more effectively and efficiently on a broader scale at displacing current residents. To Durham's progressive community, the Market appears to be a local "community-owned" business,] The other building on the property is office space which is currently rented to the Duke Center for Child and Family Health, which, according to Self-Help, is too expensive for anyone in Durham to rent except for Duke.⁴⁹

1.1.8 A New Day in Southside

On June 6, 2014, representatives from the local Durham government, North Carolina state government, federal government, Duke University, construction firms, neighborhood associations, local media, housing financing agencies, and the Center for Community Self-Help gathered under a tent in front of a newly built row of homes in a neighborhood once called St. Teresa by its residents and now called Southside, just south of the Durham Freeway from downtown Durham, NC. They were celebrating the closing of the first of these homes as part of a public relations program implemented to give a handful of Duke employees a \$10,000 subsidy towards their down payments.

In 2004, the Center for Community Self-Help catalyzed this project when they began buying out homeowners, and secured 105 properties with prices at auction or foreclosed levels. The NC Housing Finance Agency, a public agency that combines bonds, tax credits, and federal HOME and Community Development Block Grant funds to offer financing options to lower income

⁴⁸ I will explain the structure of the business in Chapter 3, but it is worth noting here that while the Market calls itself a cooperative, its structure is more of a shareholder model, like many new grocery cooperatives today.

⁴⁹ Emily LaDue, *Interview with Micah Kordsmeier*, Digital Video and Audio (Kent Corner Redevelopment Site, 2014).

homebuyers, offered Southside homebuyers with incomes at \$42,000 or less – which is 80% Area Median Income (AMI) and the standard highest marker for affordability eligibility – a forgivable 0% deferred second mortgage, and a 15% discount on the home price. The second mortgage covers part of the first mortgage’s monthly payments so that lower income people can buy homes, a modified and more conservative version of a subprime mortgage developed by Self-Help. As long as the borrowers’ payments continue, the second mortgage remains at 0% and does not have to be repaid once the first mortgage is successfully repaid.

As a historically black working class neighborhood next to downtown, Southside is a key part of the city’s attempt to demonstrate its commitment to affordable housing. Durham’s six-term mayor Bill Bell drew attention to the stakes of the neighborhood redevelopment: “A new day in Southside is already here. You are already seeing private investments in Southside as a result of the city’s strategic investment in this neighborhood, and we anticipate that a lot more will come for the years ahead of us.”⁵⁰ Several speakers referred to the project as the “tipping point” of a paradigm shift, to lessen the growing inequality from many of the sites of development outlined above, and lack of affordable housing in the city. However, Southside, as planned, is tipping towards higher income development, serving the patrons and residents of nearby American Tobacco and downtown Durham.

1.2 Rent Intensification Posed as a Public Good: Gentrification and The Center for Community Self-Help

1.2.1 A Landscape of Gentrification

Geographically, the new houses at Southside sit beside American Tobacco Campus, the site of Class AAA commercial and office real estate, chain and local restaurants, high-end loft apartments, a high-end Aloft Hotel, the Durham Bulls Stadium, and the Durham Performing Arts Center. These amenities were built to attract overlapping populations to Durham – doctors and researchers, technology entrepreneurs, and a young professional consumer class. According to contemporary urban planning literature, these are the desired populations that are necessary to

⁵⁰ Emily LaDue, *Southside Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony*, Digital Video and Audio (Durham, NC, 2014).

invigorate American cities: “meds and eds,” “the creative class,” and millennial entrepreneurs.⁵¹

The people who previously lived in Southside do not bring in the financial or social capital that the city is after, and are instead systemically moved out of neighborhoods and policed. As a longtime resident of Southside stated, “you know when there is a Bulls game or other event downtown because the police start patrolling around here.”

This process of neighborhood displacement is commonly, and contemptuously, referred to as “gentrification.” Gentrification has been popularly thought of as a byproduct of an otherwise positive and natural process of improving “bad neighborhoods” that results in the unfortunate displacement of the pre-redevelopment residents of the neighborhood, mere unfortunate casualties that are distinct from the “bad” residents committing crimes and not keeping up their properties. It is most commonly understood as a process instigated by white homeowners, “hipsters,” and developers that could be controlled if they more carefully developed areas so as to not displace the current residents, who in this rendition, are seen as a population that should be protected and befriended.⁵² The common understandings of gentrification – as an unfortunate effect of so-called “good” growth, or as driven by individual actors, be they developers or artists, lack a structural analysis that places gentrification in a wider context of mechanisms of managing crisis and finding new markets for global capitalist development. I argue that instead we must analyze “gentrification” as capitalism’s urban face. This shift not only allows us to develop a structural analysis of gentrification, but also allows our analysis of the dynamics at play in the city today to shed light on contemporary capitalism

The only agenda of policymakers and business leaders of cities is to promote speculative investment that raises rents and property values to bring in higher returns for investors; in other

⁵¹ Richard L. Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class: Revisited* (New York: Basic Books, 2012).

⁵² Japonica Brown-Saracino, ed., *The Gentrification Debates*, Metropolis and Modern Life (New York: Routledge, 2010); Loretta Lees, *Gentrification* (New York: Routledge/Taylor and Francis Group, 2007); Loretta Lees, Tom Slater, and Elvin K. Wyly, eds., *The Gentrification Reader* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2010); Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore, “Preface: From the ‘New Localism’ to the Spaces of Neoliberalism,” *Antipode* 34, no. 3 (June 2002): 341–47, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8330.00245>; Neil Smith, “Toward a Theory of Gentrification A Back to the City Movement by Capital, Not People,” *Journal of the American Planning Association* 45, no. 4 (October 1979): 538–48, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944367908977002>; Neil Smith, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1996).

words, pro-growth, rent-intensifying development.⁵³ Inner cities are one of the last sites where reinvestment is possible, due to the history of disinvestment and deindustrialization that has undervalued land and housing. Now, this loss of value is capitalized on by private, public, and nonprofit entities to fulfill promises of growth and turn profits. Moreover, the widespread critique of gentrification has led to an incorporation of the critique into the process itself, as I will unpack in this chapter. If American Tobacco is the anchor for the entire city's gentrification, then Southside is the city's, Duke's, and Self-Help's answer to the critique of gentrification, and through events such as the ribbon-cutting ceremony and local publicity campaigns, they are able to support rent-intensifying development such as Southside while appearing to support those struggling in the face of the intensification of wealth for a few.

Durham's development plans are meant to attract those who can afford to stay in hotels costing over \$200 a night, such as the 21c Hotel. In the press and client information packet materials for the 21c, the owners describe the history of the building, detailing the windows, the bank vault, and its early uses as a bank and a department store. Locally famous as being designed by the architects of the Empire State Building, "the Hill Building with its superlative height, impressive architectural credentials, and elegant Art Deco design, was designed to mirror the city's growth and prosperity and project the image of a city on the rise" when it was built in the 1930s.⁵⁴ These features, owners Steve Wilson and Lara Lee Brown attest, are a major reason that they wanted to purchase this building. They were looking for an "old building" that was representative of the "banks and tobacco here," and for a "community with a strong arts culture," mentioning their other locations: Louisville, Oklahoma City, Cincinnati, and Lexington.⁵⁵ Not coincidentally, these cities also contain universities that comprise a major portion of the

⁵³ I use the term pro-growth to refer to the profit-driven development that is supported globally and presumed to be the only way to build institutions and is also assumed to benefit populations from the top down. It was often used alongside the term "pro-poor" by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund to support projects to provide loans to newly independent countries in their infrastructure and industrialization development. The "pro-growth" agenda has historically been financial growth since real growth became stagnant in the middle of the century and the finance sector became dominant for regulating the global economy. See: Chapter 5, Matthew Sparke, *Introducing Globalization: Ties, Tension, and Uneven Integration* (Chichester, West Sussex, UK : Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013); Streeck, *How Will Capitalism End?*. The term rent-intensifying comes from Adolph Reed's studies of the black political class in Atlanta, see: Adolph L. Reed, *Stirrings in the Jug: Black Politics in the Post-Segregation Era* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999). to refer to government backed projects and private projects that increase rent and property values in urban areas, thus forcing the displacement of lower income populations.

⁵⁴ "21c Museum Hotel-Durham," *Deborah Berke Partners* (blog), n.d., <http://www.dberke.com/work/21c-museum-hotel-durham>.

⁵⁵ "21c Museum Hotel-Durham."

population and workforce, and have been developing rapidly with the growth of knowledge economies, increasing inner city wealth while pushing inner city people out of the downtowns. Wilson and Brown claim “ownership over downtown Louisville,” because their hotel spurred further development over the past several years since they began building there.

While they did not cite the business and urban planner writer Richard Florida’s work directly, they use his ideas about creative cities and development to speak authoritatively about the importance of “arts and culture” to boost a city’s “community” and economy.⁵⁶ Florida coined the term “creative class” with his 2002 book, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, followed by *The Flight of the Creative Class* (2005), *Who’s Your City* (2008), and a reprint of *The Rise of the Creative Class* in 2013. He argued that the group of artists, intellectuals, designers, and entrepreneurs were the key to the success of the economy in post-capitalism, and that cities should dedicate their resources to attracting young, hip, college graduates and young professionals in technology, arts, and start-ups.⁵⁷ According to Florida, the way to do that is with so-called progressive legislation and putting money and attention into the arts. Gay populations and ethnic minorities are key to these populations coming as well, because they add to his “Bohemian Index” of artists and performers. His view was that cities then experience both economic growth and population diversity and tolerance. However, his vision ignores the existing populations and conditions of cities, and falsely assumes that racial and sexuality tolerance among this young professional class will also mean more equality and tolerance of the poor and underserved. Essentially for Florida, the new young professional class would use their entrepreneurial skills and multicultural, liberal arts education to make cities “liveable.”⁵⁸ Florida’s publications influenced planners, business owners, policymakers, and politicians, including developers in Durham and Durham planners and politicians who cite Florida in their plans.⁵⁹ Durham was ahead of the curve with its university and research-centered economy, and with Duke’s help, increased its investments in entrepreneurialism and start-ups by subsidizing spaces in American Tobacco and elsewhere for start-up hubs, and rebuilt the city with this population in

⁵⁶ 21c Hotel Staff, Aaron Mandel, *Durham Under Development* (21c Hotel and Durham Hotel, 2016).

⁵⁷ Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class*.

⁵⁸ Florida.

⁵⁹ Downtown Durham Inc, “Downtown Master Plan,” December 2007, <http://downtowndurham.com/masterplan/>.

mind. These professions, themselves precarious and based on risk and investment, leave populations without higher education in underpaid service sector jobs that are often lacking contracts, stability, and benefits.⁶⁰

In 2007, I made short films for one building company that works in Raleigh and Durham who adopted Florida's terminology of "rock star," to describe young entrepreneurs who work long hours, but who cultivate a casual style, and value their social lives and music and arts culture as much as their work.⁶¹ I was hired to do the video because of my age and skills in video, which meant that I had rock star potential. Each of its workers were listed as various rock stars: sales rock star, contractor rock star, media rock star, buyer rock star. The company defined rock stars as people who want to be creative, succeed, and give back to the community.⁶² Their website states: "We hire Rock Stars.... We prefer to work exclusively with people who have great attitudes.... Life is too short to work with grumpy people."⁶³ The company owner, who used to volunteer with Habitat for Humanity, used to build one Habitat for Humanity house for each house that sold in new sub-developments in the greater Triangle region, which he uses to make his company stand out from others. By 2012, they changed their policy, still donating to Habitat and other causes, but not building an entire home per home as they have grown and found it unsustainable. This company is an example of what I describe later as "development media" – using an underlying critique of urban development as presented through their commitment to Habitat for Humanity, to do the development work itself, while promoting the creative class and pro-growth development.

As early as 2007, some community organizations began to describe what was happening to them as gentrification, while the city and its progressive community were banking on the promise and appeal of the creative class and referring to Durham's developments not as gentrification but in a different way, as "revitalization" or "development done right."⁶⁴ It was at this

⁶⁰ Randy Martin, *Financialization of Daily Life* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002).

⁶¹ Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class*. Garman Homes, garmanhomes.com.

⁶² Emily LaDue, Interview with Jim Garman, Garman Homes, 2007.

⁶³ Emily LaDue.

⁶⁴ DCUJ, "Durham Coalition for Urban Justice." In 2011, for example, the Durham Coalition for Urban Justice described as gentrification, the attempt by developers and the Central Park School for Children charter elementary school to redevelop and privatize the community park, while residents decried the use of the concept of gentrification.

point that the El Kilombo Community Center recognized and named the gentrification beginning in their neighborhood, Old North Durham, and throughout the city, as they watched buildings get handed to developers for one dollar to turn into restaurants and art spaces for young professionals settling in the growing region. But it was not until the middle class began to be affected when rent and home prices in the neighborhoods surrounding downtown doubled or more in some cases, and in other cases, first-time homebuyers realized that they were too late to the market, that the reality of gentrification was undeniable. Lisa Sorg, a former editor of the *Indy Week* – Durham’s free weekly progressive and arts and culture newspaper – marked Durham’s gentrification for the liberal middle class of Durham on August 12, 2015: “The moment when you realize your entire city is unaffordable.”⁶⁵ She began her piece with concerns expressed from Mayor Bill Bell, who called the lack of affordable housing, “unacceptable,” despite proudly leading the city in this direction for nearly two decades. The poor community of Durham had been shuffling around for years already in the face of gentrification. Two weeks after Sorg’s article was published, on September 1, 2015, nearly ten years after fighting gentrification, the El Kilombo Community Center closed its doors when its rent doubled, and with most of the community long displaced from its neighborhood.

1.2.2 Defining Gentrification and Pro-Growth Development

Ruth Glass coined the term “gentrification” in London in 1964 as “an inevitable development” in cities, whereby poor and working class residents are displaced out of their neighborhoods by middle class residents returning to urban neighborhoods that have received investment and infrastructure upgrades.⁶⁶ Neil Smith has developed some of the most comprehensive and lasting studies of gentrification, examining the process in New York in the 1970s through the 1990s, and still, Smith’s definition encompasses much of what is commonly

⁶⁵ Lisa Sorg, “The Moment You Realize Your Entire City Is Unaffordable,” *Indy Week*, August 12, 2015, <https://www.indyweek.com/indyweek/the-moment-when-you-realize-your-entire-city-is-unaffordable/Content?oid=4644974>.

⁶⁶ Ruth Glass, *London: Aspects of Change*, Centre for Urban Studies Report 3 (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1964).

understood by the term.⁶⁷ One of Smith's more recent works studies the important role of the state in gentrification. Tom Slater, in his essay "Gentrification of the City," quotes that article by Smith and Peter Williams:

If we look back at the attempted definitions of gentrification, it should be clear that we are concerned with a process much broader than merely residential rehabilitation ... [A]s the process has continued, it has become increasingly apparent that residential rehabilitation is only one facet ... of a more profound economic, social, and spatial restructuring. In reality, residential gentrification is integrally linked to the redevelopment of urban waterfronts for recreational and other functions, the decline of remaining inner-city manufacturing facilities, the rise of hotel and convention complexes and central-city office developments, as well as the emergence of modern "trendy" retail and restaurant districts ... Gentrification is a visible spatial component of this social transformation. A highly dynamic process, it is not amenable to overly restrictive definitions.⁶⁸

Gentrification acts as a catch all term for various urban development processes, but at its core is the idea that wealthier individuals have influence over this process, as they have certain taste preferences and mobility that enables them to decide which neighborhood to move to, and what sort of businesses are built. In sociology, Sharon Zukin and David Grazian have offered extensive research on the cultures of gentrification and the desire of white middle class populations to get close to what they see as authentic culture – through consuming blackness in the form of historically black cultural production (jazz, blues, soul, and hip hop music; soul food) and in cultures centered around the consumption of a product able to contain various levels of dedication and erudition (coffee, beer, and various food trends).⁶⁹

The process of rent intensification has been most clearly described by urban scholar Neil Smith as the "rent gap," or, "disparity between the potential ground rent level and the actual ground rent capitalized under the present land use."⁷⁰ The actual ground rent is the labor value that has gone into the house, the land value, and the potential ground rent is described as "the amount that could be capitalized under the land's "highest and best use" (in planners' parlance)—

⁶⁷ Theorists such as Loretta Lees and Tom Slater have added contemporary refinements that incorporate the role of the state in easing gentrification, and case studies examining how these processes operate in smaller cities and cities throughout the world

⁶⁸ Lees, *Gentrification*.

⁶⁹ Sharon Zukin, *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change*, Johns Hopkins Studies in Urban Affairs (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982); Sharon Zukin, *Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Sharon Zukin, "Restaurants as "Post Racial? Spaces. Soul Food and Symbolic Eviction in Bedford-Stuyvesant (Brooklyn)," *Ethnologie française* 44, no. 1 (2014): 135, <https://doi.org/10.3917/ethn.141.0135>; David Grazian, *Blue Chicago: The Search for Authenticity in Urban Blues Clubs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

⁷⁰ Smith, *The New Urban Frontier*. Page 65

or at least under a higher and better use.”⁷¹ In 1979, Smith described how investors were able to make money by renovating their dilapidated low-income rentals, so that they could collect higher rents from a wealthier population seeking to relocate to center cities.⁷² And in 1996, Smith wrote of what occurs after decades of devalorization through redlining, blockbusting, abandonment, of inner cities:

Gentrification occurs when the gap is sufficiently wide that developers can purchase structures cheaply, can pay the builder’s costs and profit for rehabilitation, can pay interest on mortgage and construction loans, and can then sell the end product for a sale price that leaves a satisfactory return to the developer.⁷³

Together with his advisor, Marxist geographer David Harvey, Smith’s lifelong urban research contributed an important structural intervention into the study of gentrification, moving the conversation away from the “consumer-driven” theories that understood gentrification as the outcome of a middle class moving to cities to be closer to urban culture. Instead, Smith traced the structural causes of gentrification, what some theorists call the “producer-driven” theories of gentrification, and connected the intense profit-making opportunities in cities with those of investment capital and capitalism more generally. He went on to theorize a second process related to gentrification, revanchism – which is the violent and legally-supported pushback of gentrifying communities against the people that already live there in the form of increased policing, privatizing parks, and active antagonism against the struggling communities already there. He described these dynamics as revenge on the populations that made cities their homes, on the part of wealthier communities that now want the idyllic urban life described by planners such as Jane Jacobs.

In the 1990s and 2000s, planners began using a reinvented form of Ebenezer Howard’s “garden city” thesis, conceived by him at the turn of the century, and later city adapted by Jane Jacobs adapted to counter the stark modernist development of New York under Robert Moses and other cities in postwar rebuilding projects. Moses’ vision for New York represented the kind of development that Logan and Molotch describe as the “urban growth machine” – growth built

⁷¹ Smith. Page 60.

⁷² Smith, “Toward a Theory of Gentrification A Back to the City Movement by Capital, Not People.”

⁷³ Smith, *The New Urban Frontier*. Page 59.

primarily with the goal of finding and investing in the spaces that increase their exchange value, or profit-making capabilities.⁷⁴ To her, these projects would eradicate the diversity and public life that make cities liveable, and contain the services and sociality that increase a space's use-value. She argued that even wealthy residents do not want to live in the homogenous spaces of ordered Haussman-like planned streets, but rather prefer areas of the city with "an exuberant and varied sidewalk life."⁷⁵ Also critical of the small planned housing developments being built in some cities at the time, in this case, in Pittsburgh, she wrote, "There is no public life here, in any city sense. There are differing degrees of extended private life."⁷⁶ Today, cities are designed by governments, planners, and developers as such, so that the extended private life of these populations dominate nearly the entirety of urban spaces while eradicating the "public" that Jacobs sought to preserve.

Jacobs' and William H. Whyte's⁷⁷ concepts of inclusive, community-based, public space-oriented cities were posed as counter to the huge, urban renewal-based development projects of the postwar US: highways, suburbs, skyscrapers and even public housing complexes. As the state and corporations attempted to grow wealth through these massive projects, neighborhoods that were seen as disposable because they were poor were razed and destroyed, and were done so in the name of uplift. As I will discuss in Chapter 2, in Durham these processes destroyed black and poor white neighborhoods, including the booming black middle class neighborhood of Hayti to make way for the Durham Freeway, and expansion of Interstate 40, to Research Triangle Park. Other developments were supposed to improve deteriorating buildings better while preserving community, but there was no recovery from the "federal bulldozer."⁷⁸

Jacobs and Moses developed what would become the lasting idea that developers and planners were contradictory forces in cities –developers had profit growth in mind and planners had people and community in mind. This framework prevails today in debates about

⁷⁴ John R Logan and Harvey Lusk Molotch, *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007).

⁷⁵ Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Vintage Books ed (New York: Vintage Books, 1992).

⁷⁶ Jacobs.

⁷⁷ Whyte started "Project for Public Spaces." Whyte was her editor at Fortune magazine in 1958 when she wrote "Downtown is for People."

⁷⁸ Martin Anderson, *The Federal Bulldozer* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967).

gentrification. But despite whatever the intentions of planners and developers are, all development is pro-growth, which is capitalist growth that is also dependent on the growth of inequality. Tom Slater draws on Smith's structural analysis and theories of the rent gap, to explain how this occurs on the level of real estate: As Tom Slater explains his intervention:

A signal contribution of the rent gap was to show that, first, the individual, personal, rational preferences in the housing market much beloved by neoclassical economists, and second, the "new middle class" dispositions towards a vibrant central city (and associated rejections of bland, patriarchal suburbia) that intrigued liberal-humanist and feminist geographers, are all tightly bound up with larger, collective social relations and investments (core to the rent gap concept is that ground rent is *a product of the labour power invested in land*, and that preferences are not "exogenous" to the structures of land, property, credit and housing).⁷⁹

In other words, the individual preferences of the classes moving in are a product of what is profitable, and what is possible. In Durham, as this study will show, this concept is important in the connection between the discourse that is driving pro-growth development, most specifically the need to include such provisions as affordable housing and community input, and the lack of the actual realization of these provisions.

Preferences for living in a certain neighborhood emerge from structural restraints forcing rents up and populations to move into disinvested neighborhoods for cheaper rent, and in turn these neighborhoods are simultaneously glorified, exocitized, and modified to fit the desires and lifestyles of the new class – because that is what is profitable. There are preferences for certain businesses – cafes, music venues, trendy restaurants with post-industrial chic aesthetics; and there is a *preference* in city council and among Durham's progressive classes to advocate a sort of "development for all" that amounts to development for all – and include what are presented as equitable solutions to inequality. As wealthier residents live closer to poor residents, they attempt to elect local officials and implement individualized solutions – such as certain minimal housing units reserved for the existing population, donation jars for subsidized coffee, and free workout days at Crossfit. These preferences are also the result of structural conditions, namely the persistent glaring inequality that have made liberal populations see the need for "alternatives to

⁷⁹ Tom Slater, "Planetary Rent Gaps: Planetary Rent Gaps," *Antipode* 49 (January 2017): 114–37, <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12185>.

gentrification.”⁸⁰ The solutions they propose, however, remain individualized and do not require questioning the broader structural conditions that have put them in these neighborhoods, and caused this displacement to begin with. Moreover, at the level of local government, policies that make public financing available based on certain conditions, such as a certain level of poverty in a neighborhood and the inclusion of affordable housing, actually have the effect of bringing even more gentrification to neighborhoods, as I will show. The liberal discourse of diversity and affordability, and the corresponding financing, are key elements of gentrification today.

With planners working alongside developers to make projects and neighborhoods more “walkable” and “diverse,” the outcome is not affordability and actual inclusivity for those struggling to survive, but the image of affordability and diversity. For example, in Durham, Central Park School for Children, a charter elementary school that received a start-up loan from Self-Help, worked to try to privatize the public park that El Kilombo struggled to maintain and push out the low-income Latino and African-American community that primarily used the park. It attracts an upper and middle class from across the city, and historically failed to provide provisions such as free lunch and after school programs for low-income students who would need it, such as those who used to live in the neighborhood. According to Principal John Heffernan, after the park struggle, and since the neighborhood has become unaffordable and pushed out its poor and working class base, the charter has been trying to implement a walking policy, where a certain percentage of their students must be from within a walking radius, and a meal program, to accommodate lower income students.⁸¹ While these programs appear to support the former neighborhood that has been displaced, the efforts go towards supporting the new residents. The school has received the “Golden Carrot Award” from the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine⁸² a new nutrition program funded by a loan from Self-Help so that they can answer the

⁸⁰ Cliff Bellamy, “What Can Be Done? Alternatives to Gentrification,” *The Herald-Sun*, n.d., <http://www.heraldsun.com/news/local/counties/durham-county/article166791722.html>.

⁸¹ Emily LaDue, *John Heffernan, Principal, Central Park School for Children*, Digital Video and Audio (Central Park School for Children, Durham, NC, 2014).

⁸² “The Golden Carrot Awards: Celebrating Healthful School Lunches,” *Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine* (blog), n.d., <https://www.pcrm.org/health/healthy-school-lunches/carrot/2016-golden-carrot-award-winners>.

critiques that they do not provide meals to their students by implementing this program.⁸³ As Heffernan discussed, the park struggle put the school in a negative light that they worked to counteract through changes that make the upper middle class school appear to be support the community they helped to displace.⁸⁴

Today, the critique and the development are enmeshed such that Jane Jacobs' calls for walkable cities, inclusivity, diversity, support of immigrant communities, and street life are all goals of the development projects themselves.⁸⁵ American Tobacco Campus presents itself as community-oriented and diverse, and reused a historic structure rather than razing and rebuilding from a top-down, stark approach. It is designed as a walkable open air campus with flowing water and seating among the restaurants and offices. Claiming that it would bring community, business, and new growth to a poor census tract, the project received New Market Tax Credits that made it affordable to do the development at all.

The space however, is entirely private and policed by its own security force. The "public" espoused by Jacobs is here only the image of a public, or a very limited public. American Tobacco and similar developments that I will discuss in Chapter 3 still foster class and race segregation, increasing inequality, and displacement. Because of the focus on community, developers such as Capitol Broadcasting and Self-Help are seen as benevolent community planners in the tradition of Jane Jacobs, as opposed to profit-seeking developers that break up communities with condos and skyscrapers, linked to the idea of the "power broker" developer Robert Moses.⁸⁶ Breweries, restaurants, and art studios are seen as desirable community building businesses.

As mentioned, one of the most influential proponents of this tactic, Richard Florida, who spent a decade promoting development that attracts this class, has since written a new book recognizing how this development actually promotes inequality. Even Florida, one of the most

⁸³ Hady Mawajdeh, Frank Stasio, and Jess Clark, "Charter Schools in North Carolina," *WUNC 91.5FM*, May 6, 2015, <http://wunc.org/post/charter-schools-north-carolina-1#stream/0>.

⁸⁴ Emily LaDue, *John Heffernan, Principal, Central Park School for Children*.

⁸⁵ Ebenezer Howard, *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* (Gloucester, Gloucestershire: Dodo Press, 2010); Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*.

⁸⁶ *The Power Broker Robert Moses and the Fall of New York* (Princeton, NJ: Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic, 2007).

cited writers among planners and city tourism departments, now critiques gentrification. In April 2017, he wrote:

It became increasingly clear to me that the same clustering of talent and economic assets generates a lopsided, unequal urbanism in which a relative handful of superstar cities, and a few elite neighborhoods within them, benefit while many other places stagnate or fall behind. Ultimately, the very same force that drives the growth of our cities and economy broadly also generates the divides that separate us and the contradictions that hold us back... Much more than a crisis of cities, the New Urban Crisis is the central crisis of our time.⁸⁷

And he has an answer about how to curb inequality: spread wealth through “upgrading service jobs” or “building stronger cities around the world with a larger middle class.”⁸⁸ While even Florida has changed his mind about the effectiveness of development that attracts young professionals working in information technology, arts, and marketing in solving what he saw as economic stagnation, in Durham, and elsewhere, this “creative cities” approach is still the primary strategy behind major financial and planning decisions by private and public institutions. What has changed is the recognition that gentrification is occurring, that it is causing further inequality and displacement, and that it is a process we are all implicated in. The result has been an incorporation of the critique of gentrification into gentrification itself.

1.2.3 The Critique of Gentrification as Part of the Gentrification Machine

Historically, critiques of gentrification have effectively made gentrification an undesirable term that few want to associate themselves with, beyond some developers and politicians who use gentrification as a rhetorical counterweight to crime and blighted neighborhoods.⁸⁹ Even they will shy away from the term as much as possible when it is politically strategic to do so and instead choose words like renaissance, revitalization, uplift, or growth. Progressives and liberals have maintained a critique of gentrification throughout its steady global intensification.⁹⁰

Communities have organized against gentrification and attempted to keep their parks, schools,

⁸⁷ Richard Florida, “The Roots of the New Urban Crisis,” *City Lab*, April 9, 2017, <https://www.citylab.com/equity/2017/04/the-roots-of-the-new-urban-crisis/521028/>.

⁸⁸ Richard Florida, “More Losers Than Winner in America’s New Economic Geography,” *The Atlantic CityLab*, January 30, 2013, <http://www.citylab.com/jobs-and-economy/2013/01/more-losers-winners-americas-new-economic-geography/4465/>.

⁸⁹ Smith, *The New Urban Frontier*; 21c Hotel Staff, Aaron Mandel, *Durham Under Development*; Duke Real Estate Club, *Duke Real Estate Club*, 2014.

⁹⁰ Brown-Saracino, *The Gentrification Debates*. Rory Carroll, “Are White Hipsters Hijacking an Anti-Gentrification Fight in Los Angeles?,” *The Guardian*, October 18, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/oct/18/los-angeles-gentrification-boyle-heights-race-activism>; John Joe Schlichtman, Marc Lamont Hill, and Jason Patch, *Gentrifier*, UTP Insights (Toronto ; Buffalo ; London: University of Toronto Press, 2017).

and homes in the face of seekers of the rent gap. However, the direction of growth in cities has not changed. Instead, the result has been a thorough subsumption of the gentrification critique by the developers, businesses, governments, institutions, agencies, and individuals engaged in actions typically categorized as gentrification. This goal of redevelopment without gentrification is where progressive politics in Durham are blooming, and what is discursively and financially powering pro-growth development.

Now, gentrification has become a ubiquitous term in cities undergoing the process that the concept attempts to capture. Disinvested areas of cities are gradually inhabited by and developed according to the tastes of the new population, who have economic and mobile flexibility and, as the common understanding goes, are looking for a lifestyle and situation that is more diverse, stylish, and matched to their tastes. The populations that are moving to and building in previously disinvested postindustrial cities, are reflecting on and discussing the changes in our urban landscapes across various media platforms. Blogs, magazines, and newspapers have been covering recent waves of gentrification and some are exclusively focused on covering news on the gentrification front, such as the sub-publication of *The Atlantic*, *Atlantic Cities* sub-publication and local blogs and features in newspapers. In Durham, at least a dozen blogs have come, and some gone, covering Durham as a subject.⁹¹ Place-based lifestyle magazines promote cities and focus on shaping identities and highlighting new restaurants, event spaces, and shops while shaping historical narratives.⁹² A significant portion of these publications are explicitly engaging with the concept of gentrification and critically encountering changes in the city for an audience of readers that is taking part in these processes. The field of action and subjecthood is consistent. In the chapters that follow, I will analyze this discourse in Durham in greater detail.

⁹¹ Best of the Bull City, Bull City Rising, Carpe Durham, Open Durham, The DM Blog, The Upstager, The Durham Voice, Clarion Content, Take the Bull by the Fork, Bull City Mutterings, Geer Farmhouse, Bull's Eye, Strong Durham Schools, Durham Hoods, Dirty Durham, Rev-Elution, Durham Bull Pen, Bull City Bungalow, Nicomachus, Durham Maps, Endangered Durham, DurhamCares, Walking Distance Durham, No Warning Shots Fired, Clean Energy Durham, Shake the Frame, My Big Renovation Blog (Cleveland-Holloway), Winston's Broken House, The Cleveland-Holloway Neighborhood, Eat at Joe's, Durham Luxury Real Estate, Fallout Shelter, Bullsh@t, bullCity, Ginny from the Blog, Dirty Durham, Oh Snap! Durham, etc. I found additional sources for this list by cross-referencing with Bull City Rising's list of Durham blogs.

⁹² Kevin Fox Gotham, *Crisis Cities: Disaster and Redevelopment in New York and New Orleans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

Neil Smith's concept of gentrification was useful, but perhaps now it does not work as a way to describe the situation happening in cities. Today, it would be difficult to spend a day in downtown Durham and not be exposed to a conversation, art exhibit, or newspaper article about the city's gentrification problem, or successful avoidance of gentrification in the face of massive development. The August 2, 2017 cover of the *Indy Week* featured a story about noise complaints in a gentrifying neighborhood, Old North Durham, calling it "gentrification in motion."⁹³ The *Indy Week* coverage of this story shows the hyper-awareness of gentrification in local media and the defense of "artists and nonprofits arts groups" against what is perceived as higher income development in the form of arts condos.

But the buzz around gentrification only barely began around 2012, when rents slowly crept up, three new hotels were built within a year downtown, and condos in a new 26 story building were bought at pre-sale for over half a million dollars. Residents considering themselves activists on the left explained that they saw Durham as an exception to gentrification, many having moved from cities like Portland and San Francisco to escape the homogenizing and unaffordable effects of gentrification. Several years earlier, however, when El Kilombo's social center fought the city against the privatization of a public park and soccer field in 2007, they were attacked for analyzing the situation as part of a larger gentrification process. Residents claimed at that point that Durham was too gritty, too diverse, too authentic,⁹⁴ too community-centered, and too unique to succumb to this process that was most popularly associated with Brooklyn and San Francisco.

So now, another visible side of the development machine is the critique of gentrification itself; a public show of commitment to equality, diversity, local community, history, and affordable housing, such as the rhetoric of affordability in the Southside project and its ribbon-cutting event, and the manager of Durham Co-op Market hosting \$3 dinners for the surrounding community. As the "good developer," Self-Help actually benefits from the current public and intellectual discourse of gentrification, which, I argue, has become inadequate to capture the processes of urban

⁹³ Katie Jane Fernelius, "Batalá Durham's Central Park Standoff with Liberty Warehouse Residents Is Gentrification in Motion."

⁹⁴ John L. Jackson, *Real Black: Adventures in Racial Sincerity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

development, let alone do anything about them because they have been subsumed into them. A new framework is needed that takes into account the institutional relationships, the new strategic role of the gentrification critique, and the soft spots of decision-making: the way that “community” is used to defend projects, the trust in local partners, and the policies and projects that look and are assumed to be “good.”⁹⁵ This is where The Center for Community Self-Help sits in Durham.

1.2.4 The Center for Community Self-Help

Gentrification, or what I will specifically explain drawing from Reed and others as a rent-intensifying, pro-growth development agenda, is neither natural nor the result of individual actions. Rather, it is a carefully managed process organized by institutions at various levels, yet gentrification literature is not discussing the role of these institutions. The processes of producing discourse, managing discourse, and managing the development processes holds in place the idea that there is actually growth occurring in the economy, and this growth can be inclusive, democratic, and lessen inequality. As a relentless pursuit of a pro-growth agenda by any means continues and even incorporates a critique of the agenda, there is in fact only more speculative growth happening.⁹⁶ In this dissertation, I examine the discursive and material value of these processes and institutions in this speculative economy in order to parse out why it is that as there is more attention is given to inequality, democracy, and affordability in development agendas, there is in fact an increase in inequality. I argue that the underestimated, understudied, and under-theorized role of non-state, nonprofit progressive institutions is key to holding the pro-growth agendas of cities in place through the careful management of discourse, politics, and finance.

The Center for Community Self-Help, a national charitable nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization founded and based in Durham, NC, is a uniquely positioned influential local nongovernmental institution carefully and quietly managing and advancing the urban development agenda of rent-intensifying development in Durham. Through the data and analysis

⁹⁵ Neil Brenner, *New State Spaces* 2004. Geographer Neil Brenner advocated for studying the rescaling of government decision making, which he observed was a new strategy of business to influence legislation and re-regulate urban policies to favor profit-driven developments

⁹⁶ *Politics After Catastrophe, Part 1: Understanding the Catastrophe* (Workshop for Intercommunal Study, 2017).

presented in this study, I argue that Self-Help is at the forefront of this development, and is in fact serving a necessary institutional role as a manager and symbol of benevolence for this development to take place.

The Center for Community Self-Help is an umbrella organization comprised of four institutions: the local Self-Help Credit Union (CU), the Federal Credit Union (FCU), the Center for Responsible Lending (CRL), and the Self-Help Ventures Fund (VF). Its activities include: providing loans to small businesses and individuals that otherwise would not be considered for loans, shepherding federal grants and tax credits for development projects, building neighborhood advisory committees for these projects, advocating nationally for non-predatory bank lending practices and legislation to support equitable banking, advocating locally with other organizations to support affordable housing, partnering with the city and universities to buy and hold property for planned development on site-specific and neighborhood-wide scales, including most recently by buying properties and acting as landlord to local businesses and nonprofits including food co-ops and charter schools.

Self-Help's work is based on promoting individual economic success in the market through financing to individuals and other institutions and buying properties to expand their portfolio and rent to institutions they support. Founder and CEO Martin Eakes has described himself as a "compassionate conservative" and his vision of asset-based wealth for all citizens is not unlike George W. Bush's 2004 campaign platform of the Ownership Society whereby every American family was encouraged to own a home and pay their own way without government interference. In the early 2000s, banks took advantage of this moment to profit even further from the aspirations of low and middle income families to realize the American Dream of homeownership, the ultimate symbol of "self-help."⁹⁷ The mortgage industry ballooned and burst, alongside these dreams, pushing the structural limits of capitalism, through the extension of credit with no growth or way to pay it back, managed by the combined naïve sense of security of the

⁹⁷ The White House, "Fact Sheet: America's Ownership Society: Expanding Opportunities," n.d., <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2004/08/20040809-9.html>.

government-backed mortgage industry, and banks' intentional profiting off of low-income people through subprime loans and knowledge that the government would bail them out.

Self-Help emerged with some losses from the 2008 crisis, but ultimately emerged as a "good bank" working in "responsible finance," and fighting "bad banks" and predatory lenders. Self-Help was able to recover due to its dependence on federal and local funding and foundation support, and its successful leveraging of the rhetoric of doing capitalism the right way, and the leveraging of real estate and capital assets.⁹⁸ Self-Help receives the capital it needs to do its work based on the use of discourse of creating equity in low-income communities. In turn, this discourse has led to Self-Help being a symbol of economic justice in Durham, so that Self-Help has become locally confused as a progressive institution fighting for equality for all.

Its goals of building equity are equated with the goals of historic struggles for economic and social justice, equality, and self-determination due to the discourses that it invokes, the history it invokes, and the current popular understandings of inequality and urban development. Self-Help receives public financing to do its work based on this leveraging. In Durham, Self-Help stands in a symbolic position where it is assumed to be promoting progressive interests of the city, and working in the best interests of low-income and African American and Latino populations. However, after the past twenty years of public-private-university-nonprofit partnerships aiming to develop the city, millions of public dollars given to developers, and countless ribbon-cutting ceremonies and pledges that the city is supporting affordable housing, inequality is at its worse, poverty has risen, and the unemployment rate continues to grow. The development of the city supports a slow and steady wealth accumulation into fewer and fewer hands; the visible development machine – new construction in every neighborhood, higher property values, a busy (but unaffordable) farmer's market, shiny new hotels (with shoe shiners working for tips alongside homeless families asking for money outside), and fresh siding (put up by migrant workers without insurance covering frequent injuries) on flipped houses – masks the labor, disinvestment, dispossession, and public burden directly and indirectly enabling this wealth

⁹⁸ A. Roy, "Subjects of Risk: Technologies of Gender in the Making of Millennial Modernity," *Public Culture* 24, no. 1 66 (January 1, 2012): 131–55, <https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-1498001>.

transfer to occur: the precarious service industry, labor from migrants fleeing the localized manifestations of economic crisis, families leaving their homes and moving in every direction further out of the city, mass public school closures, unemployed able-bodied workers who have given up looking for work and are no longer counted in unemployment statistics, and the massive public and private debt accumulation keeping the city and its people looking successful.

Self-Help's founders, executives, and project managers are able to leverage, and believe in, a civil rights discourse of community, economic justice, racial justice, and equal opportunity to rhetorically⁹⁹ fulfill a local liberal conscience that attempts to temper the inequality of capitalist growth with philanthropic projects aimed at giving low-income families, women, and people of color a chance to realize their American Dreams. Materially, it shepherds necessary public funding to make these projects financially viable. Self-Help's mission is to "create economic opportunity to help communities help themselves" and "protect ownership and economic opportunity for all."¹⁰⁰ It compares its work to Martin Luther King's dreams and "the unfinished work of the civil rights movement of the 1960s."¹⁰¹ Using this Civil Rights discourse follows in the tradition of other major foundations and institutions in the US, such as the Ford Foundation, which explicitly works to incorporate African Americans into the educational and policy elite of the country,¹⁰² in supporting a liberal aspirational doctrine, applying the idea that given the opportunity, all US citizens can have material comfort and success, basing its measure of equality on equal access to capital and credit. Its use of this rhetoric is not deceptive; Self-Help believes that its work is what is needed to bring economic and racial justice to citizens that are and have been systematically excluded from property ownership.

In this dissertation, I offer a case study of the Center for Community Self-Help to show how the critique of pro-growth, rent-intensifying development has become the very engine driving development in Durham, and urge those interested in fully understanding and changing urban

⁹⁹ See Jamieson for a thorough discussion of the concept of "rhetoric" in politics. Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Eloquence in an Electronic Age: The Transformation of Political Speechmaking* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.self-help.org/who-we-are/about-us/our-mission>

¹⁰¹ <https://www.self-help.org/blog/blog/2016/01/15/dr.-king-s-dream-our-work>

¹⁰² Karen Ferguson, *Top down: The Ford Foundation, Black Power, and the Reinvention of Racial Liberalism*, 1st ed, Politics and Culture in Modern America (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

inequalities to reorient the way that we approach the development of our cities. In the next section, I describe how Self-Help operates in the city as an engine of disinformation.

1.3: The Disinformation of Self-Help: public image-making and public financing

1.3.1. Disinformation And The Pro-Growth Agenda

Today, local political discourse in Durham implies that we can solve the impossibility of the contradiction between growth and inequality as represented through gentrification, by simply recognizing it is going on. In the face of economic distress and crisis, the promise of economic prosperity through homeownership and individual success is still held out as an answer. Self-Help sees its work as a counterweight to the history of discriminatory lending and housing policies in the US today. The problem, which this dissertation will unpack, is that advancing individual economic prosperity and extending credit has not led to decreasing inequality. In fact, inequality has been increasing globally.¹⁰³ The American Dream was never a reality, but an important discursive mechanism utilized to keep attention focused not on the structural limitations of middle class prosperity but on the individual merits or failures to achieve that prosperity.

In fact, in 2015 half of 18-29 year olds, the so-called millennial generation, believed that the American Dream was dead – not dying, not in trouble, but dead.¹⁰⁴ Discussing the shift in access to wealth that occurred beginning in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Panitch and Gindin write:

The American Dream has always entailed promoting popular integration into the circuits of financial capital, whether as independent commodity farmers, as workers whose paychecks were deposited with banks and whose pension savings were invested in the stock market, or as consumers reliant on credit – and not least as home-owners subsidized by the tax deductions allowed on mortgage payments. But in the context of intensified competition, stagnant wage income, and more sophisticated financial markets, this incorporation of the mass of the American population now took on a more comprehensive quality. Gains through collective action gave way to individual adjustments in lifestyles... Workers reduced their savings, increased their debt, and looked to tax cuts to make up for stagnant wages; they cheered rises in the stock markets on which their pensions depended, and counted on the inflation of house prices

¹⁰³ Craig J. Calhoun and Georgi M. Derluguian, eds., *Aftermath: A New Global Economic Order?*, Possible Futures Series, v. 3 (New York: New York University Press, 2011); Sparke, *Introducing Globalization*; Michael Roberts and Sharmini Peries, "IMF Worried That High Inequality Could Threaten Global Capitalism," *The Real News Network*, October 27, 2017, http://therealnews.com/t2/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=31&Itemid=74&jumival=20280.

¹⁰⁴ Jonathan Chew, "Half of Millennials Believe the American Dream Is Dead," *Fortune* (blog), December 11, 2015, <http://fortune.com/2015/12/11/american-dream-millennials-dead/>.

to serve as collateral for new loans, provide some added retirement security, and leave a legacy for their children.¹⁰⁵

Despite decades of decline in overall real wealth, the ghost of the American Dream still informs policy decisions and in the hope expressed by Obama, in the stability promised by homeownership. Self-Help is an institution built on the belief in the American Dream, that access to financial resources – credit – is an economic equalizer and will lead to more stability for all, including lower income people. For Self-Help, the American Dream, in other words, “self-help,” is possible if debt continues accumulating for more people, and in the case of real estate development, distributed publicly among more people through various public financing mechanisms.

Scholar Eric Cheyfitz has called this phenomenon, when the signifier of a belief system is no longer based in any reality and yet still governs our thinking and decision-making, Disinformation; or, the end of ideology; or “the simulacra of solutions.”¹⁰⁶

The French Marxist Louis Althusser notes that while ideologies “constitute an *illusion*, we admit that they do make *allusion* to reality, and that they need only be ‘interpreted’ to discover the reality of the world behind their imaginary representation of that world.” Here is his classic definition: “Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence.” In contrast, Disinformation constitutes an illusion that makes no allusion to reality, or it makes an allusion to what it fantasizes as reality. Disinformation approximates what Jean Baudrillard terms “simulation” or “simulacra”: The transition from signs that dissimulate something to signs that dissimulate that there is nothing, marks the decisive turning point. The first implies a theology of truth and secrecy (to which the notion of ideology still belongs). The second inaugurates an age of simulacra and simulation. Like the simulacrum, Disinformation “bears no relation to any reality whatever.” Yet, and here I may depart from Baudrillard, it does immense violence to reality in offering hallucinatory solutions to actual problems.¹⁰⁷

Cheyfitz marks Disinformation as the end of ideology of the American Dream and American exceptionalism, beginning in the mid-1970s when financial growth replaces actual growth. Disinformation is a deeply embedded belief structure, and is distinct from misinformation, which is simply false information being circulated and taken as truth. As Cheyfitz follows, “For liberal democracy is dependent for its existence on the *promise* of increasing prosperity for the majority of people... Disinformation functioned to distract public consciousness (as exemplified by major

¹⁰⁵ Panitch and Gindin 192

¹⁰⁶ Cheyfitz, Disinformation, 36

¹⁰⁷ Cheyfitz, 23

media) from the etiolation of this promise exemplified by a shrinking, indeed disappearing, middle-class.”¹⁰⁸ Self-Help, in this regard, is a Disinformation institution, maintaining the illusion and discourse, and importantly, the trust of the public, that it is working to end inequality, while in fact it is contributing to inequality’s rise.

Scholar Alvaro Reyes elaborates on Cheyfitz. Reyes states that Cheyfitz offers the important intervention that “the key contradiction at the center of our society” has been disappeared and “all the attempted solutions at the problems of that society are false solutions, are simulations.”¹⁰⁹ Reyes notes that for Cheyfitz, the class contradiction, the Marxist interpretation of the struggle of the proletariat against the capitalists, is the key contradiction, so that his Disinformation (I will capitalize Cheyfitz’ idea of Disinformation) is a disappearance of that class contradiction in society, which he argues, must be reintroduced in order to clarify the situation we are in.¹¹⁰ For Cheyfitz, this increasing gap between the classes is a result of the disproportionate distribution of resources and the surplus benefits of capitalist production, an analysis that coincides with David Harvey’s right to the city framework used by many anti-gentrification activists.¹¹¹ The solution then, for both Cheyfitz and Harvey, lies in the redistribution of this surplus wealth that is currently being absorbed and reinvested by the capitalists to produce more wealth for them – the central contradiction is the class contradiction.¹¹² As Cheyfitz writes:

But this U.S. ideology of Self-Reliance (anyone can make it in America with hard work) is now Disinformation if we realize the way wealth is distributed in the U.S. today, where, as of 2004, “[i]n terms of financial wealth (total net worth minus the value of one’s home), the top 1% of households had . . . [a] 42.2%” share (Domhoff, “Wealth, Income, and Power”), a figure that is only increasing. Where once this narrative of Puritan self-discipline had some efficacy in the world, at least for white men, it has no potency in a world of formal Constitutional equality, but where 85% of the wealth is concentrated in 20% of the population. Yet this credo of Self-Reliance remains part of the national exceptionalist narrative that continues to deny the barriers of class (and its intersection with race and gender) and in doing so helps buttress an increasingly destructive status quo.¹¹³

For Cheyfitz, the increasing inequality between the poor and the wealthy has been removed from our thinking and analysis of the world, and has made us unable to think. Reyes adds a key

¹⁰⁸ Cheyfitz 7.

¹⁰⁹ Reyes, April 1, Catastrophe lecture part 1, discussing Cheyfitz (~53:00)

¹¹⁰ Cheyfitz and Reyes

¹¹¹ Reyes April 1 lecture, ~1:00; Right to the City:

¹¹² Cheyfitz, 221

¹¹³ Cheyfitz 40

supplement to this theory: “As an objective condition we are all structured as a society to fall into disinformation, to be at its behest. It's not the powerful doing it to the less powerful... It's the structure of our thought process, it is not a manipulation, it does not even have an intention of protecting a class, corporate interest, etc.”¹¹⁴ Thus, Cheyfitz accounts for the lack of thinking and provides an important theoretical tool for understanding why solutions are constantly provided that do not actually provide solutions, but only more wealth for the wealthy.¹¹⁵ The limitation of this analysis however, is that it does not take into account the failure to recognize and account for the larger crisis of capitalism.¹¹⁶

Reyes' intervention adds the analysis that the fact that there is in fact no growth happening – there is speculative false growth based on credit and finance that came to dominate the structure of capitalism with the rise of neoliberalism, as discussed by Cheyfitz – has made Disinformation:

...The chasm between the impossibility of capitalist growth and any understanding of the internal contradictions of capital. All the theories that attempt to explain the lack of benefits from that growth, including that of class, are exactly the origins of the era of disinformation. So Cheyfitz says that it is class that's at fault for people not benefiting from American exceptionalism and I'm saying that is already part of disinformation because disinformation is actually the incapacity to recognize that there is no capitalist growth. So the Right wing version of this is we need austerity because austerity helps us grow, the Left wing version of this is we don't benefit from growth because of the disappearance of the language of class. My theory is that there are no benefits because there is no growth and that therefore disinformation begins when we are not capable of seeing that. So our era of disinformation, the loss of coordinates is exactly because we can't recognize that lack of growth, we continue to internalize the absolute permanence of capitalist growth as completely natural and permanent.¹¹⁷

This alters the concept of disinformation to mean not a *manipulation* of our thought processes to believe that reality is one way (there is a possibility of economic prosperity) when it is in fact another (there is no prosperity, only increasing inequality); but instead that disinformation *is* the “structure of our thought process” so that “there is no growth to be redistributed, and that is the point of the rise of disinformation.”¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ Reyes, April 1

¹¹⁵ He uses the examples of the Affordable Care Act, of WMD in Iraq, of

¹¹⁶ El Kilombo, the EZLN, and scholars such as Kurz, Streeck, Postone, Reyes, and more recently, even more mainstream economists such as Richard Wolff; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OIAYLYqUPB0>

¹¹⁷ Reyes, April 15 lecture

¹¹⁸ Reyes April 1 lecture ~1:05

The historical moment of the change to a lack of growth began in the 1970s, “when the left internalizes that naturalization of capitalist growth and internalizes the evilness of systemic analysis.”¹¹⁹ At this point, we also see the rise of cultural studies and identity politics that seek to redistribute wealth for all of the groups from whom labor and wealth have been extracted from, and who have been left out of receiving the surplus rewards of capitalism.¹²⁰ In the face of extreme inequality, racism, sexism, and anti-gay oppression, and the rise in higher education, the rise in attention to identity politics on the left was not without just cause.

Unfortunately, beginning at the same time as Reyes discusses, there are in fact no more rewards, so just as the struggles for sharing the “resource pie”¹²¹ are organizing, there is nothing left to struggle for within the distributive system of capitalism. And critiques of the system itself are relegated to overly deterministic analyses that do not take race, gender, and class seriously enough for not arguing for the rights of specific groups to have opportunity and access to the menu of the American Dream: education, work, housing, and credit. It is clear how Self-Help, then, beginning in the 1980s, can use this discourse and appear to be struggling for radical redistributive goals while it is actually advancing disinformation – both the idea that there is growth happening at all, and the idea that access to credit and the means of wealth accumulation (home ownership, education) are viable means to economic stability when stability does not exist. Further, its operations are housed in the disinformation of the role of the state in this process. Where it appears the state has grown its project of austerity by subjective will, it has actually done so because there is no other option. It does not put resource into public welfare and development, it offers financing to the owners of finance – in this case study, banks, corporations, developers, Self-Help – to continue the myth that there is growth happening. In the face of a lack of growth the structure of disinformation, is such that thinking, in this period, is stuck in this confusion of seeing that there is no growth but still believing that there is growth, because of all of the brutal mechanisms we have developed to keep it appearing that way. Even the wealth of Duke University, who finances Self-Help to do much of the development it does in the city, while in

¹¹⁹ Reyes part 2 April 1, 8:00.

¹²⁰ Reyes

¹²¹ Reyes part 2 April 1

control of a mass amount of capital, is *growing* only in appearance, through the speculative economy of student debt, investment, and real estate development.¹²²

Moreover, while Cheyfitz accounts for the discursive power of Disinformation in restricting our critical thinking, his analysis stays at this level of discourse: “*The Disinformation Age* studies the disconnect between political language and political reality in the United States in the post-Great Recession era of social, political, economic, and environmental crisis.”¹²³ But, there is also a disconnect between perceived political reality and political reality – what is happening at the level of urban revitalization programs by nonprofit institutions is functioning as if it is growth and as if it is benevolent, receiving support from banks and finance, the government, and the activist left. This study of Self-Help shows that is an institution of disinformation – its influence is grounded in both language and material reality; in communications and in historical materialism. Thus, throughout this study, when I reference “pro-growth development,” I speak of the intention of pro-growth; the strategy of the government, private developers, banks, corporations, and business owners to increase wealth where there is no possibility to actually do so. The concept of pro-growth is disinformation itself, and it is no coincidence that it developed when growth actually stopped, and when disinformation became the dominant structure of thinking, or stoppages in thinking, about politics and capitalism. Both the idea of self-help and the institution Self-Help are at the center of disinformation.

1.3.2 Self-Help As Disinformation

As the case studies in Chapter 3 will show, Self-Help is disinformation, an institution that promotes disinformation, and an effective manager of disinformation. With its reputation of having the well-being of citizens in mind, as opposed to predatory banks and private developers with profits in mind, it is able to grow and defeat private developers in bids from the city, receive large investments from individuals and corporations seeking to invest in socially responsible banking institutions, and be trusted as acting in the best interest for all residents of a community (even if there are competing interests). Significantly, it is able to shepherd a necessary stream of public

¹²² Streeck, <https://newleftreview.org/II/71/wolfgang-streeck-the-crises-of-democratic-capitalism>

¹²³ Cheyfitz, 8

funding to make small business loans and large development projects financially viable. It does this by serving as the required institutional community partner to receive federal grants and tax credits for projects with public and private stakeholders, receiving the federal funds designated for affordable housing, community development, urban revitalization, and local small businesses. Marked as successful when they bring in individual and corporate private investment, these projects attract wealthier buyers and superficially lower poverty rates because poor residents are displaced due to forced evictions and increases in rent.¹²⁴

Discursive strategies are employed that do not reference the lived situation in Durham or elsewhere, but reference past or present ideologies that no longer have material basis. Instead, they serve to propel the imaginary pro-growth agendas in cities while speaking to an imaginary of progressivism attached to post-Civil Rights struggles beginning in the 1970s. Thus, at every ribbon-cutting ceremony, in every interview, in every piece of media – what I will explain below as *development media* – the attention that new development are given are not about their prime speculative value or ideal desired location. Instead, Self-Help and other stakeholders focus on six key topics in discussing new real estate developments:

1. The institutional partnerships required to make the projects viable;
2. The promise of jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities for all;
3. The backing of the local community for the project;
4. The importance of and government attention to affordable housing;
5. Honoring and invoking the neighborhood's history as a model for the future; and
6. Durham's current momentum for propelling into a prosperous and diverse future.

These themes are a direct answer to gentrification, a critique of urban development that has been subsumed by the very processes it critiques, and will continue to show up throughout the study.

These discursive strategies reference actual material mechanisms for pro-growth development to occur while appearing to serve the interests of the entire city. These finance-generating mechanisms are:

1. Grants and loans from Duke University, foundations, and shared institutional executive boards and individuals common to public and private enterprises;
2. Public economic incentives to businesses, and private angel investors;
3. Public debt acquired without public approval using Certificates of Participation and nonprofit tax abatements;
4. HUD funds and low-income tax credits directed towards developers, not residents;

¹²⁴ Matthew Desmond, *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*, First Edition (New York: Crown Publishers, 2016).

5. Historic Tax Credits
6. New Markets Tax Credits.

In return, the material strategy serves the rhetorical strategy. Self-Help is key in the functioning of this mechanism, and helps to maintain two illusions. First, that these projects are successful, no matter how far away they are from meeting the goals of poverty reduction that are the conditions of possibility for receiving the public funds in the first place; and second, that the government is properly functioning for the best interest of those in need in urban areas.

In October 2017, historian Howard E. Covington published a thorough celebratory case study of the Center for Community Self-Help. It is a useful history of the institution, however without any attempt to understand the broader contradictions and implications of Self-Help's work.¹²⁵ As one local review of the book writes, "Most nonprofit founders, Covington says, 'fail to learn as they work and eventually come to a dead-end. Self-Help adjusted to meet reality' – and, in doing so, has transformed it."¹²⁶ This dissertation is a case study of the way that Self-Help leverages discursive strategies to keep illusions standing in as reality, and leverages realities to keep structural positions in place – indeed transforming reality through disinformation.

1.4 Methods and Theory

1.4.1 Development Media

1.4.1.1 Development Media as Data

This resource is fundamentally a study of the rhetoric and discourse of the city's urban development regime. While either a traditional rhetorical¹²⁷ or discourse analysis¹²⁸ would provide fruitful findings to answer a related research question, these methods alone would not allow me to study the institution of Self-Help and the discursive machine enabling its work. To gather my data, I conducted a five-year ethnography of Durham's redevelopment, eventually focusing on Self-

¹²⁵ Howard E. Covington, *Lending Power: How the Self-Help Credit Union Turned Small-Time Loans into Big-Time Change* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017).

¹²⁶ Stephen Martin and Christopher Gergen, "This Nonprofit Started with a Bake Sale. It Now Has Assets of Nearly \$2B.," *The Herald-Sun*, October 22, 2017, <http://www.heraldsun.com/news/business/article180280176.html>.

¹²⁷ Jamieson, *Eloquence in an Electronic Age*.

¹²⁸ Carpentier Nico Carpentier and Benjamin De Cleen, "Bringing Discourse Theory into Media Studies: The Applicability of Discourse Theoretical Analysis (DTA) for the Study of Media Practises and Discourses," *Journal of Language and Politics* 6, no. 2 (2007): 265–93, <https://doi.org/10.1075/jlp.6.2.08car>.

Help because it became clear that they held an important role in the widespread and growing processes of transformation across the entire city and yet there was a near total lack of research about the institution or understanding of its uniqueness and relevance in the city's gentrification. I innovated a framework for analysis that I term, "development media," to interrogate the history and discursive field of rent-intensifying development. What I call "development media" are media which support pro-growth, rent-intensifying development including: policy documents, city council proceedings, news and editorials, urban planning literature, city master plans, interviews and oral histories, social media, building design and structure, public figures, and the interactions among "development media." While all of the development taking place is pro-growth development, not all of development media is presented as promoting pro-growth. I categorize that which supports the pro-growth agenda, whether it intends to or not, as development media, as a key methodological choice to show how even the critique of pro-growth development is working to further that agenda. When I began this study, I set the criteria for development media as that media which is producing and reproducing ideologies about how and why development can and should occur in the city, allowing me to view these media together in order to interrogate how and why the present public and private reinvestment in Durham is happening.

Eric Cheyfitz' concept of Disinformation helps me to refine the definition of development media slightly, highlighting the pretense and impossibility of pro-growth development which ultimately fails to be anything other than wealth accumulation for a few: that which is producing and reproducing disinformation (ideology without referents) about how and why development can and should occur in the city. This study of the development media of the city does not aim to prove or disprove Cheyfitz' concept. Rather, I hope to intervene and expand upon the concept as one theoretical hinge for opening the understanding of the institutional management of urban development. In other words, development media in Durham is disinformation media – it supports and encourages pro-growth development by promoting the idea that this development is possible on equitable grounds while never grappling with the ways that development is made possible only by the existence of that inequality. As such, development media authorizes and promotes the continuation of that development, working to effectively influence and transform the city. I

developed this framework in order for it to be reproduced in other interdisciplinary studies, of cities, organizations, or any landscape that is being represented widely through various forms of media. Through this ethnographic study, I was able to innovate a communications-based method of studying cities and media in cities. In the present moment of disinformation regarding politics and capitalism, theorizing a new methodology is one way to understand the contradictions between what is presented as assumed reality, and what is actually being experienced as reality.

1.4.1.2 Sources of Development Media

Over the course of five years, I collected development media from the sources I describe below. Specifically regarding Self-Help and Durham's wider development landscape, these sources were recorded (audio, video, or both) in formal interviews and more informal, shorter discussions with: Self-Help's project managers, Self-Help's directors, Duke administrators who hired and worked with Self-Help, residents and former residents in neighborhoods where Self-Help worked, architects and other contractors working with Self-Help, business owners and employees of businesses receiving Self-Help loans or working on Self-Help-owned projects, City Council members, and other City employees in the following departments: Neighborhood Improvement Services, Planning, Community Development, Economic and Workforce Development, Parks and Recreation, and Inspections. Additionally, I collected and analyzed the literature produced by Self-Help, videos, reports, applications, public testimonies, speeches, policy memos, to fully understand their goals, strategies, public image, and theories of equity and development. I also attended over sixty public event including ribbon cutting ceremonies, street festivals, planning charettes, neighborhood association and PAC meetings, city council meetings and work sessions, "Third Friday" art walks, library panels, book talks, public information sessions for new developments, Duke events about Durham's development, fundraisers, and art and culture events related to urban development or community building. I did close readings of the following web-based or print-based media sources: Durham Magazine, Independent Weekly/ Indy Week / Indyweek.com, the Durham Herald Sun, the Raleigh News and Observer, the Triangle Business Journal, DurhamNC.Gov, Inside City Hall on youtube.com, various Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts, Duke Magazine, the Duke Chronicle, and Duke News.

1.4.1.3 Ethnography of Development Media

I study this development media with ethnographic research methods, and offer an intervention to the potential research directions of media ethnography. This growing transdisciplinary field takes media as its subject, its tool, its method, or a combination of the three. In the late 1990s, media ethnography began redefining itself with ethnographies of the internet,¹²⁹ gaming,¹³⁰ social media, and many published methodologically reflexive articles about the new ethnographic process of collecting research on the internet, about the internet, and on subjects who are interacting with each other and the research on the internet.¹³¹ I use sources from the internet and study the representation of ideas in various media, and contribute to media ethnography by offering this trans- and interdisciplinary method of how to study idea formation and discourse in a multimedia environment, where the real and virtual intersect and require parsing and study both as platforms and as meaning.

Anthropologist John L. Jackson Jr.'s ethnography of race, space, and identity in New York, and intervention into an area dominated by sociologists, *Harlemworld*, has been distinctly influential in framing my study. Examining Harlem when it was undergoing rapid rent intensification in the late 1990s, Jackson's study what he later called a "racioscape" informs my conception of a sort of "gentrification-scape" that is produced through development media in Durham.¹³² Jackson writes of his ethnography of the "racioscape," which "to think" it, is to:

...Imagine an engagement with what is usually left over from (and left out of) academic theories of racial essentialism and social constructedness. It is ethnography of the fake, the simulated, the counterfeit, if only insofar as such a predilection helps us peek through reality's opened back doors.¹³³

This "-scape" ethnography is perhaps what Jackson later arrives at as "thin description," an attempt at drawing out *what is there* from recordings – ethnographer's notes, photographs, videos, impressions, drawings – and placing them loosely in a structure of meaning that we can use to begin to make sense of *what is there*.

¹²⁹ Miller and Slater 2001; Boellstorff 2008,

¹³⁰ Boellstorff, etc

¹³¹ Jackson, Thin Description; Taussig I Swear I Saw This 2011; Cerwonka 2007; Fortun; Boellstorff, Nardi, Pearce, and Taylor, Ethnography Worlds: A Handbook of Method 2012.

¹³² John L. Jackson, *Harlem World: Doing Race and Class in Contemporary Black America* (Chicago, Ill.; London: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Jackson, *Real Black*.

¹³³ Jackson, *Real Black*., 59

If “-scape” ethnography is a method for the fake, then to study the changes in cities, I conducted an ethnography of the gentrification-scape, and did so primarily through video recording. The camera, as Barthes theorized, takes photographs that always refer to an event that could never be repeated, and objectifies what it mechanically reproduces.¹³⁴ (*Camera Lucida*). The field of discourse around development in cities is one piece of the gentrification scape. Integral to this is the development of the history and political and cultural economies that can perhaps lead to a backdoor of re-imagining gentrification, or solidifying the realities that lead to its existence. Below, I expand on the concepts of “ideas” and “discourse” in studying the city through an American Political Development framework.

1.4.2 Spiral Of Politics and Collective Memory

In order to unpack the history of urban development in Durham leading to the current neoliberal moment, and to track how the idea of self help became an influential fixture in local politics, I use Rogers Smith’s framework of idea formation from the spiral of politics model in American Political Development.¹³⁵ American Political Development can be seen as the history of political science, or historical political development. Political Scientist Rogers Smith calls his framework for American institution building “the spiral of politics” and indicates six stages that lead to political development, that occur in cycles, and overlap and reintroduce themselves – the spiral is directional and not cyclical, because politics are always developing and changing.¹³⁶ This framework is productive for understanding the relationship between ideas and institution-building, specifically how the pro-growth politics of the city became the only option on the table in formal urban politics, and increasingly, even in grassroots and politically left urban movements. I study the institutional formation in three ways: the development of the institution of self-help as an idea, the actual use of that idea in the Self-Help Credit Union as an economic and political institution, and the building of the institution Self-Help as developer and the shifting paradigm of the incorporation of the critiques of gentrification subsumed into the process of gentrification. At the

¹³⁴ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, Pbk. ed (New York: Hill and Wang, 2010).

¹³⁵ Rogers M. Smith, “Ideas and the Spiral of Politics: The Place of American Political Thought in American Political Development,” *American Political Thought* 3, no. 1 (March 2014): 126–36, <https://doi.org/10.1086/675651>.

¹³⁶ Smith.

last level, the spiral is a useful framework for examining the institution of Self-Help. Moving through the six stages, I will begin with the (I) context in which Self-Help was founded; (II) the formation of its ideas – including both that economic inequalities and injustices are best solved by supporting individual home and small business ownership, that capitalism can be made fair, and that supporting what it considers local businesses and nonprofits is the best path for the city; (III) the formation of alliances with community groups, universities, and other actors and competing coalitions and organizations for competition over resources and political power; (IV) Self-Help's actual capture of those resources and partnerships with the city and Federal government; (V) the modification of contexts from what they were in the first stage, and (VI) the new ideas that are generated from this change in context. In the preceding section, the current context of disinformation, the critique of gentrification leading gentrification efforts, the discourse of benevolent development that is currently at work in the city, and how the concept of self-help came to be associated with the reduction of poverty while poverty and inequality in the city is on the rise, is an example of the modification of context that finds itself in Stages V and VI. The cyclical framework shapes how in the present moment, Self-Help's work is modifying the economic situation and political context of the city, and the imagined possibilities of what an organization of a city could look like. Moreover, on a smaller and more particular scale, this framework helps to conceptualize how Self-Help began as a credit union and moved into the practice of urban development.

Smith's distinction between discourse and ideas is of relevance in how I engage with communications methods of understanding idea formation, media effects, and discourse analysis and supports my coding of data as development media. Smith defines ideas as "discernible visible and audible expressions of human conceptions, always analyzed through fallible processes of interpretation" whereas discourses are more specifically assigned systems of ideas and communication.¹³⁷ Ideas are communicated in and through development media, and these ideas hook discourses of pro-growth development, within this present moment of disinformation, grounded in the discourse of the American dream and self-help narrative is the dominant mode of

¹³⁷ Smith 131

understanding. Development media, as I define it, supports and reproduces the discourse of the pro-growth agenda, but within development media are several different ideas and discourses, including self-help. This helps in understanding how contradictory ideas, that gentrification is harmful to communities and encourages unaffordability, and that gentrification is a boon to everyone in the city – are used within the same discourse for the same ends.

Self-help is both an idea and a discourse. The idea has been present explicitly in American politics since the mid-1800s, as a way of encouraging immigrants to work their way up to success, indistinguishable from the American Dream narrative, though perhaps always with the ability to translate outside of the United States to other contexts.¹³⁸ It is an idea in that it is more widely used than just in the discourse of economic uplift, such as its use for self-help healing; and in variations of how it is understood as a method towards economic stability. The various ideas of self-help have thus become discourses that are used to enact policy and political developments – financial literacy and personal finance planning, home ownership, responsible borrowing, the American Dream, black capitalism, and community self-help; and institutions – such as the Self-Help Credit Union and its various components under the umbrella of the Community for Self-Help. The idea of self-help is often equated discursively with the idea of self-determination, and is frequently confused with this more radical concept, originating from global and domestic anticolonial movements for self-determination.¹³⁹

But with institutional support over time, these ideas of self-help have developed into discourses – systems of communicating, such as the discourse of pro-growth development that development media supports and reproduces. Thus, I am interested in the discourse of self-help that has developed as a dominating organizing system for urban development in Durham, rooted in the coming together of various ideas of self-help that I unpack through the political historical method of the spiral of politics in American Political Development. This unpacking of the ideas and discourses of self-help includes black self-help movements over the past century and a half, from slavery and the origins of segregation, to the growth of the black middle class and black

¹³⁸ This is important in looking at the spread of the discourse of self-help throughout the world in microcredit, charter schools, and other market-based approaches to economic stability.

¹³⁹ Ferguson, *Top down*. See, Chapter 2 in particular.

capitalism in Durham; from urban renewal to urban divestment; and leading to the reinvestment and displacement in these disinvested areas today, with the aid of the formal institution Self-Help. This discourse aids and abets the discourse of pro-growth development, while in a context of disinformation – the end of the actual possibility of the promises of the American Dream. As per Cheyfitz, we are left with only ideas and discourses without an actual referent, thus the distinction between ideology and disinformation.

These ideas of self-help have dominated global shifts towards neoliberalism over the second half of the century, in international development and aid policies, in the reduction of welfare, in urban pro-growth strategies, in federal housing policy, and, generally, as represented in a shift towards individual responsibility for welfare. This discourse of self-help serves to undermine the reality of increasingly inequality in the city, and that the so-called “self-help” being promoted is an agenda of personal responsibility with collectivized public risk – such as the public debt in urban development projects - and is never actually, this idea of “self-help.”

The basic idea of self-help and the imaginary that rent-intensifying, pro-growth policies are beneficial to poor communities is not new; what is new is its current institutional operationalization in the city. As Smith states, “The framework signals, although it does not take as given, that the stage of formulating and expressing ideas may matter as much or more as many others... scholars of ideas must make the case empirically that the ideas they study are significantly new and that they can credibly be seen as having consequences.”¹⁴⁰ In as much as this dissertation is an interpretative study of both the idea of self-help and the idea of a pro-growth yet benevolent development, it is a study of an institution that is constituted by these ideas and influencing their interpretation in the city, and how the ideas behind these words are new, but are being used discursively to appear to fulfill unfilled radical demands of decades past. This is through the various discourses gathered as development media, such as the communications that Self-Help produces, public discussions of urban development in Durham, news media, and interviews with key stakeholders. It also influences the work of those intending to end inequalities in limiting their imagination. In recent decades, the work of nonprofit institutions has come to

¹⁴⁰ Smith, 2014: 134.

discursively stand in for what historically was the work of struggles for self-determination and economic and social justice. Several critical studies of the “nonprofit industrial complex” and several non-critical studies of micro-credit and social entrepreneurship outline, from divergent sides, the various ways that nonprofits effectively collaborate with businesses and government in neoliberal policy making.¹⁴¹ While there are several plans for action for developing neoliberal policies for urban development, there is a smaller amount of critical scholarship on the role of nonprofits in neoliberal place making.¹⁴²

This study follows in the lineage of the work of political scientist John Arena writing of how nonprofits destroyed public housing in New Orleans, and historian Karen Ferguson, writing of the work of the Ford Foundation in sponsoring and undermining black liberation struggles and presents a mirror to the humanitarian development world looking to microcredit-based financial solutions to solve inequalities. American Political Development offers a method for bridging history and political science. As Self-Help shares many of the same ideals as international micro-finance institutions and applies them to the US, and several of its employees including its Executive Director have worked in those fields, this study, while focusing on the role of Self-Help as urban developer, will still offer a critical take on the direction of nonprofit models of development and growth. This direction of nonprofit management of inequality can be seen as one possible next stage scenario of the spiral of politics. In my conclusion, I offer ideas from what may be a different way forward in idea and institution formation that I have been able to learn from seminars and work with El Kilombo.

¹⁴¹ The term “non profit industrial complex” to my knowledge was first named by INCITE! at a conference they organized in 2004 called “Beyond the Non Profit Industrial Complex.” They quoted Ella Baker as stating in 1963, “I’m very much afraid of this ‘Foundation Complex.’ We’re getting praise from places that worry me.” See also, a special issue of *The Scholar and Feminist Online* (13.2, Spring 2015), and discussing INCITE and other efforts to critique and understand the nonprofit industrial complex, eds Soniya Munshi and Craig Willse, with a collection of essays from the past ten years about the role of the nonprofit in mediating relationships between the state and communities in struggle, organized and not. There are several other studies and political references to the role of nonprofits in perpetuating neoliberal policies, such as Evo Morales’ 2012 accusations that the US was using its NGOs to spy on Latin America (<http://www.wrongkindofgreen.org/tag/nonprofit-industrial-complex/page/4/>); *Fatal Assistance*, a 2013 documentary film directed by Raoul Peck about the destructive role of nonprofits including the Clinton’s foundation in post-earthquake Haiti; Karen Ford’s 2013 history and analysis of the Ford Foundation *Top Down: The Ford Foundation, Black Power, and the Reinvention of Racial Liberalism*, investigates these relationships through a study of one of the largest and most influential foundations, and serves as a model for my own study.

¹⁴² John Arena, *Driven from New Orleans: How Nonprofits Betray Public Housing and Promote Privatization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012); Ferguson, *Top Down*.

I incorporate theories from collective memory studies, in particular Barbie Zelizer's intervention into collective memory studies as a process of remembering history, in order to fully make use of the historiographic functions of the spiral of politics model.¹⁴³ The process of remembering a history of self help and self determination in Durham is an ongoing transformation that involves various ways of remembering and memorializing in Durham, processes that have built institutions and provided the necessary collective importance to bring in capital that has made various rent-intensifying projects possible in Durham. I employ American Political Development and collective memory in Chapter 2 in order to trace the development of the idea of self help in Durham, leading to its present life as an idea with discursive and financial value, particularly as part of a neoliberal economy of responsabilization.¹⁴⁴

1.4.3 Interdisciplinary Urban Studies

In urban studies, different cities can be used to show the major themes of urban development over the course of last two centuries. I will draw on all of these studies throughout this chapter to underline the various steps in urban development contributing to the consistent rise of inequality, alongside the consistent rise of reforms that were meant to bridge this divide. Cronin's *Nature's Metropolis* emphasizes the way that Chicago was used as a central site of exchange for the massive razing of the land as the country began industrializing. Satter's *Family Properties* tells a different, more recent history of redlining and segregation in the real estate business and local government in Chicago between 1940 and 1970. Self's *American Babylon* looks to Oakland to re-orient our history to include the central role of black liberation struggles in shaping cities and suburbs during a time otherwise often presented from a perspective of the agency of middle class white families, or white flight. Davis' *City of Quartz* retells the history of black organizing and its dialectical relationship to the sprawling development of Los Angeles. Cowie's *Capital Moves* takes us to Camden to see the way that the union organizing of the first half of the century accelerated the search for cheap and disorganized labor and moved industrial

¹⁴³ Barbie Zelizer, "Reading the Past Against the Grain: The Shape of Memory Studies," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 12, no. 2 (June 1995): 214–39; Ghassan Hage, "Migration, Good, Memory, and Home Building," in *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates*, ed. Susannah Radstone and Bill Schwarz (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), 416–27.

¹⁴⁴ Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (New York: Zone Books, 2015).

production out of the US and into unregulated overseas markets; and in turn accelerated the decline of formerly booming American industrial cities. Sugrue studies Detroit's rise and fall in *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*, emphasizing the violent anti-black racism in the city, racism in policy and in union organizing, and industrial instability, in constructing the blight and urban decline of the second half of the century. Reed's *Stirrings in the Jug* uses Atlanta as a case study to depict how the struggle to put black leaders in political office was not an effective method of lessening inequalities and redistributing wealth to black communities due to the pressures and constraints of pro-development capitalism. More recently, Abbot's *Sunbelt Cities* uses the Midwest and South as a whole to show how racism and fights over resources between cities and suburban enclaves contributed to the rightward turn in urban politics in the cities in this region. Fure-Slocum's *Contesting the Postwar City* offers a case study of Milwaukee's working class organizing in the 1940s-60s in resisting pro-business, pro-growth development, often successful, but ultimately falling apart at the hands of deindustrialization and disinvestment. Desmond's recent *Evicted* is in some ways a sequel, showing how structural inequalities, structural racism, and the continuing double decline of the welfare state and American industry keep people poor and in unstable living conditions, drawing particular attention to the way that the promise of home ownership is no longer a viable reality for most of the country, and even single-family home rental has become a luxury in American cities. Smith's *Boom for Whom* studies the public school desegregation struggles in Charlotte to show how they contributed to further segregation in housing and neighborhoods, exacerbated inequalities, redlined political districts, and contributed to the decline of several black neighborhoods. John Arena's *Driven From New Orleans* begins to look critically at the new government social service structures and nonprofits working to construct low-income housing development model to offer a detailed critical assessment of activism and local politics to show that these groups are acting as if they are in the poor and working poor's interest but are in fact moving in the only direction they know, which is further pro-growth development.

All of these case studies by historians, ethnographers, sociologists and political scientists together show the various ways that capital moved through buildings and bodies and contributed

to the rise of neoliberalism through the politics, economy, and geography of American cities, by looking at the specific ways that the situation in each place contributed to the overall development of the political economy of the country, and the world. I work from communications in order to draw attention to the role of image-making and discourse in the current organization of politics and the economy globally, as made evident through this case study.

1.4.4 An intervention in Reflexivity in Ethnography and Gentrification¹⁴⁵

In the appropriation of postmodernism as a script for gentrification, 'postmodern urbanism' has for many passed into a vehicle for the radical re-centering of the subject on the author him- or herself. If decentering taught us that the author was in the world rather than somehow above it, and encouraged us to see the world in the author, a rather reactionary version of postmodernism flips the equation: 'we are the world.'... It seems to me that to the extent that gentrification research focuses on the so-called gentrifiers themselves—only ever a part of the equation—the discernment of this vision provides an excellent starting point.
 — Neil Smith, 1996¹⁴⁶

Neil Smith, theorizing on the limits of studying gentrification as a consumer-driven process, offered a critique of what in anthropology has been called the reflexive turn, and offered an early critique of scholars who focus on reflexively studying gentrifiers. Loïc Wacquant also called on researchers to study those being displaced by gentrification and stop studying the gentrifiers themselves.¹⁴⁷ Smith observed how postmodern and poststructuralist theory offered a way to view gentrification as a culturally-driven form of 'emancipatory politics' for the gentrifier, who is now often characterized as a person who grew up or raised a family in the suburbs, whose family a generation or two before may have moved out of the increasingly black and poor city and bought a home with the help of federally-backed mortgages and property values on the lucrative side of the color line. Armed with financial, educational, and social capital from the history of being white and being offered state resources, but now rejecting that suburban life created by their parents' generation, these archetypical gentrifiers see the city as where they can create whatever life they imagine, out of the perceived controlled monotony of the suburbs and into the

¹⁴⁵ This section is adapted from: Emily LaDue, "Visual Ethnography and the City: On the Dead Ends of Reflexivity and Gentrification," in *Innovative Methods in Media and Communication Research*, ed. Sebastian Kubitschko and Anne Kaun (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2016), 167–87, http://link.springer.com/10.1007/978-3-319-40700-5_9.

¹⁴⁶ Smith, *The New Urban Frontier*.

¹⁴⁷ Loïc Wacquant, "Three Steps to a Historical Anthropology of Actually Existing Neoliberalism: A HISTORICAL ANTHROPOLOGY OF ACTUALLY EXISTING NEOLIBERALISM," *Social Anthropology* 20, no. 1 (February 2012): 66–79, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-8676.2011.00189.x>.

risky, black, state-abandoned spaces of inner cities; the gentrifier builds herself as an adventuring pioneer facing the “wild wild west” of the inner city.¹⁴⁸

The language of the pioneer underlies most media about gentrification. Robert Blauner and Kenneth Clark theorized how inner cities resemble internal colonies, and it follows, in this case, that the gentrifiers sometimes see themselves as colonists did – bringing civilization to the uncivilized, exploring “new” “frontiers,” hiring current residents as a sign of benevolence, changing the value structure of property, building amenities that serve their interests, and profiting off the human, natural, and land resources—an historically imperial orientation.¹⁴⁹ In this framework, anthropology has a difficult role to negotiate with its history of studying colonized people and bringing that knowledge back to the colonizing country, an historical fact not unrelated to this reflexive turn in gentrification.

The freedom to reject the suburban life, posed as racist, judgmental, and old, gives both the gentrifier and the researcher the image of political intent and action through whatever individual action may be undertaken.¹⁵⁰ In Durham, opening Fullsteam brewery in a neighborhood with only Latino and Black families, is presented as localism-activism, and the owners as taking the risk of starting a business where they can afford to, despite its not-yet-popularity. Or the arts reuse supplier, the Scrap Exchange, seeking to transform an entire neighborhood through buying up a strip mall to put in “community-focused” and “arts-focused” businesses and organizations. The intentions and desires of the developers are presented in media, activism, and local political elections as the focus of what is important. This is the landscape in which Self-Help sets in motion and follows through on “neighborhood transformations” – and why I focus this study on understanding the context in which they grew, rather than on understanding the context in which I grew. The major institutions that are enabling this work to occur and funding it rely on a self-oriented, localism-as-activism critique of gentrification, and “revitalization” discourse. That discourse is ubiquitous, and a clear example of development media. I use this media to show how

¹⁴⁸ Smith, *The New Urban Frontier*.

¹⁴⁹ Robert Blauner, “Internal Colonialism and Ghetto Revolt,” *Society for the Study of Social Problems* 16, no. 4 (Spring 1969): 393–408; Kenneth Clark, *Dark Ghetto: Dilemmas of Social Power* (Wesleyan: Wesleyan University Press, 1965).

¹⁵⁰ Smith, *The New Urban Frontier*.

institutions, such as Self-Help in Durham, rely on the critique in order to do development work. But that it exists, and that we are enmeshed in producing and consuming it, is a fact.

In the move to the reflexive, several recent ethnographic studies about gentrification now urge a personal account of the researcher/gentrifier in the presentation of the study.¹⁵¹ These studies focus on both the role of the gentrifier and why gentrification occurs. Part of why the reflexive is necessary in completing this research, they argue, is because they are living as gentrifiers in gentrifying cities. Studying gentrification, how it has been studied, and its critiques both complicates our ideas of gentrification and enables us to better understand the processes of discourse formation and circulation and contributes to media studies and communication. The fact that we are engaged and enmeshed in the reproduction of capitalism may be a necessary reality to repeatedly process in our personal development, but if we are to move forward in both understanding and changing these structures, we must figure out what we are doing to reinforce this and what we can do to resist it. The reflexive orientation keeps us in a cycle of wondering why and how we are so enmeshed in our own reality, rather than asking what is in the way of changing that, or even understanding how gentrification actually works. As researchers, we should be asking, by looking at ourselves, are we preventing ourselves from looking at something else? What is it that reflexivity is allowing us to not look at? This question will emerge throughout the study in working through the idea of disinformation and how it shows up and is reinforced by development media.

As elaborated in the introduction, I began collecting this research as part of a film project organized by the community organization El Kilombo. In 2010, I began filming various events with and for El Kilombo (EK), a neighborhood-based community organization, social center, and research institution. As a product, the film project itself is distinct from this dissertation and instead remains a collective project with El Kilombo. As I began working more and more on the film with EK, it became clear that such a project would not be possible without my also participating in seminars, discussions, and reading literature produced by EK, to fully understand the positionality of the organization and what, how, and why they have learned in struggle.

¹⁵¹ Kelly Anderson, *My Brooklyn*, n.d.; Schlichtman, Hill, and Patch, *Gentrifier*.

At that time, EK was struggling over the use of a public neighborhood park, and the beginning of gentrification in the neighborhood where the social center operated for nine years before the organization's base was displaced and the social center priced out of the neighborhood.¹⁵² EK began enunciating the gentrification happening in Durham, and was publicly and privately attacked for doing so by Durham's progressive political class.¹⁵³ This dissertation emerges directly from that struggle. EK's neighborhood assembly was violently surveilled, and slowly and methodically displaced from the neighborhood as what became Durham's "DIY District" moved in, with the help of a charter school, a local developer, and a population of activists that considered the music venue and bars in the poor neighborhood an asset as a sign of Durham's diversity and grit. The presence of the poor black and brown community residing in what is now \$250/sq ft residential real estate was necessary for the investment to occur, and the dispossession of the population was necessary for it to continue. As El Kilombo articulates, this is because there is no longer any growth in the capitalist value system. El Kilombo's collective analysis is a foundational theoretical apparatus to understand the city. The task of parsing out this knowledge, and not subsuming it as my own, is and has been a necessary and fruitful methodological challenge in itself and underlines the need to critique and reinvent the way we as social scientists frame and use participatory research.

My justification for studying Self-Help in particular, and working towards a project that will provide the most useful information to organizations and researchers interested in understanding how rent-intensifying urban development is actually happening, and how many of its political alternatives are not alternatives at all, is based on experience and feedback with and from EK. In this dissertation, the theoretical intervention has been developed from a community working and studying in struggle, and not from my individual thinking. Nor is it from taking the ideas I have been observing or participating in a service-learning, critical observation, or extractivist relationship with El Kilombo. Using this information from seminars, discussions, and literature

¹⁵² El Kilombo, "The Beginning of the End, Or the End of the Beginning?"

¹⁵³ Durham Coalition for Urban Justice, *Old North Durham Park Meeting*; DCUJ, "Durham Coalition for Urban Justice."

produced by EK, they appear in this study as another source of knowledge and theory, and are cited throughout.

When we refer to gentrification, the acknowledgement that it is happening has come to stand in for the critique and pass for actual understanding of how gentrification is a particular manifestation of capitalism operating at this time. Much like the idea of reflexivity in ethnography, the concept of gentrification implies a discourse of critique, but only requires an observation that there is something or even just a notion that something uncomfortable is happening. How to 'study up' then, and interview the developers, planners, and officials who view the poor in the city as 'cockroaches' as one executive remarked in an interview, in need of scattering via lights being turned on? This is where researching from a position of political grounding is the most sincere and productive – how else to produce a useful ethnography if not from the honest position of a critique of the powerful interests at work? If this work is an ethnography of the 'gentrification-scape' – the field of discourse around development in Durham, through a study of a particular non-profit institution involved in development in the city, studying the discourses that give rise to actual value production requires a study of the discourses at work, including the reflexive discussions of gentrification.

In ethnographic practices, the focus on this decentering of the subject has led to a dramatic inward, individual focus of the researcher and her role in the research process. In this way, socially responsible consumerism is akin to socially responsible research. In politically oriented and social justice research, a potential for research appears when we are earnestly trying to address a lack of knowledge or understanding on a subject and shed light on or fix inequalities that we see around us. As researchers, at best, we can offer useful information and analysis about the world we live in and where it may be going. To push the cynical view, our work is dependent on the existence of suffering and inequality, and the academy allows us to study and critique this without an organized response to it. This may not be the world we asked for, but since it is the world we live in, we are also complicity partaking in a form of extractivism. The reflexive turn in ethnography provided, and provides, a way for ethnographers to account for inequalities in power, much like speaking of gentrification allows us to account for inequality

without compromising the structure that keeps it in place. I am not calling for a return to positivistic anthropology, nor am I calling for researchers to ignore their own positionality in their work. I am urging that instead of flagging their own position and its influence on the work, a more productive politics may be to incorporate a resulting analysis of this position into the research conducted in the first place.

Examining whether the work we do is being produced in common and for a community in resistance, or is being produced in common and used for academic debate is usually presented as murky territory, but can be effectively clarified. In 2012, Mara Kaufman, writing as part of El Kilombo, urged for a reorientation towards knowledge production and organization and away from the idea of bridging a gap between academia and activism regarding social change.¹⁵⁴ As Kaufman notes, producing ourselves for the market as academics ‘risks becoming the management function of this... self-managed human capital driven by cultural more than wage capital’ and in the activist sphere, the various activities undertaken by an individual become resume assets of how well one manages oneself.¹⁵⁵ Now, these activities and relationships with community organizations can be traded in as assets towards an academic future as well – working with community organizations, showing dedication to the political cause of the research, and declaring authentic intentions. As Kaufman writes,

The myth of leading one’s own life, or ‘being the leader of one’s own life,’¹⁵⁶ is built on a refusal of a process of subjectivation beyond our control, leading us back again to the illusion that holding progressive policy positions or making ourselves visible as participants in particular activities constitutes doing politics.¹⁵⁷

Moreover, it is far too easy to “mine” the communities we study: “individually extracting that great wealth of intelligence and innovation that serious, ongoing collective organization generates.”¹⁵⁸

Reflexivity in our work risks allowing for this mining while acknowledging that it may be

happening, and may turn back and even distract us from recognizing that it is happening at all.

The ethnographer is a person who finds most any experience interesting because any experience

¹⁵⁴ Mara Kaufman, “A Politics of Encounter: Knowledge and Organizing in Common,” *American Quarterly* 64, no. 4 (2012): 823–26, <https://doi.org/10.1353/aq.2012.0041>.

¹⁵⁵ Kaufman. Page 824.

¹⁵⁶ Judith Revel, “Resistances, Subjectivities, Common,” *Generation Online*, 2008, <http://generation-online.org/p/fprevel4.htm>.

¹⁵⁷ Kaufman, “A Politics of Encounter.” Page 826.

¹⁵⁸ Kaufman. Page 825.

can be studied. Unfortunately, with the university behind that person, that drive can have consequences of dispossession and destruction on a community or neighborhood. Or, the ethnographer can take and leave without much of a trace, and continue a career taking material and immaterial artifacts in the name of elite knowledge.

Beginning in the mid-90s, universities participated in reflexivity on large scales. They began spending thousands of dollars and committing faculty and student time to social entrepreneurship and community engagement, while encouraging and rewarding it in admissions and other promotions. Community service centers, service learning, and documentary projects abound at top research universities. At the two universities I have attended, for example, Duke University in Durham, NC and the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, the community service centers were developed as part of an effort to improve the public image of the universities and the cities where they are located. A required component of these experiential programs are student reflections, often in the form of blog posts and 'letters home,' discussing what they are learning and how what they are learning is changing them. These programs add authenticity, intention, and value to the lives of university students and researchers, while making claims to benefit surrounding communities deemed in need of such services. Services such as tutoring, ESL, and skills sharing can of course be of some benefit to those giving and receiving; however, in the larger context of the role of universities and their wide ranging corporate and non-profit collaborators, these programs may very likely do more work for the university than for those on the receiving end. As these shifts coincide directly with the retrenchment of state-provided welfare and education services, they can be viewed as integral to the generalized global move towards non-profit management of citizen welfare, a precarious level of care that is rooted in and dependent on unequal development. Current and former public relations officers and administrators at these institutions credit the reason for their development as improving the image of the university in the eyes of students and parents, as well as in the eyes of the cities where these universities operate.¹⁵⁹ The value of the positive image-making, the mined knowledge for

¹⁵⁹ Judith Rodin, *The University & Urban Revival: Out of the Ivory Tower and into the Streets*, The City in the Twenty-First Century (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007); Emily LaDue, *Interview with Tallman Trask III, Vice*

the students' erudition and meaningful lines on a resume, and the spaces of capital investment and securitization of property for the university is incomparable to hours of tutoring.

These efforts keep knowledge and power moving in one direction – from those lacking in basic services to the university itself and the students who are moving to increasingly the only available jobs, in NGO and development work. Susan Buck-Morss wrote of the influence of the Haitian revolution on Hegel's master-slave dialectic and his lack of acknowledgement of this influence.¹⁶⁰ The Enlightenment ideals of freedom and self-determination stem from slave rebellions, though they were put to use to violently distinguish white men from black men in terms of what made a human, and the Enlightenment thinkers are credited with these concepts. She notes that "this glaring discrepancy between thought and practice marked the period of the transformation of global capitalism from its mercantile to its proto-industrial form"¹⁶¹ which is key to understanding the role that the self-critical researcher is playing in this transformational moment of late capitalism. The discourse of community engagement and social justice is pervasive in the university as poverty worsens, ghettos are re-inscribed, and a liberal elite grows.

Thus, to claim a political orientation, and to transform these relationships, we must position and act ourselves with communities in struggle and study the world, as it is to understand what we are up against. In 1972, Laura Nader called on researchers to look at power with as discerning an eye as we look at those we see as having less power. In 'Up the Anthropologist: Perspectives Gained From *Studying Up*' she speaks to researchers who are wrestling with why we study what we do and where this information goes, with an assumed worldview that there are gross human inequalities that should be addressed and amended.¹⁶² There have been several informative ethnographies about bureaucracies, governments, and Wall Street, for example, the

President, Duke University, Digital Video and Audio (Allen Building, Duke University West Campus, Durham, NC, 2013); Emily LaDue, *Interview with John Burness*; Emily LaDue, *Interview with Scott Selig, Executive Vice President of Real Estate and Capital Assets, Duke University*, Digital Video and Audio (Duke University Offices, American Tobacco Campus, Durham, NC, 2013).

¹⁶⁰ Susan Buck-Morss, *Hegel, Haiti and Universal History*, Illuminations (Pittsburgh, Pa: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009).

¹⁶¹ Buck-Morss. Page 821.

¹⁶² Laura Nader, "Up the Anthropologist: Perspectives Gained From Studying Up."

work of Karen Ho, Melissa Fisher, and Caitlin Zaloom in studying finance institutions.¹⁶³ Nader's method of studying up forces us to reframe our questions about inequalities and shift the blame and burden to those wielding power instead of those surviving in the face of disempowerment. It seems that we need to also figure out what that process of education can be in order to be effective, and what worlds we are a part of and trusted by. In order to do something with this knowledge, there must be a certain existing level of organization and strategy on those we imagine to be receiving this knowledge. El Kilombo's insistence on orienting ourselves towards knowledge production and organization rather than academia and activism is one step out (Kaufman 2012). In order to demonstrate how the critique of gentrification has been fully incorporated into the processes of gentrification, this is just as much a study about the institutional relationships that enable gentrification to occur as it is a reevaluation of participatory research. We cannot take on the political without doing politics, without coming to terms with the actual state of rhetoric and communication among political actors, the public, or even what that means, today.

1.4.5 El Kilombo's Crisis Analysis

For us, gentrification is not the underlying problem. Rather, "gentrification" is the name for the effects of a far broader problem—capitalism is in trouble.... We need to inundate every neighborhood and city in this country with centers for collective study and self-organization so that we might begin to produce the knowledge and ways of living necessary to find our way out of this mess. – El Kilombo, September 2015¹⁶⁴

Gentrification has created "a mess," and as El Kilombo has stated, it is up to us to figure out how to get out of this mess. As mentioned, the most significant portion of the theoretical basis of this study has been developed over the course of fifteen years by El Kilombo, and the following is credited entirely to their collective analysis. In their organizing for self-determined institutions in the city of Durham, they have come to a clear understanding of the city as a key location for the attempt to make growth happen when growth is impossible. Marxists such as David Harvey rest their analysis of urban development on the idea that the city is constantly producing a surplus that

¹⁶³ Karen Zouwen Ho, *Liquidated: An Ethnography of Wall Street* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009); Melissa S. Fisher, *Wall Street Women* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012); Caitlin Zaloom, *Out of the Pits: Traders and Technology from Chicago to London* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

¹⁶⁴ El Kilombo, "The Beginning of the End, Or the End of the Beginning?"

capitalists must re-invest in order to make a profit. There is always a surplus, always an over-accumulation of profit so that now, there is too much and no where to invest it, and therefore no way to make more profit.¹⁶⁵ Another way to understand this lack of growth is as the problem of the falling rate of profit, understood as the law that profit is harder and harder to generate as less and less labor is needed to produce more and more commodities. This can be seen as part of the development of neoliberalism – as it became harder for capitalists to make a profit, they moved to markets where they could extract more labor out of workers, in other words, exploit them more than in US cities that began to have regulations due to worker organizing.

These analyses however, as El Kilombo elucidates, are two sides of the same coin, that only look at the fetishistic aspect of capitalism – profit – and not the changing relation of value itself. They are immediate manifestations of a wider, long term crisis of value, of the underproduction of value. The growth that is occurring in cities is just the speculation on a future growth of money, or as Robert Kurz writes, a “vampire on the future.”¹⁶⁶ There is less and less actual value being created today, because less and less labor is productive; we have unproductive labor that is producing services, rents, and generating more and more fictitious capital that is not actually producing a commodity with use value, only a commodity or idea or desire that may produce more fictitious capital.

At this stage, labor, and the humans who labor, become less and less needed to produce this speculative value, and the gap between the rich and the poor ruptures at an accelerating pace. Making profits is dependent upon one’s ability to speculate on anything and everything, including what were public services and institutions, such as schools, utilities, parks, and water. As we witness and experience the privatization of these services, we also witness the increase in inequality, desperation, and the reactionary militarization and policing of populations that are being squeezed and threatened. Anything, including the idea of equality and justice themselves, can now be speculated on. Meanwhile, the state, which still has some actual capital in its reserves, rather than investing this in people and services, is investing it in the speculative

¹⁶⁵ El Kilombo, “Value Seminar” (Durham, NC, December 20, 2014). Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, trans. David Fernbach, vol. III, III vols. (New York: Penguin Classics, 1981).

¹⁶⁶ Robert Kurz, “The Apotheosis of Money: The Structural Limits of Capital Valorization, Casino Capitalism and the Global Financial Crisis,” *Libcom*, January 26, 2012.

activities that private enterprises are using to maintain the growth of profits – real estate and policing. In every city in the United States, these are the two biggest budget items. Most of the investment itself however, comes from public debt incurred as speculative growth over several decades.

So if there is no growth, how is it that the pro-growth agenda is the only agenda of cities? Gentrification is one of the mutterings from the last dying breaths of capitalism, and the subsumption of the gentrification critique into the pro-growth agenda is an oxygen mask. And, if gentrification is one face of capitalism, or as the Zapatistas refer to it, is part of a many-headed hydra, where is the battleground and site, or even possibility of struggle located?¹⁶⁷ If the critique of this pro-growth agenda, the gentrification analysis, is now used to further the pro-growth agenda, what can an understanding of the lack of growth and of disinformation (as seen through the work of Self-Help in Durham) offer us for locating this site of struggle? I intend for the data and analysis of this study to help us zero in with a bit more precision.

The history of Durham tells several significant pieces of the history of neoliberalism, and here, I focus on one: the belief in and institutionalization of self-help, whether on the scale of the individual or a community, as a way towards widespread economic development and community uplift. Durham, a small to medium-sized industrial city, experienced a devastating post-industrial crash, which lay the terrain for the reinvestment strategies today that are making the city appear successful. The founders of the Center for Community Self-Help, Martin Eakes and Bonnie Wright, began the nonprofit credit union as a way for tobacco and textile factory workers in Durham who were attempting to own their own factories in the late 1970s, to pool their resources to have enough money to buy property and invest. Workers no longer had access to the resources needed to survive, or to start their own cooperatives as they were trying to do. Credit was the only option, but at this point, access to credit was more highly regulated and difficult for these workers to access. Manufacturing jobs were rapidly declining and being replaced with better technology or cheaper workers in other locations. Some workers thought that they could

¹⁶⁷ Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (Mexico) and Pensamiento crítico frente a la hidra capitalista (Seminario), *Critical thought in the face of the capitalist hydra I*, 2016.

organize cooperatives to maintain their work even though their employers were leaving. Eakes and Wright, coming from studying microcredit and community organizing in the Peace Corps, were involved in work with textile and tobacco factory workers in tax preparation and finance management. Their analysis was that with access to credit, these workers could rebuild their industry. While one of these cooperatives still exists, most failed. Meanwhile, Self-Help continued to grow as more and more working and middle class residents in Durham - and then throughout North Carolina, Chicago, and Los Angeles – needed access to credit in order to work, pay bills, buy cars, buy homes, and to simply survive.

1.5 Chapter Overview

In Chapter 2, I present the trajectory of pro-growth development in the global market and within US cities as it relates to the development of the concept of “self-help.” I offer a genealogy of the concept of self-help as manifested throughout the twentieth century, and then, a genealogy of the institution of Self-Help. Increasing income inequality in the United States and the trajectory of Self-Help’s existence beginning in the 1980s and continuing into the present, unsurprisingly coincides with the epoch of disinformation.¹⁶⁸ In Chapter 3, I present my ethnographic findings from five years of studying Self-Help’s role in Durham’s urban development. In Chapter 4, I seek to answer how inequality grows as Self-Help grows, by analyzing the findings from Chapter 3 and placing them in the context of a broader understanding of neoliberalism and El Kilombo’s analysis of value and the lack of real growth. I conclude with ideas, lessons, and strategies from El Kilombo and other global resistance struggles asking why we may be trying to save structures that not only have always been organized against human life, but are also nearly dead, and not instead organizing to confront the current crisis we find ourselves in by building structures that may actually benefit life.

¹⁶⁸ Eric Cheyfitz, *The Disinformation Age: The Collapse of Liberal Democracy in the United States*, Routledge Advances in American History 7 (New York: Routledge, 2017).

Chapter 2: Self-Help, an Idea and an Institution

2.1 Self-help in Durham: Spiral of Politics and Collective Memory

In this chapter, I explain how the Center for Community Self-Help, what is in practice a fairly conservative institution premised on an American Dream ideology of extending credit as a strategy for increasing equality, came to stand in for progressive politics in Durham. This occurred through the formation of both institutions and collective memories of black self-help, black capitalism, civil rights, and black political leadership together with Durham's identity as a liberal and progressive city in the South. The conflation of racial justice, social justice, and black economic ownership helped to both form the institution of Self-Help and position Self-Help as a discursive representation of politically progressive ideals.

To study this history, I use an intradisciplinary combination of American Political Development from Political Science, the idea of processual collective memory studies from Communication, and development media to uncover how the idea of self-help and one particular institution of self-help grew to dominate the urban development landscape in Durham. In its intention of placing ideas more squarely in the center of American Political Development, Rogers Smith's spiral of politics model is useful for detailing the importance of discourse, ideology, and disinformation in building the material realities of the city. In this chapter, the stages of his model help to frame the development of self-help as an idea and an institution, arriving at the current moment of Self-Help's role as a developer in Durham as presented in Chapter 3.

The spiral of politics model is also useful because it allows for the realities of larger developments/spirals, smaller spirals, and the intertwined and looping back of ideas and institution-building. As Smith writes:

That is why the framework is a spiral, not a circle: the same general process is followed repeatedly, but it includes the formulation of new ideas, new coalitions, and new policies, contributing to new contexts and new human experiences. On this view, political history displays similarities, even parallels, but it never repeats itself. The spiral is dynamic, so that an adequate political science must be in part historical.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹ Smith, "Ideas and the Spiral of Politics."

In Durham, there is a broad spiral of black political development that is made up of smaller spirals, all intertwined to varying degrees with national and regional political and economic developments. The larger spiral, which is a struggle for black political agency and economic equality, starts from the smaller spiral of the development of the Hayti district; then to the struggles for Civil Rights; then to the formation of a black political class; and now, a resurgence of black entrepreneurialism, arts, culture, and activism. Alongside and with this development has been the development of white middle class liberalism and progressivism in Durham, which, strengthened during the Civil Rights movement, has been largely influenced by an allied politics with black struggles for equal rights, the women's movement, and gay liberation.

Smith's model is enhanced with the addition of Barbie Zelizer's idea of collective memory as a collective process of remembering experiences and histories.¹⁷⁰ In studying how the idea of self-help has formed new ideas of self-help and political institutions wrested from these ideas, the history of self-help in Durham is better understood for these purposes in terms of how it has been remembered and concretized, both in terms of physical monuments and structures, and discourses that play a role in shaping the political and economic reality of the city. As Zelizer writes:

The study of collective memory, then, is much more than the unidimensional study of the past. It represents a graphing of the past as it is used for present aims, a vision in bold relief of the past as it is woven into the present and future... For new givens in memory studies have forced us to reassign our sensibilities concerning the act of remembering. They have made the past a product of our collective memory, rather than the other way around.¹⁷¹

In communication studies, collective memory studies offer tools for understanding how populations understand, represent, and then reshape history, similar to how in political science, American Political Development offers tools for understanding how political ideas and institutions are processually formed. Together, these two subfields offer a method for understanding how the idea of self-help operates in Durham as a concept signifying economic justice, when in fact, the

¹⁷⁰ Zelizer, *Read the Past Against the Grain*

¹⁷¹ Zelizer, *Grain*, 217

idea of self-help is instrumental in perpetuating inequality. The institution of the Center for Community Self-Help is built from these collective memories and political developments.

In Durham and the surrounding region, the history of “above,”¹⁷² of those with power and capital, is the history of the management institutions that have governed major political and economic shifts in the city: plantation slavery, industrial tobacco and textile rise and decline, financial development, federal urban renewal, the Research Triangle and the rise of the research and development economy, and now, urban reinvestment and displacement through real estate markets, medicine and pharmaceuticals, and the “knowledge economy.”¹⁷³ The history of below is how these institutions functioned and grew: being forced off land, enslavement, debt peonage, low-paying service jobs, Jim Crow segregation, employer and union discrimination, unemployment, criminalization and increased policing, incarceration, and low-paying and precarious service jobs. There has also been a multi-faceted history of resistance in response to the state and non-state imposed racism, classism, violence, exploitation, and dispossession. Organized efforts to survive with dignity have taken the form of radical worker unions and strikes, boycotts and sit-ins, Civil Rights marches and protests, policy negotiations, voter monitoring and protesting, black-led efforts to integrate unions, neighborhood community support, and grassroots education. In Durham, some of the more radical mid-century efforts included a black homesteader project north of the city called “Soul City,”¹⁷⁴ the Malcolm X Liberation University, a tuition-based school teaching Pan-Africanism and Black Power emerging from protests for the rights of African American students at Duke in 1969, organizing with nearby Black Panther chapters, rural community organizing largely supported by a rural poverty initiative called the North Carolina Fund, and Communist Party organizing. Before all of this, the Hayti neighborhood in Durham organized itself as a fairly self-sufficient middle class black community during Jim

¹⁷² Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (Mexico) and Pensamiento crítico frente a la hidra capitalista (Seminario), *Critical thought in the face of the capitalist hydra I*; Mara Kaufman, “Mexico’s Indigenous Governing Council: Actually Existing Anti-Capitalism for the 21st Century,” *Counterpunch*, November 10, 2017, <https://www.counterpunch.org/2017/11/10/mexicos-indigenous-governing-council-actually-existing-anti-capitalism-for-the-21st-century/>.

¹⁷³ Margaret Pugh O’Mara, *Cities of Knowledge: Cold War Science and the Search for the next Silicon Valley*, Politics and Society in Twentieth-Century America (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005).

¹⁷⁴ Soul City, as I will discuss further in this chapter, was a Model Cities program proposed in the 1960s by Floyd McKissick, a CORE organizer. It was a black homesteading project in Warren, NC north of Durham. It ultimately failed, arguably because it was defunded because the project would have taken many more years to fully develop, but the Model Cities program was defunded.

Crow segregation. Hayti was led by an organized group of black businessmen, driven to build an economic base and political power in the face of a South governed by white supremacy according to the ideals of black capitalism and black community self-help being theorized and circulated most rigorously by Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Dubois.

The history of black self-help is central to the history of urban development in Durham. A black financial district, nicknamed Black Wall Street, and a commercial and residential district, Hayti, began in the 1880s and grew through the 1950s until urban renewal, desegregation, and the decline of industry contributed to its downfall. In Durham, a new coalition of black businesses have called themselves Black Wall Street to continue in this legacy, invoking both the history of black capitalism in the city as well as the struggle for civil rights. The idea of Black Wall Street is also used beyond the black business community in Durham, notably by the local government and developers to bring in historic tax credits and to support the idea of entrepreneurialism in the city.

The history of black self-help in Durham shows not only how African Americans were able to build a successful economy and neighborhood in the face of Southern white racism with a functioning economy of their own, but also how racism, classism, and the structural limits of capital growth demolished Hayti and Black Wall Street, the first casualties of suburban reinvestment and economic restructuring. The midcentury efforts by the government and business to increase capital growth in the face of deindustrialization, known as urban renewal, required the destruction of poor and black neighborhoods in cities to create areas that were seen as having profit potential. These areas were cleared for reinvestment to be more appealing to developers. But as was first chronicled in 1965, and then in later studies, this strategy never did work.¹⁷⁵

Studying the growth of Hayti also demonstrates how the successes and perceived successes of the city over time have also always included layers of inequality. Hayti was forged from the struggle to survive in the face of white supremacy, but within Hayti, there was much class division and exclusion of the poor and working classes from the middle class community. As black newspapers from the time, oral histories, and other historical accounts make clear, there

¹⁷⁵ Anderson, *The Federal Bulldozer*.

was a stark division in wealth that increased as the black financial institutions grew. The division between the black elite, the black middle class that supported them, and the black working class and poor is still a major site of co-optation, exploitation, and confusion in Durham politics. Still, compared to the white middle class which, post-Depression was supported by New Deal policies such as the government-backed mortgages, the black middle class faced quite a precarious existence. As the institution of self-help was materially developed by black communities at the turn of the century, their experience of struggle, success, and failure shows that the possibilities for success under capitalism were limited to temporary moments of growth and individual successes.¹⁷⁶ In Section 2.2, I introduce specific instances of collective memory being used to further the present pro-growth agenda in Durham. In Section 2.3, I present a history of black self-help in Durham, according to Smith's spiral of politics model, bringing the idea of self-help to its new neoliberal context. This sets the stage for the creation of the institution, the Center for Community Self-Help, and its evolution from a credit union to a developer.

2.2 Selling History for Growth: Discourse and Collective Memory

2.2.1 Two Black Wall Streets: Self-Help In the Face of Violence

During Reconstruction, African Americans organized and fought for their survival in the face of the many manifestations of racism - violence, poverty, segregation, and laws designed to keep them as close to slavery as possible.¹⁷⁷ Sharecropping, convict leasing, and Jim Crow laws were used by the white government to reinforce a lower status of African Americans. Segregation offered a certain layer of protection because much of black success could be shielded and was not perceived as directly threatening white business, nor as threatening integration. It was a "tactic of resistance" to build an autonomous community with its own institutions and capital.¹⁷⁸ Successful black institutions also brought on increased violence and anger from white

¹⁷⁶ W. E. B Du Bois and David L Lewis, *Black Reconstruction in America* (New York: Free Press, 1998).

¹⁷⁷ Sam Pollard, *Slavery by Another Name* (Twin Cities Public Television, 2012); Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*, Race and American Culture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

¹⁷⁸ Brown, 23.

populations, who, in the face of black success, could no longer ascribe racist notions of inferiority and other eugenics-based ideas to African Americans.

In Durham, Black Wall Street is collectively remembered with pride. However, for others the title “Black Wall Street” invokes a traumatic historical memory of the killing of roughly 300 African Americans and the burning of the prosperous black business district in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1921.¹⁷⁹ The area, also called Little Africa, was home to a prosperous black business and residential neighborhood called Greenwood. White mobs and the Ku Klux Klan, backed by the military and police, dropped firebombs on black-owned businesses, killed residents, arrested thousands, and destroyed 35 blocks of business, infrastructure, and over 1200 homes. Most survivors mostly fled and never returned. Others tried to rebuild with some success, despite the government’s failure to deliver promised funding. Some cite desegregation ordinances in the 1950s and 1960s as the end of the black city center, causing competition from white businesses that flooded out the black business district.¹⁸⁰ Millions in assets were lost and never recovered. The terror of that day – and its lack of prominence in US history – testifies to the structural resistance against black prosperity, and the violent repression by whites against black self-sufficiency and wealth. In addition to the structural constraints on African Americans’ accumulation of wealth after emancipation, the collective memory of what was a hugely successful organized community in the face of this reality at the turn of the century became a memory of terror and trauma from violence. Many such attacks throughout the twentieth century and continuing today have contributed to the destruction of black neighborhood infrastructure, and are being remembered as such.¹⁸¹ Today, there are efforts to contradict the memory of terror and trauma and reincarnate Black Wall Street through support of black entrepreneurialism in the

¹⁷⁹ Randy Short, “Micah Xavier Johnson: Made in America, a Failed Human Rights State,” *Black Agenda Radio* (blog), July 13, 2016, https://blackagendareport.com/us_failed_human_rights_state.

¹⁸⁰ Christina Montford, “6 Interesting Things You Didn’t Know About Black Wall Street,” *Atlanta Black Star*, December 2, 2014, sec. Editor’s Picks, <http://atlantablackstar.com/2014/12/02/6-interesting-things-you-didnt-know-about-black-wall-street/>.

¹⁸¹ Chis Everett, *Wilmington on Fire* (PBS, 2015). In 1898 in Wilmington, North Carolina, when the growing black middle class and the progressive whites began organizing, white supremacist groups connected to the Democrat government raided City Hall in a siege where they captured power and violently swept the city for any surviving African Americans. They then took over the black property that was left by its owners fleeing for their lives, liquidating their assets through fake house deeds, and fake sales amongst themselves, and liquidating all of the existing banks, black and white, as well. The recent availability of instant media proliferation through fast internet and camera phones has brought the murder of black men and women at the hands of the police to the forefront of public consciousness, but violence against the black population has been consistent since the slave trade.

face of continuing inequality, incarceration, and the dispossession of black and brown neighborhoods. The memory of Black Wall Street is thus being re-invoked as a way to overcome inequality through these ideas of black capitalism and black self-help; to stand up to the current inequality by taking back the memory of Black Wall Street as a triumphant collective memory, and not the memory of terror.¹⁸²

Historian Leslie Brown writes that after the burning of Tulsa, “African Americans sought a new beacon of hope” and turned to Durham for that hope.¹⁸³ The fate of Durham’s Black Wall Street was not a violent siege or direct liquidation of assets: it was destroyed primarily through the state practice of eminent domain, or taking land in exchange for a certain monetary compensation for state uses that are said to benefit the broader public. Durham’s Black Wall Street and the Hayti neighborhood were destroyed slowly over time by economic inequality, suburbanization, racist urban renewal policies, and the separation of interests between the black middle and upper classes and black working and poor classes. There were, nevertheless, acts of violence, many documented and many not, against black institutions struggling to provide for the growing black population, including schools being burned down in Durham.¹⁸⁴

The memory of Black Wall Street is a narrative that claims the successes of capitalism in empowering black self-determination. The destruction of Hayti is equally remembered, through the building of the Durham Freeway, a highway to Research Triangle Park and the growing suburbs. The Freeway was built with the cooperation of several business and political leaders in the black middle class and like nearly all mid-century urban development projects, the community was promised redevelopment that never actually came.¹⁸⁵ While the reincarnation of Black Wall Street is still limited to the upper and middle classes, that were also the beneficiaries of its wealth in the beginning of the century, while its memory is being harnessed in the name of “racial

¹⁸² Scott Ellsworth, *Death in a Promised Land: The Tulsa Race Riot of 1921* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982); Sameer Roo, “It’s Been 96 Years Since White Mobs Destroyed Tulsa’s Black Wall Street,” *Color Lines*, May 31, 2017, <https://www.colorlines.com/articles/its-been-96-years-white-mobs-destroyed-tulas-black-wall-street>.

¹⁸³ Leslie Brown, *Upbuilding Black Durham: Gender, Class, and Black Community Development in the Jim Crow South*, The John Hope Franklin Series in African American History and Culture (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

¹⁸⁴ Brown.

¹⁸⁵ Brown; Susan S. Fainstein, ed., *Restructuring the City: The Political Economy of Urban Redevelopment* (New York: Longman, 1983); Clarence N. Stone and Heywood T. Sanders, eds., *The Politics of Urban Development*, Studies in Government and Public Policy (Lawrence, Kan: University Press of Kansas, 1987).

equality and diversity.”¹⁸⁶ These memories are being used to support the same pro-growth development that is disproportionately making it more difficult for poor black communities in the city to survive. In Durham, the resurgence of Black Wall Street is a major component of the redevelopment of the city by a pro-growth coalition that is being led by black and progressive political leaders. As Reed has noted to explain missing pieces to the argument that the growth of a black professional-managerial and electoral leadership is the maturation of black protest politics:

First, the dynamics that make possible the empowerment of black regimes are the same as those that produce the deepening marginalization and dispossession of a substantial segment of the urban black population. Second, the logic of pro-growth politics, in which black officialdom is incorporated, denies broad progressive redistribution as a policy option and thereby prohibits direct confrontation of the problem of dispossession among the black constituency.¹⁸⁷

This is not to say that the increase in wealth and electoral political power does not demonstrate certain important gains of African Americans in the United States. However, these gains serve to diversify the elite class racially while simultaneously widening the class gap that remains racialized.

2.2.2 Remembering Black Wall Street Through Real Estate Development

Black culture has been used to sell music for years, but only recently has it been commoditized to market neighborhood redevelopment.

-Derek Hyra, 2017¹⁸⁸

The history of Durham forms a discursive base today for the management of pro-growth politics, as developers and business draw on Durham’s Black Wall Street, using its namesake to indicate a renaissance today. Similar mechanisms are used today – to change ownership of property from either public or individual ownership to developer or businesses that are part of a pro-growth agenda – as were used to redevelop Hayti into a highway and transition the economy from industrial base to a knowledge base. As discussed in Chapter One, in addition to the promises of affordable housing, community support, elite partnerships, a successful future, and

¹⁸⁶ Office of Economic and Employment Development, “A New Era on Parrish Street” (Durham City Government, August 2, 2004), <https://durhamnc.gov/DocumentCenter/Home/View/1801>. Page 5

¹⁸⁷ Reed, *Stirrings in the Jug*. Page 89

¹⁸⁸ Derek Hyra, “Selling a Black D.C. Neighborhood to White Millennials,” *Next City*, June 12, 2017, <https://nextcity.org/features/view/washington-dc-real-estate-branding-white-millennials>.

prosperous jobs, the discursive mechanism of re-using historical properties and honoring Durham's historical past is used to justify developments, economic incentives, and policies, as well as to bring in public funding for developments through historic tax credits. The sites of Black Wall Street, Hayti, and the former sites of employment such as empty warehouses, are redeveloped using historic tax credits into new spaces to serve what is seen as the new promising population of consumers and professionals.

In Durham, eighty-one projects have been completed using state and federal historic tax credits since the 1970s when the federal and state programs were implemented. As reported by the Durham Chamber of Commerce, historic preservation projects have received over \$366 million in raw dollar state tax credits during this time.¹⁸⁹ Advocates of historic tax credits cite massive returns in investments and jobs from rehabilitating old structures. For example, in North Carolina, "Each \$1 in state historic tax credits issued has been leveraged to create \$12.51 (for income-producing projects) or \$7.93 (non-income-producing projects)."¹⁹⁰ The idea is that renovating old spaces preserves a sense of place and architectural history and integrity in a city, and repurposes buildings to have new uses for a changing economy. This translates to the use of an idea of the past resting on various histories, such as the history of Black Wall Street and an industrial working class, to furnish the present reality of an economy based on speculation and a professional consumer class.

The idea of Black Wall Street is used both to attempt to garner historic tax credits and to support the drive of black businesses and the new economy in Durham. Durham City Council began focusing on revitalizing Historic Parrish Street in 2004 by allocating some of leftover funds that were slated to go towards the American Tobacco campus renovation, to research and plan for a National Heritage Site, which was marketed under the name Black Wall Street. The commemorative project, "A New Era on Parrish Street," did not receive historic designation but did receive over \$350,000 from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development for

¹⁸⁹ "Making the Case for Historic Tax Credits" (Durham, NC: Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce, n.d.), <http://durhamchamber.org/blog/making-case-historic-tax-credits>.

¹⁹⁰ Rebecca Holton, "A Profitable Past, A Priceless Future: The Economic Impact of North Carolina's Historic Tax Credit" (UNC-Chapel Hill, 2008), <https://www.presnc.org/tax-credits-economic-impact/>.

renovation through tax credits and grants.¹⁹¹ The grant was used to fund plaques and sculptures that tell the history of NC Mutual Life Insurance and Mechanic and Farmer's Bank, as well as the other small black-owned businesses that operated on the street during the days of Jim Crow. It has also funded small business start up grants to new businesses, including bars, bakeries, coffee shops, and restaurants. Over ten years, they produced over ten years, an array of development media and revitalization attempts on the street, all in the name of self-help and black entrepreneurialism. This effort was led by the Durham Office of Economic and Workforce Development, along with a team of business owners, realtors, bankers, and representatives from several local business associations and nonprofits including the NC Institute of Minority Economic Development, Downtown Durham Inc, NC Central University, the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University, and Self-Help, represented by their CEO, Martin Eakes.

In interviews with the grant recipients, they revealed that they mainly have started the businesses off of their own credit and with the matching grants of the government.¹⁹² Five new white-owned businesses opened on Parrish Street using these grants: a bakery called Monuts that has since moved to a bigger location; a veteran-owned cafe and event space called Intrepid hoping to build community and raise money for veterans, opened with the owners "credit cards," that closed a year later;¹⁹³ and a bakery called Loaf. NC Mutual Life and Mechanic and Farmer's Bank, which have both since moved to larger buildings, although M&F still operates a branch downtown. The Parrish Street Advocacy Group also created the Historic Parrish Street Forum, through a city-administered organization, rents its space for events and highlights the history of "Black Wall Street" in banners and signs inside and outside of the space.

The stated purpose of this project was to add another site of heritage tourism and value-generating memory, which took the form of generating wealth and growth for businesses, developers, and the city, monetizing the historical memory of this black self-help. The efforts of the Parrish Street Advocacy Group demonstrate the use of "self-help" to promote an *idea* of black self-determination disconnected from both the *struggle* of black self-determination and

¹⁹¹ *Durham City Council Work Session*.

¹⁹² Emily LaDue, *Interview with Matt Victoriano, Owner, Intrepid Coffee and Community Center*, Digital Video and Audio (Parrish St, Durham, NC, 2013).

¹⁹³ Emily LaDue. And, see: <http://durhamchamber.org/blog/making-case-historic-tax-credits>

cooperation; and from the ensuing history that left the city poor and in a position for developers to turn massive profits on areas deemed value-less.

In the media produced by the Parrish Street Advocacy Group, the concepts of self-help and mutual aid are also used to explain a history of African Americans in Durham setting “standards for themselves and others, expecting hard work, religious devotion, philanthropy and racial uplift.”¹⁹⁴ The Advocacy Group refers to W.E.B. Du Bois’ concepts of mutual aid and self-help to promote their endeavor of development.¹⁹⁵ While Du Bois may have been less of a radical in his earlier writings and during his visit to Durham in 1913, his 1935 *Black Reconstruction* argues for a radical cooperation between the black and white poor and working classes that takes into account the violent and systemic dismantling of the black middle class.

The Black Wall Street from a century ago was a project of self-determination and cooperation, one based on black advancement through capitalism, whether that meant inclusion in the dominant economy, or more commonly, through a secondary economy that kept money revolving among African-Americans, present in both Hayti and Black Wall Street. During Jim Crow segregation, this idea may have had more of a referent. The timing of a built space can act as “a punctuation mark in the flow of history, separating the past from the present,” as if what is to occur is distinct and separate from the past before it.¹⁹⁶ The commemoration is an apostrophe – bridging a memory of black entrepreneurialism and success with the present development of the city while leaving out the decades that do not fit neatly into this narrative. Through the 1970s, 80s, and 90s, Parrish Street housed law offices and bail bondsmen, storefront churches, a revolving door of failed businesses, and vacant spaces, along with a remaining branch of Mechanics and Farmers Bank. This history is the actual required history for this current development to take place materially: if not for the disinvestment in black communities in the middle of the century,

¹⁹⁴ Office of Economic and Employment Development, “A New Era on Parrish Street.”

¹⁹⁵ It is useful to note here that the concepts of self-help and mutual aid are also used together to refer to self-help as a strategy for well-being, and mutual aid as a way for individuals to help each other help themselves. Today, the concept of self-care is often used instead. There is crossover in meaning, and neoliberal strategies emphasize this crossover, so that the need to care for one’s self physically, emotionally, and mentally is marketed and used as justification for consumption. The individual is the site of all development and growth in this framework.

¹⁹⁶ Wu Hung, *Remaking Beijing: Tiananmen Square and the Creation of a Political Space* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005). Wu Hung writes of the making of Tiananmen Square as a political space and focuses on the importance of its timing. While the remaking of Parrish Street is indeed apolitical, with a focus only on the business development and imagery, Hung is useful for understanding the current redevelopment of Parrish Street amidst the rest of the downtown development, page 33.

bringing property prices down to mere dollars in some cases, the Parrish Street project would not have occurred at all. The advocacy group members are the property owners and prospective business owners of this area and in nearby blocks downtown. Developers were interested in this part of downtown, then, because of its cheap property whose cost was nevertheless slowly rising given renewed interest resulting from the surrounding investments underway by Duke and the city. The history of Parrish Street is a currency, a piece of development media that enables pro-growth development to occur using the idea of struggle and righteousness.

The underlying logic is to attempt to build wealth through urban development because there are fewer and fewer ways to actually grow productive capital.¹⁹⁷ Black entrepreneurialism in the late 1800s and through the 1940s in Durham was an effort at building wealth that functioned to bring certain families and individuals into the middle class and provide support and safety to African Americans. Today, the idea of black entrepreneurialism born of necessity and struggle – is being used as a mechanism to generate wealth in the form of tax credits and government grants for business endeavors, reflecting not an “entrepreneurial spirit” but a desperate effort to deploy history in an attempt to create growth. from the idea of history. As John L. Jackson Jr. wrote of gentrifying Harlem in the 1990s:

In a quotation-marked-off place like Harlemworld, the imaginative and symbolic components of its inflated past are just as palpable and meaningful as the physical concreteness of its nineteenth-century brownstones. And indeed those homes are important too. This fetishized connection between Harlem and its past is the first point to stress about a location where notoriety is contingent on what the place used to be, on connections between the present and the once-glorious past.¹⁹⁸

On Parrish Street, the weight and currency of the inflated past attempts to fill the void left by the lack of growth, progress, and community fabric today, most concretely through inflated property values from the historic designation, historic tax credits to developers, and nominal grants to some new businesses. The rhetorical boosterism pats the past on its back, looking for support to fill the false sense of hope in this development today. Calling out this vacuity, one of the statues commemorating the street is of a hanging top hat and coat, eerily missing its owner, as if a businessman from the past hung up his things and walked away forever. The statue

¹⁹⁷ See Discussion of Crisis, Chapter 4.

¹⁹⁸ Jackson, *Harlem World*. Page 22.

commemorates ten African American leaders from Durham between 1890-1915: John Merrick, J. A. Dodson, R.B. Fitzgerald, J.R. Hawkins, A.M. Moore, W.G. Pearson, J. E. Shepard, C.C. Spaulding, G.W. Stephens, and S.L. Warren.¹⁹⁹ The history is also inflated with notions of “building positive race relations in the Durham area,”²⁰⁰ as the plaque reads, but like today, these relations were contingent on one’s status and class position.

The commemoration of the site is a pivot point in the memory-making of downtown, remembering a past that is long gone in this place and clearing the way for the future development that the city wants to promote. The signpost on Parrish Street reads:

In the early 20th century, Parrish Street was dubbed ‘Black Wall Street’ due to the success of black-owned businesses such as North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company and Mechanics and Farmers Bank. Those were the days when Jim Crow laws reigned and commerce was segregated. Visionary leadership and Black Wall Street business growth fueled the development of many important community institutions throughout Durham. To understand the history of Durham, one must understand the entrepreneurial spirit of Black Wall Street.

In *Jim Crow Nostalgia*, Michelle Boyd notes this sort of juncture as a necessary stop for placing the history of Jim Crow squarely away, as past. But as she describes, this turns the collective memory into a street with an accompanying neat discourse, where the politics of the history are removed and replaced with market logic.²⁰¹ Moreover, placing the memory on a signpost allows it to be kept safe and controlled in a specific place and a specific time, claimed by the city and the Parrish Street group, through their eyes and words: “How does one understand the entrepreneurial spirit of Black Wall Street?”²⁰²

Local folklorist Barbara Lau was a part of this advocacy group, and created a course at Duke’s Center for Documentary Studies to support original research about Durham’s Black Wall Street. She incorporated talks from members of the Advocacy Group, including Nathan Garrett, the first African American certified public accountant in North Carolina and director of various programs and organizations emerging from the NC Fund; and Carl Webb, founder of Greenfire

¹⁹⁹ “Visionary Leadership in the New South, Durham,” Commemorative Landscapes (DocSouth, UNC-Chapel Hill, n.d.), <http://docsouth.unc.edu/commland/monument/193/>.

²⁰⁰ “Visionary Leadership in the New South, Durham.”

²⁰¹ Michelle R. Boyd, *Jim Crow Nostalgia: Reconstructing Race in Bronzeville* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

²⁰² Andrew Hoskins, “The Mediatization of Memory,” in *Save As... Digital Memories*, ed. Joanna Garde-Hansen, Andrew Hoskins, and Anna Reading (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

Development. Students completed oral history, photography, and video projects about Black Wall Street, and as an article in *Duke Today* emphasizes, some went on to get grants for future research and were motivated in their own careers to continue using history in their endeavors.²⁰³ While there is nothing iniquitous about this, it brings into focus who benefits from these historical projects. It is a useful public good and necessary act for us to study and record the buried and forgotten histories, buried in this case by racism in what we deem historical, and to teach students about a piece of history that otherwise is ignored or not made public. However, what is made clear by the Parrish Street Advocacy Group and the promotion of the history of Black Wall Street in institutions supporting market-led development is that this history is brought into the fold of profit-making and personal advancement. In this context, it seems that we know do not how to relate to these histories except to use them for own career-building or for profit-led development.

This is doubly underscored by the trajectory of one of Lau's students, who took the class and received a grant to continue studying the history of Durham over the summer. Lau's final quote in the article reads:

Students say the class has changed them as much as it has changed their view of Durham. "Doing this project has made me more excited to be a part of Durham," Moskop says. "Durham has its own identity and that gets forgotten by a lot of [Duke] students. This helped me learn more about that identity."
 "It's about getting beyond the surface," Lau says. "We begin to chip away at the misconceptions and stereotypes about Durham and what it means to live here."

Framing Durham's Black Wall Street in the context of an oral history project that is presented as political, as a nearly lost history that is being reclaimed by university students (and made more democratic with the inclusion of NC Central students) orients students to the importance of their approval of the city. Here, the students are able to place themselves in the position of change agents; supporting Durham businesses becomes a progressive political action. However, the support of Duke students in this process of redevelopment is problematic in that it tends to erase the history and present reality of struggle and dispossession, the very dispossession that set the stage for the new community service programs that Duke students are oriented towards. The

²⁰³ Sylvia Pfeifferberger, "Durham's 'Black Wall Street,'" *Duke Today* (blog), January 25, 2007, <https://today.duke.edu/2007/01/parrish.html>.

history is used only as a stepping stone towards individual scholarship and success, and the collective memory of Black Wall Street is shaped by the new reality of urban developments.

2.2.3 Collective Memory of Hayti's destruction: The Durham Freeway

A local performance artist and student of Durham history created a walking tour of Durham Hayti's District in 2013 with a grant from the Hayti Heritage Center, a nonprofit promoting culture, arts, and community located in the former St. Joseph's Church in the center of the Hayti District. The purpose was to spread the knowledge of the history of the Hayti District to current residents in order to preserve the history in the community. This walking tour is one way that collective memory is remembered, spoken, and concretized in Durham, giving an acted overview of the emergence, life, and decline of the neighborhood.²⁰⁴ On the day I attended and filmed the tour, it was attended by recent transplants to Durham, planners and historians visiting town for the National Planners Association annual meeting, and members of the Inter-Neighborhood Council of neighborhood organizations who heard about the tour through a listserv post. The tours can also be commissioned for students, groups of teachers and community leaders.

In 1958, the Hayti neighborhood was bifurcated by the construction of the Durham Freeway/Highway 147. The walking tour makes a stop at the Freeway overpass, and personifies the highway as an actor, accurately representing how the relationship between Hayti and the Freeway is discussed and remembered in Durham – as the cause of the downfall of the cohesive black community.

Narrator: What happened to all of this? What happened to Hayti? Have you read the paper? Some people blame integration, urban sprawl, the automobile, the construction of the East-West Expressway [I-40]. Look out, 147 is coming....

Highway 147: They say I did it. I didn't even pass through here when Hayti first fell down. They were just looking for someone to pin it on. They were all upset because they lost everything. Their homes, their businesses, everything they loved was right here. But from what I hear, this place was nothing. Just a blink on the train ride to somewhere else. Ain't nobody care about Durham – it was the tobacco.... Ain't nobody care nothing about no Hayti. This place was an accident. Got lucky.... A bunch of negroes...at the right place at the right time. Yeah yeah yeah, they had fifteen grocery stores, eight barbershops, seven fish and meat markets, two drug stores, a haberdashery, and an undertaking business. And five manufacturing companies... so? But one false move on the part of them

²⁰⁴ Zelizer, *Against the Grain*

negroes and this place could have easily been destroyed just like them negroes that got hung up in Greenwood [Tulsa, OK].²⁰⁵

The highway is a relevant vessel for speaking this history, because of all it represents, but collapsing the history into the highway alone ignores the role of deindustrialization and the catering to a new economy of research and development. IBM, for example, would not have developed one its major headquarters in Research Triangle Park if the state did not build Interstate 40, and Highway 147 was built to connect I-40 to Durham.²⁰⁶ The highway acts as a symbol of urban renewal, white flight, and massive economic shifts, holding these collective memories in one thoroughfare in the city. Yet, the presentation of the highway as a monument of sorts to the history of urban renewal/urban removal in Durham, the highway risks abstracting and displacing a history of inequality into a single, if massive, development project. In this way, the highway itself is used as a piece of development media, taking on influential discourses and serving as a placeholder for more complicated and uncomfortable dynamics. As we will see below, personification of the highway avoids attributing responsibility for the destruction of one neighborhood to the leaders of that neighborhood.

A key piece of the development of the Freeway was the compliance of black political and business leaders in convincing the community to peacefully acquiesce land that was acquired by the city through eminent domain, the legal right of the state to take personal property for public use with just compensation. Eminent domain, according to state law, “may be exercised as a means of achieving any legitimate governmental objective substantially related to the public welfare.”²⁰⁷ In that case as in others, removing what is characterized as blight falls under eminent domain: the homes and neighborhoods of the poor, with unsanitary and insufficient conditions, are classified as slums, and shifting this property to what is classified as productive uses – selling to developers – is considered sufficient “public use.” The public that is served in these cases,

²⁰⁵ Aya Shabu and Brian Brewer, *Hayti Heritage Walking Tour*, Digital Video and Audio (Durham, NC: Recorded by Emily LaDue, 2014).

²⁰⁶ Emily LaDue, *Interview with Lead Architect Kevin G. Montgomery, of O'Brien Atkins*, 2014.

²⁰⁷ “Urban Renewal: Acquisition of Redevelopment Property by Eminent Domain,” *Duke Law Journal* 123 (1964), <http://scholarship.law.duke.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1897&context=dlj>.

does not refer to the poor public that had been living in these areas, but instead to a potential profit-generating public, yielding a higher exchange value.²⁰⁸

In the case of Hayti, two publics were considered. First and foremost was the white public to whom the expansion of the whole Triangle region via the growth of RTP was attributed and who needed a highway to move from their homes in the suburbs to shopping and services in downtown to workplaces in other areas. The second public was the black owning class at this time who were compensated for their property and were able to move, relocate, and maintain their wealth despite the destruction of the neighborhood. Certain businesses were relocated, for example the Scarborough Funeral Home. The funeral home has since moved three more times due to eminent domain, but the owners have managed to receive significant financial compensation with each move. Another family-owned general store in the neighborhood was maintained and modified several times in order to stay in business.

The decision to put the highway directly through the Hayti neighborhood reflects the racism toward the black owning class from the white government and white owning class. The black propertied classes of the time also treated the poor and working class black community not as a public, but as a surplus.²⁰⁹ Whereas the wealthier community was able to retain individual wealth after the construction of the highway and other urban renewal projects at the time, working class and poor African Americans were cut off from wealthier black communities, their homes, and from their jobs at white-owned industries that were being taken over by automation, consolidation, and outsourcing. With urban renewal, the social and community life declined further. And now, developers are able to draw on public resources to renovate those empty warehouses with historic tax credits. In effect, this history of Hayti and Black Wall Street today forms a discursive base for the management of pro-growth politics, as developers and business draw on Durham's Black Wall Street to indicate a renaissance today.

In his multiple studies and analyses of the black political class in Atlanta, Adolph Reed Jr. has described two political developments of the 1970s that are also key in understanding

²⁰⁸ Logan and Molotch, *Urban Fortunes*.

²⁰⁹ Brown, *Upbuilding Black Durham*.

Durham's political direction at this time. First, in seeking to answer how former Mayor Maynard Jackson garnered enough support for pro-development interests despite the fact that these policies did not benefit his majority African-American constituency, Reed shows how under the weight of powerful pro-growth coalitions, many black political leaders in the 1970s were forced to support the agenda of major developers or lose their positions.²¹⁰ In this case, Jackson ultimately compromised his position on supporting a second airport location and a minority firm contract in exchange for reelection support and a modest version of his minority-contracting agenda.²¹¹ Despite Jackson's attempts to support development projects that would also support his working class constituency in Atlanta, the political situation allowed only for pro-growth development.

The other major political development discussed by Reed in *Stirrings in the Jug*, is examined through Mayor Jackson's involvement with the 1977 sanitation workers strike, a useful illustration of the subversion of "the moral force of racial populism."²¹² Here we can see the contradiction between the claims to a constituency and its powerful influence on one hand, and on the other, the dramatic shift in black politics from literal support at the picket lines against worker exploitation, to the reformulation of the problem as one of white politicians attacking his black-led administration – a simple reliance on identity-based political maneuvering.²¹³ This served to re-interpret issues as racial, and not class-based contradictions, contributing to the growing divide between electoral politics and radical politics. Reed attributes much of this disconnect to the reactionary direction of post-black power politics as opposed to any sort of strategic formulation to hold elected officials and government institutions accountable.²¹⁴ Reed and others²¹⁵ pose this as a problem of opposing class interests – between a working class and a real estate class. In this case, what was also pushing the development agenda was the restructuring of the economy towards privatization of public services and institutions, the decline of support for social services, and the increasing reliance on public funding for the growth of

²¹⁰ Reed, *Stirrings in the Jug*; Stone and Sanders, *The Politics of Urban Development*.

²¹¹ "A Critique of Neo-Progressivism in Theorizing about Local Development Policy: A Case from Atlanta," in *Stirrings in the Jug* and Stone, *The Politics of Urban Development*, 211.

²¹² Reed, *Stirrings in the Jug*.

²¹³ Reed.

²¹⁴ Ferguson, *Top down*.

²¹⁵ Stone and Sanders

private profit, as finance capital came to be the only stabilizing mechanism of capitalism. Urban politics were one managing mechanism of this stabilization.

In *Downtown America*, Alison Isenberg writes of the return to the past in the 1980s: "After decades of strenuously forward-looking modernization strategies, downtown investors began to mine the past for inspiration."²¹⁶ Isenberg's work highlights the nostalgia present in the projects of downtown revitalization and historically reaffirms Huyssen's assertion that "if the time consciousness of high modernity in the West tried to secure the future, then one could argue that the time-consciousness of the late twentieth century involves the no less perilous task of taking responsibility for the past. Both attempts inevitably are haunted by failure."²¹⁷

In a discursive and built attempt appearing to take responsibility for the past while supporting pro-growth development, Durham dedicated a new bridge to a local civil rights activist. The R. Kelly Bryant Pedestrian Bridge was memorialized in fall of 2010 to honor R. Kelly Bryant, who worked at NC Mutual Life for 36 years and is now 96 years old. He has been involved in various civic campaigns around Hayti and spent years trying to convince the city to redevelop the bridge, which has one entrance just doors from his home. According to another long-time Hayti resident and business owner John "Skeepie" Scarborough, grandson of J.C Scarborough who founded one of the nation's first African-American funeral homes in Durham, Bryant raised trouble about the inability to use this bridge until 2.2 million dollars was finally found from excess city transportation fees to develop the bridge in 2003.²¹⁸ In the dedication ceremony for the bridge, Mayor Bill Bell remarked, "R. Kelly Bryant is Durham, when you talk about Durham you talk about Kelly Bryant."²¹⁹

Before closing for renovation from 1995 until 2010, and for several years before that, the bridge had been known locally as a crime haven.²²⁰ It was built in 1973 to allow pedestrian

²¹⁶ Alison Isenberg, *Downtown America: A History of the Place and the People Who Made It*, Historical Studies of Urban America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), page 255.

²¹⁷ Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*, Cultural Memory in the Present (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2003) page 16.

²¹⁸ Emily LaDue and Vivian Wang, *Interview with John "Skeepie" Scarborough* (Scarborough Funeral Home, Durham, NC, 2013).

²¹⁹ Jay Jones, "Durham Dedicates R. Kelly Bryant Pedestrian Bridge," *Durham Voice*, n.d., <http://www.durhamvoice.org/durham-dedicates-r-kelly-bryant-pedestrian-bridge/>.

²²⁰ Adam Sobsey, "When a Bridge Is More than a Bridge," *Independent Weekly*, September 2010, <http://www.indyweek.com/indyweek/when-a-bridge-is-more-than-a-bridge/Content?oid=1667578>.

access over Highway 147 and to connect two sides of a community that was dismantled by the highway's construction. As a reporter for the Independent Weekly wrote, "the bridge loomed as an ugly reminder of what had happened to Hayti, affixed there like a censor's bar covering a history no one wanted you to see. It was a sorry welcome to Durham for drivers arriving from Raleigh-Durham International Airport."²²¹ Its reconstruction with blue lights and brick entryways, symbolizing the landscape of Durham, welcomes drivers coming in from Raleigh and the airport to Durham, and connects a piece of the American Tobacco Trail, a biking and hiking trail that runs through Durham. What had stood as a reminder of the destruction of community with Highway 147 and the decline of industry in Durham, through its reconstruction, became a commemorative site. Like the other developments in Durham, it is a "lieux de mémoire" with an intent to remember and a piece of construction meant to be lived in.²²² As Nora writes, "If the old ideal was to resurrect the past, the new ideal is to create a representation of it."²²³ And, like other developments in Durham, it accomplishes both by putting a new face on the history of Durham that focuses on the future of the city and what is to come by commemorating certain parts of the past. By naming it after R. Kelly Bryant, Durham commemorates the site and grounds that commemoration in nostalgia.

Importantly, the communities that the bridge currently connects are today being targeted by the "Northeast Central Durham Corridor" redevelopment plans that seek to bring in private developers to "uplift" an area suffering from the divestment of major manufacturing and the city's first wave of urban renewal. As Andrew Ross argues, the urban renewal we discuss in the past tense is actually continued into the urban development happening today.²²⁴ In Durham, for example, the highway that helped enable the growth of Research Triangle Park and the rise of the knowledge economy in the area is the same highway that is remembered as a destructive force for Durham's black community. The R. Kelly Bryant Bridge, rebuilt nearly fifty years after Highway 147, is meant to do a piece of the work of healing the trauma caused by the highway.

²²¹ Sobsey.

²²² *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, European Perspectives (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

²²³ *Realms of Memory*, 12.

²²⁴ Andrew Ross, "Universities and the Urban Growth Machine," *Dissent*, October 4, 2012, http://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/universities-and-the-urban-growth-machine.

However, the development of Durham today is not focused on the success and empowerment of the lower income communities affected by the early redevelopment efforts, but rather on the increasing wealth and attracting white collar workers to the area. The bridge then attempts to take the memory of urban renewal and keep it in the past, signifying an end to that painful part of Durham's history. Its symbolic location at the entrance to Durham from the airport does the work of welcoming visitors to a supposedly new Durham, with less crime and less conflict, and focused on growth into the future through its cleaning up the past. Perhaps most telling of this image-based development has been the lack of bridge upkeep since its first year, and the difficulty in keeping it lit.

2.2.4 Fayette Place and a Memory of Public Housing

As mentioned, a tour of Durham's Hayti district gives attendees an interactive, performed history of its rise and fall. Towards the end of the Hayti Heritage guided street tour, the tour guides walk the audience into a more recent history, the ruins of Fayette Place. Pointing to the now empty foundations behind a locked chain fence and overgrown grass, the actor states:

You all know what urban renewal is: Negro removal. Hayti's Fayetteville Street didn't fit into Hayti's traffic plan for the city. Through redevelopment, citizens were promised new homes and businesses that would replace a lifetime of history, memory, values. Look around. Here is Fayetteville Street Public Housing Projects. Does this look like renewal to you?²²⁵

Another actor plays the role of John O. Daniel, the first black owner of a hosiery mill in Durham and one of the first and only black mill owners as of 1877 whose home was on the site of Fayette Place. He tells the tour group that his "beautiful home" was torn down in 1865 to make way for urban renewal.²²⁶ Here, the history of Hayti is presented as a memory of black wealth from the past destroyed at the hands of the state's urban renewal programs and now a stark, overgrown lot. In this tour, presented to planners and a handful of middle class white property owners in town, this image acts to advocate for supporting historic preservation, historic tax credits, and private development. While the sentiment and content communicate a great historical loss, contrasting the emptiness of the lot with what could be there, the limits of the development

²²⁵ Aya Shabu and Brian Brewer, *Hayti Heritage Walking Tour*.

²²⁶ Shabu and Brewer

imagination is to gentrify that space with a mixed income development, as proposed by a recent advertisement by mayor-elect Steve Schewel.²²⁷

Public housing itself, as exemplified the Mayor's negative reference to Cabrini Green as "warehousing poor folks" when he voted against a public housing initiative in downtown Durham, is seen as ineffective, despite the actual history of a lack of government support for public projects and a focus on pro-growth development outside the city.²²⁸ Developer and independent blogger, historian, and Durham booster Gary Keuber wrote on his blog, *Open Durham*, which as a website explaining the architecture and planning history of several places in Durham, is a key site of development media itself:

Like most bad ideas, urban renewal had many roots in good intentions. We love to forget this, and look back on bad ideas as if they were perpetuated by evil people. Which allows us plenty of room to repeat our mistakes. For progressive folks, the good intention was decent housing.²²⁹

The roots of urban renewal were in spurring economic growth for private accumulation, seen as the only way towards jobs, housing, and a quality of life. Urban renewal was sold as decent housing, but remembering these "good intentions" is an act of remembering the *discourse* of development. It serves to promote continued faith in publicly funding various private, profit-making development ventures with the stated intentions of closing inequality gaps in housing and quality of life, even though this was precisely the plan for the failure of urban renewal. The failure is in turn remembered as the failure of public programs, instead of what it actually was – the failure of public funding of private programs.²³⁰ The discrepancy is reflected in Keuber's statements, functioning to promote an idea that his "we" – "progressive folks" – are doing their best at development today. This is a nod to the tax credits and mixed public and private developments such as those built by his own company, Scientific Properties, while Durham is repeating its "mistakes," again using discourses of equitable development – further perpetuated by various retellings of history – that are actually even further privatized versions of what is marketed as public development.

²²⁷ "Issues, and Instagram Account," Campaign, *Steve Schewel for Mayor* (blog), October 10, 2017, <https://www.stevefordurham.com/issues/>.

²²⁸ *Durham City Council Meeting*.

²²⁹ Gary Keuber, "Fayette Place," *Open Durham* (blog), n.d., <http://www.opendurham.org/buildings/fayette-place>.

²³⁰ Anderson, *The Federal Bulldozer*.

The Fayetteville Street Housing Projects were city-owned public housing structures built in 1967 to house Hayti residents displaced by the building of the Durham Freeway, which bulldozed their “slum” and “blighted” homes.²³¹ Families lived in the 20-acre, 200-unit complex for several decades, gradually losing funding and support from the Durham Housing Authority and the federal government. Between 2001-2004, the site began to end leases and send residents elsewhere, converting it to a development maintained by low-income tax credits. This work never came to fruition, as renting to low-income families in a majority black part of the city, was unappealing to any private partner, and the Durham Housing Authority no longer prioritized its own or HUD funding to subsidize low-income housing. The Housing Authority in fact ended up with debts to HUD as a result of this failed transition. In 2007, in order to pay back these debts, the complex was sold to and demolished two years later by a Philadelphia developer, Campus Apartments, to construct student housing in partnership with North Carolina Central University.

Meanwhile, a stipulated ten year option period of development was set to expire on August 7, 2017, giving the Durham Housing Authority the right to buy back the location for the sale price since Campus Apartments had not yet developed the site. Beginning in the summer of 2016, Durham CAN held meetings to urge the city to buy back the property in order to develop affordable housing on the site. In August 2017, the city repurchased the site for \$4,162,000 dollars, through a grant awarded from the city’s general fund on June 5th to the Durham Housing Authority’s development corporation, Development Ventures Incorporated.²³² The site is now being maintained by the Durham Housing Authority as the agency looks to private developers to develop the property into Section 8-optioned housing according to HUD’s Rental Assistance Demonstration Program, or RAD. This program and Section 8 are programs that offer public funding to private developers to build housing for lower income families and individuals through subsidies and rent checks paid to tenants but earmarked for their landlords. As part of the transition towards the appearance of “choice” in housing, these programs still contain the market

²³¹ Sarah Willets, “Durham City Council Awards \$4 Million Grant to Purchase Fayette Place,” *Indy Week*, June 6, 2017, <https://www.indyweek.com/news/archives/2017/06/06/durham-city-council-awards-4-million-grant-to-purchase-fayette-place>, <http://www.opendurham.org/buildings/fayette-place>.

²³² City Council Meeting, June 5, 2017. <http://cityordinances.durhamnc.gov/OnBaseAgendaOnline/Meetings/ViewMeeting?id=200&doctype=1>; Willets.

idealism that urban renewal contained: that a public-private partnership will help to bring affordable housing and equality to the city. Most recently, Durham mayoral candidate Steve Schewel posted a photo of himself on Instagram in front of the Fayette Place chain link fence to show his dedication to affordable housing in the Triangle.²³³

2.2.5 Selling Black Wall Street

City Councilwoman Jillian Johnson, who ran on a campaign calling for equity, affordability, and social justice, in a campaign Q & A with the blog *Bull City Rising*, discussed the issue of businesses catering to only wealthy people:

"What is happening in Durham is, we're getting beer gardens, we're getting fancy cupcake shops, we're getting nice restaurants and – and I like all that stuff, my partner and I have a date to go to Mateo on Sunday, and it's delicious and I love it – and I am very much one of those privileged folks that can afford to participate in this new downtown... But I think for folks who can't, there's serious questions of equity, and who are these businesses providing these services for," Johnson cautioned. "And I think that we are seeing a lot of displacement already in North-East Central Durham, in Cleveland-Holloway, you know, house prices have gone up by about 400% in the last ten years, and that is not sustainable for that community.

Noting that Durham has, through incentives and public policy, been "subsidizing all this development in downtown," Johnson encouraged the city to find opportunities to bring more locally-relevant businesses into other neighborhoods.²³⁴

The problem with Johnson's call for locally-relevant businesses, is that these new businesses are only catering to a professional class, and there is no incentive to cater to a population that cannot afford high prices to cover the higher rents and profit potential on these spaces. Regardless of the intentions at play, businesses that do not cater to the incoming wealthy classes are unsustainable as the city is further redeveloped and gentrified.

Greg Hills of Austin Lawrence Partners answered a question about the displacement of what used to be downtown's only café – which was also owned by an African American woman on Parrish Street, Blue Coffee Café – from his new hotel on the property, the *Unscripted*. In response he asked, "How well are those retailers going to be able to re-invent themselves?"²³⁵

The message is that those who do not serve the new elite, fail. Nearby downtown, a bar and

²³³ Schewel, "Issues."

²³⁴ <http://www.bulldcityrising.com/2015/10/meet-the-city-council-candidates-jillian-johnson-1.html>

²³⁵ "Meet the City Council Candidates: Jillian Johnson," *Bull City Rising* (blog), October 29, 2015, <http://www.bulldcityrising.com/2015/10/meet-the-city-council-candidates-jillian-johnson-1.html>.

nightclub serving an older generation called Talk of the Town was displaced due to rising rents. Also pushed out of the hotel property were a sneaker and t-shirt store primarily serving a younger Black generation, and Blue Coffee, which was supported in earnest on social media by local architect and former coordinator of Downtown neighborhood association, PAC-5 (Police and Communities, Downtown District) Committee, Scott Harmon, was forced out as well. As reported by a local blog: "The developer told [owner Gwen] Matthews she could remain in the space where the hotel, called Unscripted, will be located, but her rent would soar and she would have to substantially downsize. So in December 2014, Matthews moved out."²³⁶ Harmon promised space to its owner and organized a Kickstarter campaign for her to be able to afford the higher rent in one of his apartment buildings down the street, but Matthews presented a statement in late 2016 stating that she was not able to afford the transition. In the meantime, she temporarily opened her business in the lobby of the NC Mutual Life Building just between Downtown and the West End neighborhood, but did not have enough business to keep her there. The businesses downtown, and in other locations near downtown such as the West End – a local coffee roaster and café, Joe Van Gogh Café, the Durham Co-op Market, and a new restaurant called Grub – serve the incoming educated, upwardly mobile professional, elite, and upper middle class clientele. The newest location of Joe Van Gogh Café for example which has built a handful of locations around the Triangle, sits in a former gas station retrofitted with outdoor seating and trendy aesthetic details, sitting just across from the Durham Food Co-op. Joe Van Gogh also operates a location within Duke's campus, having taken over the café in the West Campus student union, the Bryan Center. Without serving the young professionals, elite finance and research population, or Duke students, businesses in Durham struggle.

While Blue Coffee's Matthews, serving a primarily black regular clientele and wide mix of regulars and supporting evening meetings and jazz shows, could afford to stay in business when rent was lower (\$1450 for most of her tenancy), she could not sustain the Hotel's rent of nearly

²³⁶ Rachel Chason, "The Closing of Blue Coffee: How One Durham Cafe Is Shaping Conversation about Gentrification Downtown," *A City Beat Durham* (blog), May 3, 2017, <https://acitybeatdurham.wordpress.com/2017/05/03/the-closing-of-blue-coffee-how-one-durham-cafe-is-shaping-conversation-about-gentrification-downtown/>.

double²³⁷ without changing her business to serve the incoming higher income professional classes. In a 2015 column by then Indy Week editor Lisa Sorg, she discussed her comparison between Blue Coffee's temporary operation in the NC Mutual Life Building and downtown's new Japanese bar and ramen restaurant, Dashi, she ended with:

There is room in my life for both Dashi and Blue Coffee. Likewise, if downtown Durham wants to maintain the diversity that has made it a destination for displaced Yankees and West Coast refugees, there must be room for both chi chi cuisine and home cooking. When I want a Japanese whisky and black sesame nori popcorn, I'm glad I can get it. But sometimes nothing tastes better than a mound of mashed potatoes.²³⁸

Sorg demonstrates the benign conclusion of "development for all" after critiquing the problems with the pro-growth agenda and showing that it is actually only possible for it to go in one direction. The article offhandedly covers the forced displacement of Blue Coffee, describing it as being "temporary exiled," from a downtown that "has transformed from a sketchy place to get knocked in the head, to hipster central where a 17th-floor hotel suite goes for \$1,100 a night."²³⁹ Even at NC Mutual Life, and the other businesses that rent space in their building, which employs a majority black workforce, she could not sustain her business without changing her menu and image to fit the aesthetics and taste of a growing population in Durham. It is not just that these businesses have to cater to an upscale audience to survive, but that the populations they served have been displaced.

The article focuses on the food in the two locations, and whether Dashi is worth the price and Blue Coffee is worth the trek outside of the limits of downtown proper and inside the NC Mutual Life Building, answering with an unenthusiastic "yes." Her article is written to show the contrast between expensive and affordable food options in Durham, and takes a view only of how this affects consumers such as herself, whose dominant concern is where to eat. NC Mutual Life, the "the largest African-American-owned building in America," is given more attention than the forced move of Matthews' business, and Dashi's details fill most of the rest of the article. In the end, the history of Black Wall Street and the discussion of soul food at Blue Coffee – Sorg even

²³⁷ Rachel Chason.

²³⁸ Lisa Sorg, "On Chapel Hill Street, Dashi and Blue Coffee Show Two Sides of Durham," *Indy Week*, March 18, 2015, <https://www.indyweek.com/indyweek/on-chapel-hill-street-dashi-and-blue-coffee-show-two-sides-of-durham/Content?oid=4358950>.

²³⁹ Sorg, 2015

jokes that the cost “leaves plenty of money for a heart surgeon” – is ultimately used to support Dashi, which is owned by three other successful other downtown restaurant owners.²⁴⁰ Blue Coffee’s planned move back to downtown is discussed as a given, but that plan was always precarious. When Matthews was unable to move back downtown, Blue Coffee had already moved into a space of invisibility and out of the media mind. This article does the work of fulfilling the disinformation that Durham is growing for all by covering the unaffordability of the city while making statements that do not take into account how this change is actually affecting the population, the characteristic nod of development media to a critique of gentrification and a desire to claim a history of black capitalism without discussing the present political and economic contradictions.

Lisa Sorg was editor of the former Independent Weekly for eight years, and saw it through its ownership transition in 2012 to its present form, the Indy Week. It changed hands from city councilman Steve Schewel to national publisher ZM Indy, Inc based in Portland, Oregon. Sorg covered Durham’s urban development for several years and was fired without reason, except for “changes” that the publisher wanted to make.²⁴¹ She now continues to cover politics, culture, and development in Durham as a popular voice of the progressive population on the blog, Bull City Rising. Sorg writes stories that often critique gentrification as a problem in Durham but champions Durham’s growth as a positive direction for the city that could be fixed with more thoughtful policies, “a development for all” model.²⁴² Notably, her firing from the Indy Week angered local progressives, and created a stir that it was a political move from a corporate publisher who was seeking to support development and did not want Sorg’s critiques to color the redevelopment.²⁴³ Whatever the reasons, Sorg’s development media helped Durham’s pro-growth agenda by providing the semblance of critique and a place to hold the ideas of Durham as

²⁴⁰ The owner of the Cookery, discussed in Chapter 3, and the owners of the downtown eatery, Toast.

²⁴¹ R.L. Bynum, “Dismissal Surprises Former ‘Indy Week’ Editor,” *Raleigh & Company* (blog), August 14, 2015, <http://raleighco.com/media-circus/lisa-sorg-editor-indy-week/>.

²⁴² Lisa Sorg, “On Chapel Hill Street, Dashi and Blue Coffee Show Two Sides of Durham”; Lisa Sorg, “The Moment You Realize Your Entire City Is Unaffordable.”

²⁴³ In multiple conversations in Durham after the firing, nearly every resident suspected this, calling her a martyr for Durham.

progressive, based in a strong history of black success, and rooted in culture and community without actually handling these contradictions.

An ideal notion of downtown Durham in the 1960s was described by Mayor Pro Tempore Cora Cole McFadden, who was called upon in a city council meeting to do this work of telling Durham's retail business history, testifying to a potential that Durham has, based on its past: "I remember all of the retail in downtown, and I certainly would like to see some of that come back," she remarked after recounting being a child shopping in downtown and dreaming of someday being able to buy the fancy women's dresses her mother used to shop for. Kevin Dick, Director of the Office of Workforce and Economic Development, flatly responded that "to go back to the days that the Mayor Pro Tempore alluded to, [well] there were those days, and then there were decades of disinvestment and so now we've systematically tried to invest over the past 3-5 years and it's just an ongoing process."²⁴⁴ This moment of development media occurred in a special city council meeting discussing the budget allocation for new businesses and next steps for Durham to grow its retail base in downtown, a process supported almost singlehandedly with small business loans made by Self-Help. The developers behind the revival of Parrish Street were successful in their ultimate goal, which was the extensive development of downtown Durham. Now, Parrish Street houses a bakery, bars, restaurants, historically renovated condos, and a 27-story condo and retail skyscraper, One City Center. As the *Triangle Business Journal* noted in a lead-in to the new project: "Economic development efforts are underway to revitalize Parrish Street. And they're working."²⁴⁵

In 2015, two friends who grew up in Durham, launched a clothing line called Runaway with the theme of Black Wall Street.²⁴⁶ Years earlier, one of the first t-shirts of the brand owner Gabe Gets was a shirt stating, "I'd rather be shot in Durham than bored in Cary." The shirt, according to the owner, was reclaiming the identity of Durham with pride in the city despite its high crime and poverty. One new restaurant on Parrish Street was slated to call itself "Hattie Mae

²⁴⁴ City Council Meeting, October 2013

²⁴⁵ Lauren K. Ohnesorge, "Black Wall Street: A Legacy in Downtown Durham," *Triangle Business Journal*, June 20, 2014, sec. Banking and Financial Services, <https://www.bizjournals.com/triangle/blog/2014/06/black-wall-street-a-legacy-in-downtown-durham.html>.

²⁴⁶ Emily LaDue, *Interview with Gabriel Eng Goetz, Creator, Runaway Brand*, Digital Video and Audio (American Underground, Durham, NC, 2015).

Williams Called Me Captain” until local pushback – including a locally circulated hashtag on social media #HattieMaeWilliamsCalledMeRacist – convinced the white owner that naming his restaurant after his black housekeeper was glorifying a highly exploitative relationship and profiting off of this glorification.²⁴⁷ The restaurant, now called Littler, is one of the more expensive and boutique-style eateries in downtown Durham, and sits beside “Bulldega,” an upscale mini-grocery store, on Parrish Street. As one of the several articles covering the development stated, By far, Downtown Durham’s largest and most expensive development to date is the One City Center skyscraper in the middle of downtown that has been the source of contestation in the city.

The Center for Community Self-Help plays a significant role in this new retail development through small business loans that are meant to assist businesses that may look risky to traditional lenders. However, Self-Help bases its judgment of risk and success on similar criteria to those used by major banks, and the loans that have the possibility of success are those that are serving the growing upscale consumer base of Durham. As Chapter 3 will show in further detail, much development in Durham has been made possible through tax credits and loans that were based on the idea that supporting the growth of a wealthy population in Durham was a risk, and Self-Help and other early investors stepped in to take on these risks, a luxury afforded to them because of the cushion of federal tax backing and the financial security of Duke’s population or investments.

2.3 Black Wall Street to Black Main Street in the Spiral of Politics

2.3.1 Context of Struggle and Formation of Ideas and Goals

Stage one and two of the spiral of politics is the “context of struggle” and “formation of ideas and goals.”²⁴⁸ For the idea of black self-help, the context is long; the context of Reconstruction, the “slavery by another name” of debt peonage, violent racist attacks, and the

²⁴⁷ Grayson Haver Currin, “Gray Brooks Defends ‘Hattie Mae Williams Called Me Captain,’ but He’s Willing to Consider a Name Change,” *Indy Week*, October 7, 2015, <https://www.indyweek.com/food/archives/2015/10/07/gray-brooks-defends-hattie-mae-williams-called-me-captain-but-hes-willing-to-consider-a-name-change>. Jill Warren Lucas, “More on That Unwieldy Durham Restaurant Name ‘Hattie Mae Williams Called Me Captain,’” *Indy Week*, October 5, 2015, <https://www.indyweek.com/food/archives/2015/10/05/more-on-that-unwieldy-durham-restaurant-name-hattie-mae-williams-called-me-captain>.

²⁴⁸ Smith, “Ideas and the Spiral of Politics.”

state-organized racism of the Jim Crow south. The context of the development of both black self-help and self-determination was structural racism and the need for African Americans to survive in the face of structural exclusion and attacks. The ideas of Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. DuBois, and Marcus Garvey, and other sites of black business district formation from Wilmington to Atlanta, and Tulsa, shaped the discourse and beliefs of self-help and financial autonomy that led to the growth of Hayti and Black Wall Street. This falls under Smith's stage two – formation of ideas and goals. Smith emphasizes that discourses and ideas at this stage are used strategically, appeal to different parts of the population, and can often be contradictory and clash. Here that is manifested through the varied opinions about involvement with the white community, respectability politics of the middle class and elite, and clashes with working and poor classes.

The title Black Wall Street is usually ascribed to a single street in the middle of downtown, Parrish Street, where the black-owned centers of finance were housed: Mechanics and Farmers' Bank, founded in 1922, and the insurance provider, NC Mutual Life, formerly NC Mutual and Provident Association, founded in 1898. The institutions of Durham's Black Wall Street extended beyond Parrish Street, and two other major institutions, Mutual Building and Loan, and North Carolina College (North Carolina Central University), also anchored the growing black business class. These financial institutions helped shape Durham into the "Capital of the Black Middle Class"²⁴⁹ by providing bank services, insurance, and loans to black citizens, because other banks would not do so. These banks thus acted as sites of resistance and wealth creation, and were integral in black businesses and leaders gaining political and economic standing. As Brown writes, "Durham's black elite emerged within an apartheid system enforced routinely by violence and learned to use segregation to its advantage, believing it could provide a route to autonomy otherwise denied by Jim Crow."²⁵⁰

Black Wall Street supported, and was supported by, the population just southeast of Downtown in the Hayti neighborhood, where from the 1880s through the 1950s over 200 businesses – including black-owned funeral homes, barbershops, grocery stores, restaurants, a

²⁴⁹ <https://durhamnc.gov/530/Historic-Parrish-Street>; first coined by E. Franklin Frazier in 1925, Brown 14.

²⁵⁰ Brown, 114.

hospital, library, and movie theater – and a large middle class community struggled but thrived. The Hayti neighborhood is remembered as the height of black culture in Durham. Both Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois visited Hayti in the early 1900s, and wrote of how impressed they were by its culture, class, and organization.²⁵¹ The focus of Du Bois' writing is on the strength of the community as a whole, as well as the impressive diversity in downtown Durham and agreeable race relations. Yet, like other cities in the Jim Crow South, Durham was segregated and the black population was not treated as an equal citizenry, with scores of accounts of whites attacking, policing, and ridiculing black citizens.

Du Bois visited and wrote of Durham in 1912:

A cursory glance at the colored people of Durham would discover little to differentiate them from their fellows in dozens of similar Southern towns. They work as laborers and servants, washerwomen and janitors. A second glance might show that they were well represented in the building trades and it would arouse interest to see 500 colored girls at work as spinners in one of the big hosiery mills. The chief interest of any visitor who stayed long enough to notice, would, however, centre in the unusual inner organization of this group of men, women, and children. It is a new "group economy" that characterizes the rise of the Negro American -- the closed circle of social intercourse, teaching and preaching, buying and selling, employing and hiring, and even manufacturing, which, because it is confined chiefly to Negroes, escapes the notice of the white world. In all colored groups one may notice something of this coöperation in church, school, and grocery store. But in Durham, the development has surpassed most other groups and become of economic importance to the whole town. There are, for instance, among the colored people of the town fifteen grocery stores, eight barber shops, seven meat and fish dealers, two drug stores, a shoe store, a haberdashery, and an undertaking establishment.²⁵²

He goes on to draw attention to the black-owned businesses and the interdependence of black residents in maintaining Hayti, as well as the role of the "Durham Group"²⁵³ which started and ran the financial institutions and the university and helped to finance many businesses.

The hosiery mill mentioned above by Du Bois in Durham was started by Charles Amey, the manager of the only black-owned hosiery mill in the nation, the Durham Textile Mill, that was opened with backing from the black financial leaders. However, it closed in 1916 as the pressures of World War I brought consumption down. Managers of factories and mills at this time were strictly white, as the technical knowledge required to operate and service machines and set up a

²⁵¹ W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Upbuilding of Black Durham. The Success of the Negroes and Their Value to a Tolerant and Helpful Southern City*, World's Work, 1912, <http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/dubois/dubois.html>.

²⁵² W. E. B. Du Bois.

²⁵³ Brown.

factory was not made accessible to black workers. Amey, however, was able to learn how to manage this mill because the manufacturers of new automated machines allowed him to attend classes for training so that their machines would be purchased, in this case, by Moore, Merrick, and Spaulding.²⁵⁴ As the textile mills and tobacco warehouses continued to bring in new machines, automation replaced the jobs of hundreds of workers in Durham. Even though Hayti was a booming, prosperous neighborhood with its own functional economy for most out-of-work workers there was no local alternative for which they had the skills and experience once their jobs were lost. This was a gradual change that occurred starting from the beginning of industrial production and continues today.

2.3.2 Stage Three: Coalition-Forming and Class Division in Hayti

The Durham Group became an elite in Durham, and through their real estate and financial holdings were able to stabilize and support the black middle class. Coalition building for the Durham group and the growing black elite in Durham meant developing a black elite class that could compete with the downtown white elite in the city. Several historical accounts also point to the fact that segregation in Durham was not as distinct as typically imagined, and a few black property owners owned businesses in downtown as well.²⁵⁵ But Hayti's development occurred overall in the face of business, school, and residential segregation in the city. The owners in Hayti saw black ownership of property and business as the key to ending racial inequality and as the only option in the face of government-mandated segregation and exclusion. However, to maintain their wealth and standing, the black elite had to make major compromises with the white elite that negatively affected the black poor and working classes in the city. This reinforced divisions that linger today.

These compromises took the form of "respectability politics" and support for policies that served the interests of the owning classes but separated their success from the black poor. Thus, while Hayti and Black Wall Street are today used to signify Durham's black community development in the face of structural inequality, the community was divided sharply as the black

²⁵⁴ Andre D Vann, *African Americans of Durham County* (Arcadia, 2017).

²⁵⁵ Andre D Vann; Brown, *Upbuilding Black Durham*.

elite tried to separate themselves from the struggling classes. In CC Spaulding's own words, "I am convinced that the demoralizing actions of our shiftless, worthless element are as revolting to us as a whole as they are to the better element of the white race."²⁵⁶ These words by CC Spaulding point to the orientation of the Durham Group in prioritizing their association with the white middle and upper classes over the black poor and working classes. Oral histories from poorer blacks at this time discuss how they saw Spaulding and other members of the Durham Group as leaders who ran the black community at large, but not as allies fighting for the interests of the working or lower classes.²⁵⁷ The writers of the walking tour about the Hayti District draw attention to these economic differences in their portrayal of the editor of the African-American newspaper, Louis E. Austin, as the one who "rocked the boat" while CC Spaulding "stabilized it."²⁵⁸ The actor playing Austin states: "I work closely with CC Spaulding and the old vanguard, if only to push them out,"²⁵⁹ and mentions that the two formed what is now the Committee on the Affairs of Black People, the local PAC that has taken an influential backseat in recent years to the People's Alliance, a majority white, liberal PAC. The tour, in their telling of this history, emphasizes how the two leaders with very different political opinions worked together to fight for inclusion in, and against, the powerful white institutions – Austin, driven to fight economic inequality, and Spaulding, driven to amass wealth and keep what he considered disorderly conduct under control.

The Durham Group looked up to those more powerful as a strategy for survival and increasing wealth and equity for African Americans. So, while not at all on equal grounds, the black and white elite of Durham were both working towards amassing more wealth and building power and networks – with the black elite facing racism and obstacles – while the majority of the population – black and white – was working for white-owned businesses, whether in the tobacco factories or the textile mills, or in the homes and farms of wealthy white families. As historian Brown discusses, the African American women who worked in the homes of white families were subject to targeted racism all day, while the growing black middle class could stay somewhat

²⁵⁶ Brown, 23.

²⁵⁷ NC Oral History Project archives

²⁵⁸ Aya Shabu and Brian Brewer, *Hayti Heritage Walking Tour*.

²⁵⁹ Aya Shabu and Brian Brewer.

shielded by working with only other African Americans the majority of their time. This led to distinctly different experiences for both classes, with the lower classes still further exposed to the brutality of segregation in the face of white management and ownership and estranged from the wealthier black classes. Today, this history of Black Wall Street is yoked to an idea of radicality and struggle. As discussed above, it was indeed a struggle for wealth and survival. However, like the development in Durham today, that struggle was a struggle for middle class wealth and stability, and while it had some success, it was also systematically destroyed during urban renewal, competition after desegregation, and automation.

The black banking institutions still exist and serve the black middle and upper classes in Durham and elsewhere that have money to invest and property to insure. The community however, became a site of urban renewal, or urban “removal,” with the construction of the Durham Freeway. The neighborhood destruction resulting from urban renewal, mass unemployment from the closing of the factories, and the middle and upper classes leaving the city for the suburbs gradually pulled the resources out of downtown Durham that would have been necessary to fulfill the promises of urban renewal. The building of the Durham Freeway shows the way that the coalition building, stage three in the spiral of politics model, between the black and white middle and upper classes was based on major compromises that led to the destruction of Hayti with the construction of the Durham Freeway – coalition-building among the elite in Durham. This is seen in the transition in the economy from manufacturing to education, medicine, research and development. In order to make this transition, land was needed to develop highways, and resources needed to develop suburbs, while the resources from tobacco and textile companies left the inner cities.

2.3.3 Federally-Mandated Self-Help

Thus the ambivalent legacy of postwar American liberalism not only created many political opportunities for the conservative ascendancy but also allowed liberals to fit comfortably within the ideological and policy mainstream of neoliberal America. This surprising confluence reminds us that the differences between American liberals and conservatives play out within the narrow scope of the rhetorical conventions and policy alternatives of American politics, all of which have been inexorably shaped by the legacy

of the paradoxes of American history, not least those of the eighteenth-century American liberalism from which today's putative "conservatives" and "liberals" are both descended.
 – Karen Ferguson²⁶⁰

A new cycle of the spiral of politics occurs in the 1970s leading to the formation of the Center for Community Self-Help. To arrive at this context, the federal government adopted policies and formed federal institutions based on the idea of black self-help. The 1960s and 70s saw the change from supporting public housing and welfare reform to supporting programs for individual success and ownership, such as Nixon's move to black capitalism.

With each successive presidency after Nixon, Housing and Urban Development moved further away from subsidized government-managed housing and direct aid programs; welfare dissolved into meager support for fewer and fewer people in need; and those who did receive federal aid were private companies, developers, institutions, and nonprofits who now do the work of managing poverty. VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America), for example, funds individuals to work with approved organizations to promote community and equality, in their words, "building communities while building their careers."²⁶¹

Stage Four in the spiral of politics model is the capture of governing institutions and policies, which is demonstrated by the national capture of the idea of black self-help through Nixon's promotion of "black capitalism" in cities and the formation of programs under Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty campaign, such as VISTA and Head Start. These ideas and programs were formed out of the struggles of black communities and activists working to end rural and urban poverty, such as Fannie Lou Hamer's work forming Head Start to teach young African American students what they needed to know in order to effectively learn in school. Still today, these programs are populated with educators, organizers, and activists who work to improve the lives of individuals and communities and fight with idealism to do so. However, as I will discuss in Chapter Four, while these programs continued and continue, inequality still increased as overall economic growth stagnated. The movements for overall community uplift were watered down and

²⁶⁰ Ferguson, 14

²⁶¹ "AmeriCorps Vista Program," *US National Service* (blog), n.d., <https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/ameriCorps/ameriCorpsvista>.

infiltrated, and equality became equated with individual uplift and merit-based advancement.²⁶²

The Ford Foundation, which was providing resources to many black empowerment projects early on, served an important role in this work of converting liberal philanthropy to neoliberal policies.²⁶³

When the Civil Rights Act passed in 1964, Durham was also undergoing a decline in its industry and, as described above, the bulldozing of the center of business and life of Durham's black middle class. So, with institutionalized desegregation and more African Americans able to work in formerly white-only workplaces, workplaces were closing and the economy was shifting away from an industrial working base. The black middle and owning classes in Durham began moving to the suburbs and increasingly turning to real estate, with some families and businesses actually receiving federal retribution for the closing of their businesses and displacement of homes in Hayti through Community Development Corporations that were given support largely through federal funding initiatives. Formal, owning and middle class black political organizing was carried out through the Durham Committee on Negro Affairs, which formed in 1935. In 1953, the committee helped to get Durham's first black city council member elected, Rencher N. Harris.²⁶⁴ Slowly, desegregation of political and business institutions took place as the middle class base in Durham left the city and the working class base lost their jobs. In other words, the overall situation was getting worse for the most vulnerable, while programs to find and support "the best and the brightest" and promote individuals with ideas to support equality became the new goal of the Ford Foundation.²⁶⁵

In 1963, as poverty increased throughout the state such that "thirty-seven percent of residents lived below the poverty line and half of all students dropped out of school,"²⁶⁶ then Governor and future Duke President Terry Sanford convinced the Ford Foundation to invest seven million dollars in a statewide program called the North Carolina Fund, to try to bring education and jobs into the poorest of the state's black communities, focusing on both urban and

²⁶² Ferguson, *Top down*.

²⁶³ Ferguson.

²⁶⁴ "The Old Black Corporate Bar"

²⁶⁵ Top Down

²⁶⁶ Leoneda Inge, "Durham Celebrates 50th Anniversary of NC Fund," *WUNC*, November 12, 2013, <http://wunc.org/post/durham-celebrates-50th-anniversary-nc-fund#stream/0>.

rural literacy and education, including in Durham.²⁶⁷ Howard Fuller was a young black civil rights activist based in Durham who was working with school youth to close the education gap through a federal housing and urban education program called Operation Breakthrough. He was hired as a lead organizer in the NC Fund by the program director, UNC-Chapel Hill Government Professor George Esser.²⁶⁸ Fuller's work had been concentrated in Durham schools, working to close the literacy gap between black and white students. As his work with the NC Fund expanded to rural poor communities throughout the state, Fuller became more and more politically radical.

NC Fund organizers encouraged communities to fight for state resources for education, to organize themselves in survival programs inspired by a legacy of black homesteaders and organizations such as the Black Panthers, and efforts of activists such as Fannie Lou Hamer. In one of his speeches in Durham, Fuller called for black power and community control in the city as the only way to end poverty. Conservative congressman Jim Gardner took this opportunity to help discredit and end the NC Fund, calling Fuller too radical and discursively connecting him to ideas and fears of black urban riots and uprisings. By 1967, the NC Fund lost most of its funding and the ideas that Fuller and other organizers were implementing in rural NC were beginning to be co-opted by what would become merit-based government-administered programs such as Head Start and VISTA.²⁶⁹

With the NC Fund cut off due to racist fears of its radical influence, and after the Civil Rights Act of 1964 made institutionalized racism illegal, new strategies drawing on the history of black self-help were employed. Fuller became active with the small group of Duke African American students in the Allan Building takeover and helped to form Malcolm X University to teach radical community organizing in the city. Eventually, Fuller left North Carolina and left community organizing. Instead, he turned to promoting charter schools as the path to educational equality. In a very direct path, Fuller's trajectory shows the development from public support of community organizing and school equality to private, corporate control of education policies with the rise in charter schools with very different results. In North Carolina, for example, new reports

²⁶⁷ Robert Rodgers Korstad and Video Dialog Inc, *To Right These Wrongs: The North Carolina Fund and the Battle to End Poverty and Inequality in 1960s America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

²⁶⁸ Korstad.

²⁶⁹ Korstad.

on charter schools point to the ways that they are increasing inequality dramatically, pulling funding from public schools and contributing to a re-segregation of schooling.²⁷⁰ The idea of self-help of black communities was taken from struggles to teach and organize at local levels and turned into an idea of using public resources for private organizing endeavors.

In the 1960s, the organization CORE (Congress of Racial Equity) was also organizing to end segregation and inequality in school and work opportunities. CORE was a liberal democratic organization advocating integration and school equality, and was visible in North Carolina. Fuller was positioned to the left of this work as supporting more radical black community self-help, while CORE was focused on assimilationist goals. NC native Floyd McKissick, who was one of the first three black students admitted into UNC-Chapel Hill's School of Law, took over CORE's national leadership in 1966. While the shift in 1966 is often remembered as a turn to more radical black power politics for the organization, what this meant in practice was a turn towards supporting black business development in cities as a way of ending black poverty, and supporting Nixon's campaigns in 1968 and 1972 and his support for black capitalism instead of public welfare and urban housing.

The ideological history of Nixon's black capitalism can be directly traced to the history of this black organizing in North Carolina. McKissick eventually gained support from Nixon's administration to support his black homesteader project, Soul City, to the north of Durham in Warren County, NC. Soul City received a \$14 million federal bond as part of the federal "Model Cities" program, and McKissick oversaw the construction of a water, health, and factory system that was set to employ and house over 20,000 African Americans in NC. The failure of Soul City coincided with the decline of manufacturing and overall economic growth in the economy during the 1970s.²⁷¹ Federally and locally, there was a gradual shift from Johnson's Great Society programs, including the Model Cities program, as one major effort to publicly support community efforts to improve the lives of urban residents, towards individual-based market solutions. The infamous *Daily News* headline: "Ford to City-Drop Dead" in 1975 represented the abandonment

²⁷⁰ Hady Mawajdeh, Frank Stasio, and Jess Clark, "Charter Schools in North Carolina."

²⁷¹ Soul City Application to Model Cities Program.

of the city by the federal government in the mid-1970s.²⁷² But even the Model Cities Program was a move in the direction towards the neoliberal model of entrepreneurialism as an answer to the failing economy and lack of growth. Responsibility ultimately shifted to the developers of innovative programs, so that larger structural issues at work, namely, the decline of working class jobs and the transition to a finance economy, were glossed over. McKissick's program received funding, but overall the Model Cities program did not produce enough immediate results for the public and Congress to continue funding it beyond the late 1960s.²⁷³

Then, the idea of self-help was used by the Nixon administration and under the title of "black capitalism," with the help of the Ford Foundation, to support the containment of radical organizing in cities, Nixon's black capitalism was used to put the burden of the lack of growth overall in the economy on the shoulders of those most vulnerable. The infamous Moynihan report, commissioned in 1965 under Nixon, helped to justify the onus put on black families to pull themselves out of poverty, blaming their "dysfunctional family life"²⁷⁴ for their lack of resources. This is the second context of self-help, which now came down as a mandate from the US government, appearing to be an equalizing force.²⁷⁵

Meanwhile in Durham and elsewhere, the development of Community Development Corporations sought to support black businesses and black community organizing. However, these CDCs, such as United Development Industries (UDI), current Mayor Bill Bell's organization, quickly became development companies acting less as community development support and more as economic and real estate developers. As Karen Ferguson discusses in her study of the Ford Foundation:

The instrument that the Foundation settled on to achieve this reorientation was the CDC, an institution that it did not originate but that it had been shaping through funding since community development's first incarnations in the early 1960s. The CDC offered a new place-based, public-private model for the economic and social development of the nonwhite poor, once again putting the Foundation at the forefront of American social

²⁷² Sam Roberts, "Infamous 'Drop Dead' Was Never Said by Ford," *New York Times*, December 28, 2006, sec. NY/Region, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/28/nyregion/28veto.html>.

²⁷³ John F. Bauman, Roger Biles, and Kristin M. Szylvian, eds., *From Tenements to the Taylor Homes: In Search of an Urban Housing Policy in Twentieth-Century America* (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000). Roger Biles, *The Fate of Cities: Urban America and the Federal Government, 1945-2000* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2011).

²⁷⁴ Biles, 164.

²⁷⁵ Ferguson, *Top down*.

policy, this time by anticipating the nationwide trend toward localism and privatization that eschewed the grandiose, statist solutions of the dying New Deal order. Also in keeping with the national mood, the CDC retained the Foundation's ongoing focus on race- and ghetto-based solutions, rejecting any whiff of integrationism sure to arouse controversy among blacks and whites alike in the post-civil rights 1960s and 1970s. By the time that the Foundation joined Kennedy in building a CDC from the ground up, it could take what it liked from existing community development initiatives around the country. It then molded those elements to its ends of finding a liberal solution to the ongoing "problem" of directing African Americans, after their hard-won entrance into public life, onto the path of assimilation that would leave the structures of the American political economy intact.²⁷⁶

The CDCs were built on the idea that elite entrepreneurs could lead programs that would lift certain individuals out of poverty for advancement in university and business settings. They presented no real threat to the establishment order, and often used loans and financial solutions to support community programs. As Ferguson continues, "Democrats and Republicans flocked to these projects, as did philanthropic and government funders, all based on community development's promise to solve ghetto problems without any fundamental social, economic, or political disruption."²⁷⁷ The CDC model kept the aspects of 1960s and 70s community-based organizations that were legible to the market business and property development, and abandoned the political education, political agitation, and community self-determination. As some businesses became more successful and more African Americans were elected in municipal elections, CDCs became subsidized business ventures that appeared to be part of a legacy of black radical organizing, but fell squarely in line with even the most conservative politicians at the time.

This direction paved the way for the development of Self-Help as a Credit Union in 1980 – a new institution developed from a long spiral of politics, from a struggle to develop African-American wealth during Reconstruction and Jim Crow, to middle class-based community formation in Hayti, to movements and organizations for self-determination and civil rights, and finally, to institutions that support individual wealth creation and finance-based solutions, "controlled by elites who represented their particular constituencies while sharing the worldview and leadership style of their fellow members of the inner circle of American leadership."²⁷⁸ Like

²⁷⁶ Ferguson, 211.

²⁷⁷ Ferguson, 213

²⁷⁸ Ferguson, 62

the CDCs then, the idea of community empowerment was redirected into project-based solutions that were not rooted in communities, but rooted in the rhetoric of communities. As described, at this time the unemployment rate was on the rise, options for working class jobs were decreasing, and most of what was the urban budget was now going towards the new suburban outskirts of Durham and areas such as the more suburban and upscale Cary. The black and white middle classes at this time had already left or were leaving the city for the suburbs, concentrated in South and Southwest Durham towards Chapel Hill, or Southeast towards RTP, Raleigh, and Cary, away from more visible signs of poverty and into bigger homes with the perception of more safety.²⁷⁹

Notably, Nixon's presidency is often seen as the turning point towards neoliberalism in the United States, when self-help actually became the only option for economic survival, mandated through "workfare" programs and the transition from public housing to programs such as Section 8 and CHOICE housing, appearing to give more options to those in need of housing assistance through vouchers and subsidies towards developers, but offering fewer resources and housing that is dependent on the market, rather than stabilized and managed by the government. Of course, public housing before these shifts was underfunded, overcrowded, and poorly managed by HUD and local housing agencies as well. In Durham, 1,706 units of public housing remain operated by the Durham Housing Authority, a number that has been dropping steadily by roughly 100 units each year since the mid-1990s.²⁸⁰ In 2017, over 6,500 people applied for Section 8 vouchers, and over 1500 remain on waitlists to apply. In 2012, over 200 residents were evicted from the low-income Lincoln Apartments because they were not receiving public subsidies and could no longer afford to maintain its \$300-500 rents.²⁸¹ The apartments still sit empty but are part of a plan to turn them into a mixed-income development, as part of a larger project with McDougald Terrace, the city's largest soon-to-be-formerly public housing community.

²⁷⁹ Setha M Low, *Behind the Gates: Life, Security, and the Pursuit of Happiness in Fortress America* (New York: Routledge, 2003). Low's ethnography of a gated community in Arizona gives a thorough account of residents' perceptions of safety inside suburban neighborhoods, and crime and danger outside of the gates of their neighborhoods.

²⁸⁰ Lisa Sorg, "Durham's Affordable Housing Crisis," *Indy Week*, October 24, 2012, <https://www.indyweek.com/indyweek/durhams-affordable-housing-crisis/Content?oid=3176667>; "Public Housing," *Durham Housing Authority* (blog), n.d.

²⁸¹ Lisa Sorg, "Durham's Affordable Housing Crisis."

McDougald Terrace, with 360 units, has received a \$300,000 Choice Neighborhood Initiative (CNI) grant, a small amount of money compared to the massive change that the grant will enact on the neighborhood. Located southeast of downtown Durham in the Hayti neighborhood, closer to NC Central University, Durham Tech, and en route to RTP from downtown, the grant transforms affordable housing into mixed income housing, encouraging private and public investment in the redevelopment. The Choice Neighborhoods Initiative is development media itself – in claiming to renovate and improve “distressed housing,” the program takes affordable housing and transforms it into more expensive housing, and encourages the neighborhood to cater to higher income individuals – essentially, gentrification under the name of public housing. The language of the CNI Planning Grant points out the problem in discursive renderings of current affordable housing initiatives that use the discursive mechanisms outlined in Chapter 1 – community, affordability, history, future, jobs, and partnerships – in order to appear to be serving the people of the neighborhood, but actually serve to transform areas into pro-growth, profit-serving areas:

The Southeast Central neighborhood of Durham, once a flourishing center of economic and historical significance for African-Americans in the South, began a long period of economic decline and social disinvestment in the 1960s. Today there are pockets of vacant, abandoned and demolished houses and businesses. The long-term vacancy rate is 30.30 percent. The poverty rate is 47.14 percent and Part 1 violent crime is 2.62 times the city rate. Students attend persistently low-performing schools. McDougald Terrace’s 360 public housing units represent some of the most concentrated and distressed housing in the city of Durham. The neighborhood, however, has existing assets and planned investments that will help reverse this pattern of decline. The Southeast Central neighborhood is located two miles from Duke University and one mile from downtown Durham, which has undergone a transformation by converting historic tobacco and textile structures into vibrant mixed-used residential and commercial buildings. Through the Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant, the Housing Authority of Durham and its planning coordinator, TCG International, LLC, will conduct an intensive planning and outreach effort that will build on existing momentum in the neighborhood. The planning process will buttress implementation efforts of the Livability Initiative, Gateway Plan, Trails and Greenways Plan, and the Fayetteville St. Historic Preservation Plan, bringing quality improvements to an underserved neighborhood. It will also foster increased community involvement in the local schools, improving performance and graduation rates, and adding early learning programs for young children. Shortfalls in community amenities such as parks, sidewalks and transportation will be identified and addressed. Further, the process will create a steering committee that fosters the collaboration that is needed to achieve a vision that serves everyone in the community.²⁸²

²⁸² Durham City Planning, “Durham CNI Report,” November 2012, <http://www.durhamcni.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Durham-CNI-Description.pdf>.

The promises it makes for better amenities will serve those can afford to live in the area after renovations, and who move back after renovations – not unlike the promises of urban renewal.

Mayoral candidate Steve Schewel, when questioned on the topic at a neighborhood forum, affirmed his commitment to the CNI and the promotion of better livelihoods for the poor through this change, stating that “mixed-income is the gold standard.”²⁸³ While the apartments are in need of renovation, the CNI aims to turn the area into a center of growth, rather than better living conditions for the poor who live there. Self-Help is notably not a part of the renovation of McDougald Terrace. This is due partly because it is not needed – as a public housing site already, there is no need for the city to partner with Self-Help to give the project credibility as a development serving low-income and minority populations. Moreover, the city does not need Self-Help as a community development partner, a role that the institution plays in order to secure funding, much like a CDC.

2.4 From Research Triangle Park to the Downtown Innovation District

2.4.1 Research Triangle Park and Self-Help

The development of Research Triangle Park marks the shift from industrial production to information production as the dominant economy in the Triangle, coinciding with a shift towards a neoliberal economy. It was at this time that the US economy transitioned to an economy fueled by finance. Political scientists Leo Panitch and Sam Gindin discuss the end of American Exceptionalism: “Four specific transformations were especially important in this restructuring of the economy and social relations in the US, each with particular implications for the making of global capitalism.”²⁸⁴ They describe four transformations: the financialization of industries; the outsourcing of labor-intensive production in industry to overseas and domestic non-union plants; the replacement of labor with technical innovation in manufacturing; and the increase in “professional and business services that ranged across consulting, law, accounting, market

²⁸³ Anonymous source at the Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People Candidates Forum, October 2017.

²⁸⁴ Sam Gindin, *The Making of Global Capitalism: The Political Economy of American Empire* (London ; Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2012).

research, engineering, computer software, and systems analysis" (191).²⁸⁵ These transformations, which began in the 1970s came to dominate and define what is now global capitalism, and created a "dependence on the US for establishing, guaranteeing, and managing the global framework within which they could all accumulate."²⁸⁶ Panitch and Gindin, in studying the development of American Empire as the development of global capitalism, reflect a dominant view of the crisis of global capitalism as rooted in American exceptionalism. In other words, with the end of Bretton Woods in 1971, as Nixon de-linked the dollar from gold, the global economic system became even more dependent upon American power, this time through the institutions of Bretton Woods – the World Bank, the World Trade Organization, and the International Monetary Fund.

Critically, the financialization of the global economy was also due in part to global uprisings and movements for independence from the colonial world order. In gaining their independence, these new nations gained lifetime debt sentences through structural readjustment programs to modernize and urbanize their economies and landscapes. The promise of growth through development was held out for the newly developing countries, as loans were given for infrastructure projects that helped to develop the resource management and industrial structures that helped transnational corporations build manufacturing plants, growing their wealth and changing the entire landscape of production.²⁸⁷ The US and European nations could no longer accumulate resources and labor from their colonies at the same time as increasing technology was making the value of abstract labor to decline. Industries moved to the former colonies to escape organized labor and high wages.²⁸⁸ US cities were left without jobs, and without public interest, just as more and more African Americans migrated to the now desegregated industrial cities.

²⁸⁵ As Panitch and Gindin outline: "The first of these was the relationship between industry and finance. A much larger share of total corporate profits now went to the financial sector: between 1960 and 1984, the financial sector's share of domestic corporate profits averaged 17 percent. From then through 2007 it averaged 30 percent, peaking at 44 percent in 2002...dividends as a share of the profits of nonfinancial corporations averaged a steady 32 percent between 1960 and 1980; they then rose sharply, and averaged almost 60 percent between 1981 and 2007." Page 187.

²⁸⁶ Panitch and Gindin 193

²⁸⁷ Sparke, *Introducing Globalization*.

²⁸⁸ Jefferson Cowie, *Capital Moves: RCA's Seventy-Year Quest for Cheap Labor* (New York: New Press : Distributed by W.W. Norton, 2001); Aihwa Ong, *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty* (Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 2006).

Research Triangle Park was conceived of initially by Romeo Guest, the owner of a construction company that primarily built textile mills in the South.²⁸⁹ When his business started to slow, he realized that the economy was shifting greatly. He turned to his former clients and contract holders to partner with him on the venture, and managed to convince one NY textile mill owner to invest and the local politicians to see what was happening regionally to the economy. This history is relevant because it sets up the area's move away from tobacco and textile industry, leaving whole populations of workers behind, and towards research. The poverty and urban disinvestment that resulted, combined with the gradual end of public welfare resources, in turn set up the conditions for the nonprofit care industry to have an object to focus on: for Duke to partner with Self-Help to improve the image of Durham to attract the next round of professionals when downtown Durham was contemporarily envisioned as an *inner*-“city of knowledge.”

Through the development media studied, it is clear that this history of RTP, while it is a history, as we will see below, of public money and several private partnerships, is remembered as the genius of a single man, and an entrepreneurial spirit of development and change, and has become another story of self-help. For the world of white professionalism, self-help is told as a story of individual intelligence, opportunity, networking, and consistent and focused hard work. These are also the virtues that are promoted and celebrated as necessary to obtain the American Dream, and become a successful self-made man. These messages are applied universally with correctives falling along the lines of just giving people the opportunity to succeed.

Research Triangle Park was indeed planned with careful attention and dedication by a group of North Carolina businessmen, politicians, educators, and in many cases, men who also shuffled among all three roles, trying to maintain their wealth as the economy underwent major shifts. As the post-war booming economy began leveling off, North Carolina's economy grew stagnant and poverty grew. Textile mills and farms required less labor due to technological advances, and there was a brain drain from the state's populations and university graduates. In his history of RTP, William Rohe writes,

²⁸⁹ His construction company continues to work on major projects and receives several Duke contracts.

In the 1960s, three industries dominated the North Carolina economy: textiles, furniture, and tobacco. Together these comprised two-thirds of the state's manufacturing employment and one-quarter of all jobs. The state's competitive advantage at that time was largely based on the availability of low-cost labor. But falling trade barriers, improvements in information and transportation technology, and the expansion of multinational companies eroded that advantage... North Carolina's textile employment fell by more than two-thirds between 1970 and 2007.²⁹⁰

To retain and attract a high-paid work sector, Guest, along with NC Governor Luther Hodges, UNC sociologist George L. Simpson, and Director of Development and Land William Saunders, attracted capital and built what is now the largest Research Park in the world. The plans started in 1954, the land was built in 1957, and in 1959 the Chemstrand Corporation became the first company in RTP.

George L. Simpson, Jr, a UNC sociologist and the first acting Director of the Research Triangle Committee that was set up by the Governor to raise the funds to secure land, utilities, and attract companies to RTP, gave a speech to the Faculty Club of NC on February 5, 1957, citing North Carolina's lack of progress in the economy and the need to change its course:

It is sufficient to say that North Carolina has not kept pace with the general economic developments of the nation since World War II, whether keeping pace be defined as advancement in per capita income; or as industrial and commercial growth relative to the nation and the Southern region; or as the ability to provide the services of education, health, etcetera needed by the people of the state; or as the significant and indigenous use of science in industrial production.²⁹¹

He called for "regional diversity" to encourage economic growth. He also listed the major proponents of development of RTP, that can be seen as acting players in the correspondences: the three presidents of Duke, NC State, and UNC; Robert Armstrong, the Vice President of Celanese Corporation, a company based in Dallas with a plant in Charlotte that produced chemical polymers, some used in the manufacturing of cigarette filters; C.W. Reynolds, Assistant Works Manager of the Western electric Company in Winston-Salem; Grady Rankin, a textile manufacturer; E.Y. Floyd, Director of the NC Plant Food Institute; and William H. Ruffin, President of Erwin Mills in Durham. The last was the Governor of North Carolina, Luther Hodges, who supported the formation of RTP from conception until he sat on the board of the Research

²⁹⁰ William M Rohe, *The Research Triangle from Tobacco Road to Global Prominence* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10642204>.

²⁹¹ "Romeo Guest Papers," n.d., Rome Guest Archive.

Triangle Foundation. The high presence of textile producers is of particular interest, as the economy of the Triangle region was slowly phasing out of textile production and into the professional and scientific fields of RTP. In a sense, they had already jumped ship.

Labor was moving out of the United States, or being replaced by machines. Duke's Phail Wynn discusses when this occurred at American Tobacco years later:

These tobacco workers were getting \$40-50,000 a year, and they were getting \$24/hour starting wage, because they were unionized. So all these 3,200 employees lived right around [the factory]. So American Tobacco told me, we are going to be putting these machines in, and a lot of jobs are going to be lost, and we need you to help us develop a strategy to retrain these folks. Fortunately they did that 18 months before they closed. Now what the challenge was even though these folks were making all this money, more than half these adults did not have high school credentials, did not have high school diplomas, and of course none of them had transferrable skills. The one step that each one of them mastered wasn't transferrable to anyone... so even though we worked hard and worked with businesses and identified new jobs that could be learned in six months or so, they were getting paid at 40% what they were making before. Many of them went elsewhere looking for high paying jobs, many of them had to settle for 60% wage cuts or more. They became working poor and then they became even poorer poor.²⁹²

Key to this the industry shift was always a need to sell the area to businesses, and particularly to the elite classes of industry owners, research institutes, pharmaceutical companies, professors, doctors, and information technology professionals. While the region had a population of unemployed or soon to be out work skilled laborers, the developers sold RTP to industries based on the potential for building it into what they saw fit, collaboration with the universities, the climate, and quality of life. Today, the attractive location is a city with restaurants, arts, recreation, a certain level of hipness, and an assortment of housing choices from urban to suburban to rural.²⁹³ In the mid-1950s, the founders of RTP worked to market the area as a suburban dreamscape,²⁹⁴ fighting Northern discrimination of the South as backwards, and playing up the undeveloped landscapes. The suburbs were just starting to be built, and the idea of university-supported research was not yet a full realization.

²⁹² Emily LaDue, *Interview with Phail Wynn, Vice President, Durham and Regional Affairs, Duke University*, Digital Video and Audio (Duke University Office of Durham and Regional Affairs, Main St, Durham, NC, 2013).

²⁹³ Put a quote in here from durham mag or atlantic cities or a ranking article

²⁹⁴ Cite Welcome to the Dreamhouse

It appears that Romeo Guest, in developing the materials advertising RTP, took seriously the recommendations of Dr. Kinzel of the Union Carbide and Carbon Company²⁹⁵ who kindly rejected his invitation to start business in the Triangle. Dr. Kinzel rejected the invitation because of many listed deficiencies of the region, the same characteristics that are now used to advertise the Triangle region. He wrote to G. L. Simpson on November 20, 1956:

We have stressed living conditions and cultural opportunities in the memorandum and under present conditions I believe they are at least as important as any other considerations. Since the success of a scientist depends largely on his creative ability it is important to keep him reasonably happy and free from external pressures. Just as important is the problem of hiring new scientists. There just aren't enough good men to go around and competition is intense. With equal opportunities and salaries at different locations the decision to accept a position is usually made on the basis of living conditions. Many of the young men we hire now are married before they leave school and their wives frequently cast the deciding vote on location.²⁹⁶

Most notably, he did not think that a company would move to an area because of the promises of research that could occur, stating that “as far as large companies are concerned they rarely put the presence of research activities and facilities at the top of their list of priorities in locating either a plant or laboratory” (Letter from George Simpson to Governor Hodges, 1956). At this time, it was evident that his industry did not see a need to invest itself in the business of university research, but rather use industry-focused research. Moreover, this letter points to the distrust of the South by Northern businesses at this time, as Simpson recalls that Dr. Kinzel “strongly suggested that we look around us, and seek to serve those industries that are already in North Carolina and in the South.”²⁹⁷

2.4.2 RTI: From Profit to Nonprofit

Research Triangle Park houses over 170 global companies and non-profit corporations. As of January 2013, its top employers are IBM, GlaxoSmithKline, Cisco, Fidelity Investments, RTI International, the US EPA, NetApp, Biogen Idec, Credit Suisse, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, BASF Corporation, Bayer CropScience, EMC Corporation,

²⁹⁵ The same Union Carbide responsible for the 1984 Bhopal, India plant gas leak that killed thousands and harmed more.

²⁹⁶ Letter to G.L. Simpson, 1956, in Jones, Mary Virginia Currie. (1978). *A Golden Triangle of Research: Romeo Holland Guest – His Conception of and Involvement in the Development of the Research Triangle Park, UNC-Chapel Hill*. Romeo Guest Papers, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library.

²⁹⁷ Letter from Simpson to Hodges, Romeo Guest Papers.

Grifols, Inc., FujiFilm, and Syngenta (rtp.org). 45% of companies are in life sciences and pharmaceuticals, 18% informational technology, 9% professional services, 8% scientific and engineering materials, 7% service providers, 2% environmental sciences and 2% financial (rtp.org). Additionally, 43% of companies have fewer than 10 employees (rtp.org).

RTI International, formerly the Research Triangle Institute, was created in 1959 to serve as an anchor for other companies, but originally was developed only as a “promotional gimmick” to center the focus of the project with an organized board and body.²⁹⁸ It is a non-profit corporation that is governed by the presidents of UNC and Duke University and two corporate members who elect the Board of Governors: a mix of corporate, university, and former government officials. Its mission is to “improve the human condition,” and has a staff of 3,700 working in drug, statistical, educational, economic, social, international development, chemical, and environmental research, with about 2,200 of them based in the Triangle region. Its clients are corporate, government, international, and educational. Its non-profit status allows it a reduced taxes and collaborations with public and private investments, and it supports the development of the local universities and their expansive developments. Essentially, RTI International is a research university without any teaching, and allows for the research that universities primarily did not undertake because of conflicts of interest between corporate partnerships and university research ethics.

The Bayh-Dole Act of 1980 fostered the commercialization of university research, allowing federally funded research to be patented to universities, small businesses, and non-profit corporations. In the Triangle, university patents and licensing is not seen as widely as is at other universities such as NYU with over \$791 million, Columbia with over \$135 million, and the University of Minnesota with over \$63 million in licensing revenue as of 2006 (Rohe, 154: 2011). Duke’s revenue is \$4.1 million, followed by N.C State’s \$3.6 million, and UNC-Chapel Hill’s \$2.4 million (Rohe). RTI however, brought in over \$777 million in revenue in 2011. While a nonprofit, its research endeavors directly support corporations in providing new technology and data.

²⁹⁸ Speech by George L. Simpson to the Faculty Club of UNC-Chapel Hill in 1959 in Jones, Mary Virginia Currie. (1978). A Golden Triangle of Research: Romeo Holland Guest – His Conception of and Involvement in the Development of the Research Triangle Park, UNC-Chapel Hill. Romeo Guest Papers, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library.

Simpson stated in 1959 that research is “key to industrial profits,” and applied science research “is the most desirable growth industry...a \$7 billion business.”²⁹⁹

To take a wider and longer look at the trajectory of development, the construction of Research Triangle Park could be noted as the change in direction of the area that led to the future turning point in downtown Durham’s redevelopment. In the fifties, RTP was built as the anchor that allowed the area to become a destination for the professional classes. The majority of jobs in RTP are white collar professional jobs requiring terminal degrees, mostly filled by immigration. There are mid-level management and coordinator positions that for the most part hire local university graduates, and attract this population, contributing to the infill. The working class jobs produced by RTP are service sector jobs, that often do not provide benefits, job security, or full-time schedules, and require personal or lengthy public transportation as they are located out of the city center. RTP’s location in the middle of Durham, Raleigh, and Chapel Hill makes it centrally located and convenient for research collaborations and a professional class who may live anywhere in the Triangle. Former Governor and Duke President Terry Sanford noted in 1986 that based on the growth of RTP, Durham was the next place for development, because by that time, Raleigh had little room and Chapel Hill had little desire.³⁰⁰ It also set the stage for the public and private financial and political relationships that were needed to redevelop thousands of acres of farmland to a research and development office park.

RTP, according to Duke’s administrators, is the reason why the Triangle is seeing development today.³⁰¹ In downtown Durham, the turning point of development is usually marked as the building of the Durham Bulls Stadium in 1995, which coincides with Duke and Self-Help partnership in Walltown and which together, I argue, mark the actual turning point. Durham City Council put forth its pro-growth agenda in the city monetarily and politically, Capitol Broadcasting Company bought the Bulls, which would lead to purchasing American Tobacco, and Duke began redeveloping the city with Self-Help’s image and expertise. Jointly, these actions moved public funding into the hands of urban real estate developers; used public funding to renovate Durham

²⁹⁹ Simpson speech, Romeo Guest Papers

³⁰⁰ Brent Glass, Interview with Terry Sanford, December 16, 1986, Southern Oral History Program Collection #4007, <http://docsouth.unc.edu/sohp/C-0038/C-0038.html>.

³⁰¹ Interviews with Selig, Trask, and Burness

to be more appealing to young professionals; positioned Duke to use Durham's redevelopment as a site of investment to improve Duke's social, political, and financial capital; and advanced Self-Help from a credit union to a position of community developer. Moreover, at the center of this redevelopment was the promotion of the idea – which also set the conditions to receive funding – that all of this work was in the name of poverty alleviation and urban uplift, in other words, Durham's own self-help. In the early 2000s, a t-shirt made by a vintage store that has since gone out of business, became locally popular with the saying, "Durham, love yourself."

2.4.3 Duke, Research and Development, and University Growth

You know every university in America has tried to do this and it never gets going on any scale except for those two places (Boston and Palo Alto), here and Austin. It's sort of the place where it's worked. And it's worked in each place for very different reasons. And in many ways it's most difficult to explain why it worked in North Carolina. You can understand why it worked in CA, why it worked in TX, why in MA – [but why it worked here is] because a lot of people had a really good idea early on and they just worked it for 50 years.³⁰²

-Tallman Trask III, Vice President, Duke University, 2013

Tallman Trask III has been the Executive Vice President and Treasurer of Duke University since 1995. He was brought to the university in order to make Duke a more attractive and competitive institution as measured against other elite research universities. Part of that work is what he refers to simply as "this" – to "turn" the city of Durham into a more desirable place for the professional class that Duke is looking to attract. On his desk sit several awards from the American Institute of Architects; he was chosen as an honorary member because of the dozens of new structures that were constructed under his vice presidency at Duke and his time managing investments and real estate at the University of Washington.³⁰³ He also sits on the board of the Research Triangle Foundation, the nonprofit that manages Research Triangle Park. In the quote above, Trask cites the continual growth of Research Triangle Park as a product of its builders' foresight, and the persistence of the growth of the research and development (R&D) sector. He does not seek credit for what he calls a "turn," perhaps partly cautiously in his interview with me, though his role in managing Duke's relationship to Durham's development and supporting these

³⁰² Emily LaDue, *Interview with Tallman Trask III, Vice President, Duke University.*

³⁰³ Interview, Trask.

investments has been substantial. He, more than any other interview subjects, was curious why I wanted to speak to him about Duke's role in Durham's development, carefully fielding questions regarding Duke's intentions to insist that the University is not seeking to exploit the city's real estate, as other universities, such as Columbia and the University of Pennsylvania, were accused of. This relationship between Duke and the city is part of the development of the idea of self help cementing itself in the city of Durham as a progressive policy for economic equity; and the political development of the institution of Self-Help as a real estate developer in Durham. Duke began a strategy of developing its reputation as a progressive institution before it began doing so in Durham, and Trask was key for this last phase taking place.

Trask works from a bright office overlooking a quad on Duke's West Campus, down a back hall in the Allen Building, among the offices of Duke's senior administrators, made famous as the site of sit-ins, takeovers, and other demonstrations, in particular the momentous Allen Building takeover in 1969 to demand a black student union, an African American studies department, and more resources to support African American students.³⁰⁴ This takeover happened at the end of President Howard Knight's tenure as University President in the late 1960s, during which he refused the demands from newly integrated African American students for better conditions for learning, and ignored a student and worker-led four day silent vigil in 1968 demanding higher wages and better working conditions for the university's dining and housekeeping workers. While the Board of Trustees at the time did not want Knight to agree to the students and workers' demands, they also did not want the bad press, and as one former administrator notes, this was the final nail in the coffin for Knight's presidency.³⁰⁵ The influential former Democratic Governor of North Carolina Terry Sanford took over for Knight in April of 1969, giving concessions for students, approving the hiring of several black faculty members, opening the Mary Lou Williams Center for Black Culture and the Women's Studies Department, and managing Duke's image carefully by overseeing several initiatives from an activist student body.

³⁰⁴ Korstad and Video Dialog Inc, *To Right These Wrongs*; Howard Fuller and Lisa Frazier Page, *No Struggle, No Progress: A Warrior's Life from Black Power to Education Reform* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Marquette University Press, 2014).

³⁰⁵ Staff, "Bill Griffith on the 1969 Allen Building Takeover," *Duke Today* (blog), n.d., <https://today.duke.edu/2013/09/griffithallenbuilding>.

For the next sixteen years, Sanford worked to give Duke a reputation for being a liberal university, supportive of civil rights and diverse educational initiatives in the South, on par with the Northern Ivy League. This carried over to the following two Presidents, Richard Brodie, who made fame for supporting Duke's divestment from South Africa, and Nan Keohane, who began Duke's re-orientation of its relationship with Durham. Before Keohane's presidency, the neighborhoods surrounding Duke University lost government support and the city's white and growing middle class population moved its tax contributions to the suburbs.

As Trask notes in the opening quote to this section, the reasoning for "success" of the Triangle region is in line with the mythical reasoning of the self-made man, who sees his success coming from his own hard work and saving strategies, with no acknowledgement of how this ability to buy a home and save money came from the advantages provided by postwar state-backed structural programs. The myth is that working and saving every day, a lifestyle that was made available post-WWII to a class of white men and almost no one now, could bring stability.³⁰⁶ Now, not only is the idea of the self-made man a myth, the conditions that led to the belief in the self-made man are a myth: wide-reaching state-backed financing for families, even on racist grounds, and the possibility of stable working or middle class employment. With the increase of inequality, rising debt, the lack of real growth, and the disappearance of a middle class, what is required for this success now, is the discursive strategy, or a form of disinformation, that accompanies the financial strategy. Self-Help is how Durham "turned."

Trask, and other Duke officials in interviews, mention Boston, Palo Alto, and Austin as all having the combination of multiple elite research universities and large attractive cities and notes that it is harder to pinpoint what contributed to Durham's growth. When the science and research parks were being built, all of these regions also had majority African American and Latino urban centers that were being increasingly disinvested by state and local governments as wealthier populations moved out of cities and towards new suburban construction, with infrastructure built both for the new residents and the new research parks, with accompanying incorporated towns and villages so that the neighborhoods could control their own tax base and not support the city.

³⁰⁶ *Politics After Catastrophe, Part 1: Understanding the Catastrophe.*

Understood historically, it is not as difficult to explain why RTP was successful in the Triangle region in North Carolina – the major conditions of possibility for this development were all there: state and privately-held forest land made available for small sums; Durham, a city being emptied of its black and white middle class; Chapel Hill, an elite university town; Raleigh, a small but growing city anchored by government and public university resources; and investors from the textile and tobacco industries looking for reinvestment possibilities.

Specifically, I locate three major reasons why RTP became successful in North Carolina. First, it began as a reinvestment strategy from the accumulation of wealth from the tobacco and textile industries, wealth which can be traced to slave and low wage labor and the accumulation of natural resources and land through indigenous dispossession.³⁰⁷ With automation, union organizing, and expansion into international labor markets, the owners and investors from tobacco and textile reinvested their money into new research and development infrastructure. Second, RTP brought in, over time, billions of dollars in state and federal research funding. This came in the form of research grants in the sciences, sometimes directly and sometimes through universities; funding for military-related research; funding for the Environmental Protection Agency; student loan debt; and other university-related funding such as support for inter-university research.³⁰⁸ Third, RTP benefitted from urban renewal programs that used federal funding to build mass infrastructure, and clear the land to do so, at the expense of many people's neighborhoods, mainly poor, working class, and mixed class African American neighborhoods. Section 112 enabled much of this development to occur, with universities able to cover the required local matching dollars.

Universities are huge conveyors of wealth, and have been since the turn towards science research during the Cold War. Sometimes referred to as the "knowledge economy," University Research and Development is a peculiar industry in its own right. However, according to Selig, and trends being reported by the National Science Foundation, research funds for Duke will be

³⁰⁷ Clyde Woods, *Development Arrested: The Blues and Plantation Power in the Mississippi Delta*. (London: Verso, 2000). Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism*, Paperback edition (New York: Basic Books, 2016).

³⁰⁸ O'Mara, *Cities of Knowledge*; "Romeo Guest Papers 1925-1987" (Duke University Library, n.d.), David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library.

decreasing as the Affordable Care Act and NSF funding undergo restructuring (Interview). Duke also reports that the 2008 economic crash hurt the endowment by 20% because of the amount of private donations and finance that funds it, but according to Vice President Tallman Trask, Duke was more protected than many other schools because of its low-risk investments.

Universities received over \$65 billion in funding for Research and Development in Fiscal Year 2011, with a slight drop expected in the 2012 report, according to the National Science Foundation (NSF). The majority of research is in the life sciences (\$37.232 billion), and within that the medical sciences (\$20.356 billion), followed by Engineering (\$10.045 billion), the physical sciences (\$4.779 billion), and the social sciences (\$2.045 billion) (National Science Foundation). As major US industrial cities fell into economic disrepair, the federal government and major institutional foundations such as Ford and Rockefeller began to back scientific research. Soldiers returning from WWII, followed by baby boomers began to populate college campuses and increase the demand for the physical growth of universities ³⁰⁹.

Duke is fifth in the nation for its research fund spending overall in 2011 at \$1.022 billion, with \$511 million of that from federal non-American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding, \$74 million in Federal ARRA funding, \$32 million from the state and local government funding, \$120 million from Institution funding, \$215 million from business funding, \$69 million from non-profit funding, and \$1 million from other sources.³¹⁰ Johns Hopkins leads with \$2.145 billion followed by the University of Michigan, University of Washington, and University of Wisconsin Madison. Johns Hopkins receives nearly \$1.884 billion in federal funding because of the size and scope and military research of its Applied Physics Laboratory, while Duke receives more private-sector business funding than any other institution. Duke also has the highest medical school expenditures at \$831,000, ahead of UC San Francisco, Johns Hopkins, University of Pittsburgh, Washington University, University of Pennsylvania, University of Washington, University of Michigan, Stanford, and Yale, respectively. It is notable that these institutions share strategies

³⁰⁹ *Buying in or Selling out?: The Commercialization of the American Research University* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2004); O'Mara, *Cities of Knowledge*; Daniel Paul Gitterman et al., *A Way Forward Building a Globally Competitive South* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Press, 2011), <http://public.eblib.com/EBLPublic/PublicView.do?ptiID=830254>.

³¹⁰ National Science Foundation, "Universities Report Highest-Ever R&D Spending of \$65 Billion in FY 2011," n.d.

and strategists. Two of Duke's current Vice Presidents, Tallman Trask, III and Scott Selig, were recruited to Duke because of the work they had done in the eighties and nineties at the University of Washington. Scott Selig recently started a focus group of twenty university real estate executives who share Duke's profile as a major research university with a medical center in a city, noting that Johns Hopkins visited Duke this summer to study their urban developmental model.

In her case studies of Stanford, the University of Pennsylvania, and Georgia Tech, Margaret Pugh O'Mara outlines the conditions of possibility for building cities of knowledge in post-WWII Cold War America, and what led to their success and failures. Her investigation "shows how the process of high tech growth was actually a process of city-building. The suburbanization of science in the late twentieth century helped to *urbanize* American suburbs by making these places closer to classic definitions of cities in terms of their economic diversity and self-sufficiency."³¹¹ If she were to add Research Triangle Park to the mix, it would join Stanford and Silicon Valley as a success story for the attraction and maintenance of a white collar workforce. Research Triangle Park fits her description of a city of knowledge that is a product of cold war spending, of federal persuasion of the private-sector, and of major university involvement – three, NC State, UNC, and Duke, in the case of RTP. An important lesson from her study is that with the decline of the welfare state came the rise of the knowledge city, financed with Cold War military spending but disguised in form and controlled by universities and managing authorities. She concludes that this allowed for "a strong state to masquerade as a weak one," for "local flexibility, institutional entrepreneurship, and opportunities for innovation," and, for the stage to be set for elite urban centers, such as Durham, Austin, and Palo Alto.³¹²

Now, as RTP seeks to urbanize its landscape by building its own downtown and residential complexes the city of Durham comes to embody what is perhaps an *inner-city* of knowledge, new details of the characteristics she describes emerge. One of O'Mara's conclusions to build a city of knowledge is wealth. In the 1950s and 60s, "The Cold War had a decisive effect on economic development and the shape of urban space because it provided a

³¹¹ O'Mara, *Cities of Knowledge*.

³¹² O'Mara.

giant influx of capital [through universities].”³¹³ There is less military funding for scientific technology and more private industrial funding, much of it from venture capital that follows the same geography of the successful cities of knowledge because of the infrastructure already in place but there is still much federal, and private money flowing through universities (227). In Durham, the physical remnants of its manufacturing past also create the conditions of possibility for its present of an entrepreneurial knowledge economy and its hoped for future of a globally competitive city. It is cheaper to redevelop old tobacco and textile factories and warehouses than it is to build new structures.³¹⁴ It appears that the knowledge economy supports itself through its individualism and scientific success, but it is actually subsidized by state welfare.

Margaret Pugh O'Mara discusses changes in the role of the university in attracting elite populations in the 1960s:

Harvard and MIT were at the top of the research institutions, and soon other universities realized they had to compete... establishing Washington offices, adjusting their academic missions, becoming more entrepreneurial and political in their approach. These patterns of power and privilege-and the competition they engendered among universities for prestige and resources-had critical bearing on the eventual geography of scientific production. Because science became the domain of elites, scientific places came to be elite as well.³¹⁵

In the 1950s, the founders of RTP advertised the Triangle heavily for its livability, never focusing on the city, but instead on the affordability, weather, schools, and suburban living, to attract scientists, researchers, and most importantly, companies, to the area. Documents and correspondence among government leaders and RTP boosters call attention to the comfortable family living and trees ³¹⁶. As O'Mara writes, “For cities of knowledge, ‘desirability’ was defined by a high degree of homogeneity, a certain level of cultural vibrancy, and architecture and design that created a physical separation from the rest of the urban landscape.”³¹⁷ Now, according to Scott Selig and the direction of development, the class of knowledge workers wants an urban lifestyle with quality arts, culture, restaurants, schools, history, charm, *and* diversity at their fingertips. This is a balance that is difficult to maintain, and Durham may be at a breaking point.

³¹³ O'Mara, *Cities of Knowledge*. 226.

³¹⁴ Emily LaDue, *Interview with Tallman Trask III, Vice President, Duke University*; Emily LaDue, *Interview with Scott Selig, Executive Vice President of Real Estate and Capital Assets, Duke University*.

³¹⁵ O'Mara 229.

³¹⁶ “Romeo Guest Papers.”

³¹⁷ O'Mara 229.

In her study, O'Mara finds that the city of knowledge is dependent on certain characteristics, such as "control over land in the right location."³¹⁸ Based on the difficulties of the University of Pennsylvania in overcoming racial tensions attached to urban renewal and the success of Silicon Valley's outward suburban model (similar to RTP), she concludes that the success of the city of knowledge was built on maintaining class stratification in cities. Race came to matter less as the diversity of race and ethnicity of professors, scientists, and engineers was high.³¹⁹ While the city of knowledge certainly has worked along class lines, the ties between race and class in inner cities is too interconnected to discount the role that racism was playing. But more than that, success of Durham's building this inner-city of knowledge is largely dependent on diverse race and class relations in a top-down, paternal development model.

However, her claim that the concentration of wealth was key as "success has always been contingent on creating an exclusive environment" in cities of knowledge seems to be playing out in Durham, but only due to the careful management of lower-income, predominantly African-American communities.³²⁰ So in fact, control over land in the right location is proving to be key in Durham as well, as Duke and Self-Help work to control and maintain the surrounding areas while also promoting individual self reliance. Here the interdependence of entrepreneurialism and managerialism is clear. In 2007, changes to the Unified Development Ordinance were considered and it went through a drastic change, and the form of urban development became the focus rather than specific uses to sites. In 2010, these changes were passed when the Downtown Design District was initiated into the Master Plan. As stated in the update, "this allows for more flexibility in the marketplace without sacrificing flexibility in the built form."³²¹ The image of the city became the focus, rather than the uses of spaces. This is an entrepreneurial move – the spaces must conform to certain standards and codes in the area, but they do not have to conform to what the government mandates.

³¹⁸ O'Mara, *Cities of Knowledge*. 226

³¹⁹ O'Mara 229.

³²⁰ O'Mara 230.

³²¹ *City Council Meeting* (City Hall Council Chambers, Durham, NC, 2017), http://durham.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=1986&meta_id=226297.

2.4.4 Urban RTP – The Durham Innovation District and Entrepreneurialism

When you think of Stanford, you think of Palo Alto, when you think of Harvard, you think of Boston (motions hands at same level). When you think of Duke, you used to think of Durham (lowers his hand on the Durham side). We want to make it so that when you think of Duke, you think of Durham (same level).... Because if we are going to attract the best faculty, staff, and students, attract the next Nobel Laureate, they have to have something to do other than to go to work. And we want that upper 1%. We want the best of faculty, staff, and students. We have all the other qualities, we have the low cost of living, we have the good weather, we have the mountains nearby, we have the oceans nearby, we have a very smart community, we have great world class health care. What we didn't have was a vibrant center or city to be interesting. And that's what the quiet motivation was, to make Durham and Duke synonymous in quality.

-Scott Selig, Associate Vice President of Capital Assets and Real Estate, Duke University, 2013³²²

Increasing layoffs by IBM have been shaking up the feel of stability in the area. Indeed, “the Triangle may boast about the presence of major companies like IBM and GlaxoSmithKline, but these companies are based elsewhere.”³²³ The most stable anchors are still the universities, the original impetus behind the formation of Research Triangle Park. Universities are grounding themselves further and further into the land of the city, making satellite locations that bring the same desires that the original RTP plan brought, in terms of image, culture, and local amusements for students (who, at Duke, if living in town, are usually spending money) and other university-affiliated personnel. In a March 14, 1980 article in *The Wall Street Journal*, reporter Sam Allis wrote:

Those who rate cities as business sites like mid-size Sun Belt ones... They're desirable places, the experts say, because they combine strong growth potential with a high quality of life. Nobody grades the experts, but that, according to many observers, doesn't really matter. Image is apt to become a reality, and if a place gets a reputation as a desirable location, that has a lot of influence on the multimillion dollar decisions of business executives to locate or expand.³²⁴

The image of the Research Triangle is being sold as innovative, creative, smart, and entrepreneurial, and is being used to attract new forms of capital and growth. In *The Research Triangle: From Tobacco Road to Global Prominence*, author William M. Rohe writes:

While the towns of Hillsborough, Raleigh, and Chapel Hill were largely founded by governmental actions, Durham was the result of raw entrepreneurship. Its early reputation was one of a bawdy, rough-and-tumble place, where all varieties of 'diversions'

³²² Scott Selig, Author Interview, Digital audio and video, July 29, 2013.

³²³ Rohe, *The Research Triangle from Tobacco Road to Global Prominence*. 169

³²⁴ Sam Allis, *Wall Street Journal*, March 14, 1980.

could be found. In spite of numerous efforts to change it, that reputation has, to some extent, persisted to the present day.³²⁵

This image is in fact still being sold today, and marketed upon in numerous capacities.

Warehouse spaces and former banks are being turned into loft apartments, million-dollar home renovations by start-up entrepreneurs keep details of the former buildings in tact, such as exposed industrial rafters, and non-profit organizations such as Preservation Durham work closely with developers to preserve the historic *look* of Durham during its major transformations. It is part of the marketing of the place, of the inner city, that is happening in order to attract young entrepreneurs and retain talent. This encompasses more of life than the segmented work and life division of the initial RTP design. As one of Guest's initial 1957 pamphlets to attract businesses stated, "If you are looking for an attitude rather than just a laboratory you will find it here." Selig's account of the Durham Innovation District has the same view – downtown Durham has the "cool" that is needed to give it an edge over other locations, a cool that is sourced from its history of black entrepreneurialism and the rise of grittiness as a cultural capital.³²⁶

Research Triangle Park was the antithesis of Jane Jacobs' visions of urban planning: car-dependent, isolated structures and huge parking lots. In advertising materials for RTP in the early 1960s, workers were shown taking lunch breaks and playing badminton in the grass in front of their offices, as an idyllic and relaxed place outside of the cities, specifically the heavily industrialized Northern cities the new director of the Research Triangle Foundation was chosen specifically to rebuild the area as an urban-inspired space.³²⁷ While one of these spatial orientations may be more aesthetically pleasing and conducive to sociality, they are both part of the pro-growth agenda that is oriented around the needs and desires of the wealthy populations. Jacobs' orientation was based on the lives of lower income, immigrant, black and brown and racially diverse populations, but its implementation in planning is how well it serves the needs of the upper classes, as development is oriented towards what will continue to attract this base. Scott Selig claimed the current increasing investment in Durham is due to its economy of "Eds

³²⁵ Rohe, *The Research Triangle from Tobacco Road to Global Prominence*. 169

³²⁶ Interview with Selig; The Birth of Cool exhibit in 2008 in the Nasher Museum of Art.

³²⁷ Ivan Ascher, *Portfolio Society: On the Capitalist Mode of Prediction* (New York: Zone Books, 2016).

and Meds and TEDs – Technology, Engineering, and Design.” These ideals at work in the hub of the professional class in RTP. And, closer to the former spaces of the poor black and brown populations in Durham where the Durham Innovation District is being developed.

Scott Selig arrived at Duke University in 2001, hired by his former colleague at the University of Washington, Tallman Trask. Trask created the position of Executive VP for Capital Assets and Real Estate for Selig so that Duke could manage its growing portfolio of real estate and continue to expand in Durham. Scott Selig describes the current “urban RTP” in Durham:

We have a few very strong legs on the stool. We have a very good office and entertainment environment, now we are starting to develop a good residential environment. But the office and entertainment sectors could drop. You know we could not be as cool as we are now. We are bringing basic science downtown because we know that the private sector will surround it. That's happened in Kendall Square in Boston, that's happened in Palo Alto, that's happened in Southlake Union in Seattle, that's happened in Austin, Texas, and Birmingham, AL. Everywhere that a university has come off campus the private sector has followed them. They want to have those chance interactions at a Parker and Otis. Or at a Mateo or a Pop's Restaurant... those chance meetings where they run into someone and say, hey, I'm working on this, or someone who is working on the latest app for a phone, or working on the latest game console, or doing pharmacology, sooner or later if you put enough pinballs in a machine they're gonna collide and something's gonna happen. And so that's really what it's all about. People really like being downtown for those chance encounters, those chance relationships. And bringing science gives you a third stool so even if the office market drops because the economy drops, you still have science, or you still have entertainment... the Durham Performing Arts is Number 3 in tickets [nationally among performing arts venues]. Duke donated 7.5 million dollars to make sure that that box was an interesting box to be in. The city would have still built the box, but Duke made a donation to make sure the seating, and the lighting, and the stages were world class. So that when we bring these performances... people will come and say, this is wonderful.³²⁸

Since the late 1990s, universities are moving more swiftly into private research opportunities and focusing on entrepreneurial ventures for students.³²⁹ Duke has been planning for this shift, and encouraging it, eventually creating the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Initiative, a networked program of faculty, courses, staff, summer and semester abroad programs, internships, hackathons and conferences, and a “landscape of innovation³³⁰” around the city and campus to encourage chance encounters and “the next big thing” to emerge from Duke.

Their investments in the city support both the professional incoming class as well as the ability of students to work in the start-ups around the city for which they are helping to build

³²⁸ Emily LaDue, *Interview with Scott Selig, Executive Vice President of Real Estate and Capital Assets, Duke University*.

³²⁹ Slaughter, 2000.

³³⁰ <https://entrepreneurship.duke.edu/map/>

spaces for. In my interview with Executive Vice President of Community Engagement Phail Wynn, he spoke of the ideal student that Duke is trying to attract:

The role of universities like Duke has sort of expanded from knowledge discovery and knowledge in the service of society to creating a dynamic new class of entrepreneurs... Our economy is going to be driven by the Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, and Mark Zuckerbergs of the world and I see many more of them coming to Duke... The reason they are thinking of coming to Duke was not the traditional reason...these students were thinking about coming to Duke to be mentored for a short period of time by bright professors they had identified to network with other bright students that they would like sort of like to co-mingle and cross-pollinate ideas with and incubate an idea they already had to the point that when they are ready to go out and create a business they could.³³¹

He continued to state that they wanted to use their college tuition for start up money instead, so that from the student's perspective:

[It is] not so much I'm preparing for a career anymore... it's, "I have an idea and I want to launch it, I want to create a business, I am either a commercial entrepreneur or a social entrepreneur... Universities will probably lament the fact that... they won't have the same stream of revenue as before. On the other hand it really creates a dynamic economic impact by young folks really getting out there."³³²

In other words, Duke is counting on the speculative market of ideas in order to grow. This is true in the physical spaces of the university and Durham. Speaking from his office at The American Tobacco Campus, Selig discussed the logic he uses for real estate development that has built spaces such as its Entrepreneur Offices, the American Underground; and the newest renovated warehouses, the Durham Innovation District, built to be one of the spaces that incubates entrepreneurial and startup activities through an open design, and proximity to both Duke and downtown Durham. He stated that these collisions are:

What entrepreneurialism is. That's what the new market is. That's what the new environment is. We have a center for the Integration of Medicine, Education, and Applied Sciences. We built a building to force people to collide... because that's where the really creative new life comes in the invention world. [In a downtown] it is happening a little more naturally.³³³

The logic of entrepreneurialism is placed into spaces, so even the built environments must be put to the a standard of measurement that must be achieved, always speculating, and always towards amassing more potential, through more financial wealth.

³³¹ Wynn

³³² Wynn

³³³ Interview, Selig

2.4.5. Social Entrepreneurialism and Duke's Public Image

Social entrepreneurship is the process of pursuing innovative solutions to social problems. More specifically, social entrepreneurs adopt a mission to create and sustain social value. They relentlessly pursue opportunities to serve this mission, while continuously adapting and learning. Social entrepreneurs act boldly, not constrained by resources currently in hand. They hold themselves accountable for achieving the social mission and use resources wisely. They draw upon the best thinking in both the business and nonprofit worlds and operate in all kinds of organizations: large and small; new and old; religious and secular; nonprofit, for-profit, and hybrid.

– Social Entrepreneurship at Duke University³³⁴

The support of social entrepreneurship has also been instrumental in Duke's restructuring, as a major part of the entrepreneurial, start-up, and venture capital industry is based on the development of solutions to problems created by industrial growth in capitalism. As job prospects for recent graduates become more competitive, students use international and domestic service work as a way to stand out on applications and represent themselves as global citizens, capable, flexible and well-traveled. Phail Wynn supported Scott Selig's assertion that encouraging entrepreneurialism is also supporting the building of spaces of entrepreneurialism: "The important part of it is the cross pollination of it." Wynn continued his point by citing the example of Jim Goodnight and John Sauls creating the international corporation the SAS Institute - one of the largest informational technology and statistical research companies in the Triangle region. Despite their political differences, Wynn highlighted, Goodnight a staunch conservative and Sauls a liberal, "it's amazing what can happen... they are going to forget political differences and focus synergies on making something of value."³³⁵ The removal of politics from the idea of social improvement and social justice is partly how a credit union such as Self-Help can maintain its position in Durham as the developer that is good for the people, while pursuing projects of rent intensification, and private wealth as the marker of social equality.³³⁶

Under the administration of Trask and Burness, Duke decided it would take on the image of a university that supports student activism, and support initiatives in Durham and globally, under the politically neutral idea of social entrepreneurship. As Trask stated, "I think we are a lot

³³⁴ "About," *Social Entrepreneurship, Duke University* (blog), n.d., <https://entrepreneurship.duke.edu/social-entrepreneurship/about/#Q1>.

³³⁵ Phail Wynn, Author Interview, Digital audio and video, August 1, 2013.

³³⁶ See for example, Duke In Detroit, the Duke Engage program, dukeengage.duke.edu.

more attentive to those kinds of issues than other institutions... we did conflict minerals even though I am not sure I understand what that means, we did that. It turns out sweatshops was an easy answer, within thirty days we had a result.”³³⁷ Duke’s carefully managed reputation includes getting on board with student-led initiatives for more ethical behavior, part of their overall strategic planning beginning in 2004.

Trask’s orientation to student demands during his tenure demonstrates the careful reputation management that the University has held since the position of Chief Public Affairs Officer was created for John Burness in 1991. Burness was hired because Duke had “bungled a lot of public issues” and the university was looking for someone with more strategic leadership: Despite its careful reputation management, it came to a peak with the Duke Lacrosse scandal³³⁸ in 2006, which according to Trask, resulted in declining acceptance rates for admitted students the following year, losing undergraduates to Stanford, Yale, MIT and the like – the Ivy League and other top schools that a younger and less geographically centered Duke works to measure up to. Then in 2016, a Duke parking attendant, Shelvia Underwood, filed suit against Trask. Trask had hit her with his car and yelled racial slurs at her after a basketball game on campus in 2014, presumably while he was (driving) drunk. He wrote her an apology note, and was surprised at the suit, writing in a public statement: “I had assumed this was resolved more than a year ago until I received a letter last November from a Raleigh attorney threatening to sue me (not clear for what) unless I paid her an unspecified sum...I declined to do so then and do not intend to do so now.”³³⁹ This sparked another Allen Building student takeover, this time, the students demanding Trask’s firing, a living wage for employees, reparations, and a public apology. After several days of protest, the students only got their apology, Duke was quickly relieved from the lawsuit, and in 2017, so was Trask, with his insurance paying minimal damages to Underwood.³⁴⁰ This resolution was barely covered in the press and cycled out of the news by this time, with no comment from

³³⁷ Trask Interview

³³⁸ In 2006, a Duke Lacrosse team of nearly all young white men hired, harassed, and assaulted two young African-American dancers at their off-campus party. Four Duke lacrosse players were accused of raping one of the dancers, creating a national scandal and media frenzy.

³³⁹ Ellen Wexler, “Duke Administrator Hit Parking Attendant With Car,” *Inside Higher Ed*, March 1, 2016, <https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2016/03/01/duke-administrator-hit-parking-attendant-car>.

³⁴⁰ Staff Reports, “Plaintiff Dismisses Lawsuit against EVP Trask after Insurance Settlement,” *The Chronicle*, February 6, 2017, sec. News, <http://www.dukechronicle.com/article/2017/02/lawsuit-against-evp-tallman-trask-dismissed>.

Duke University or Trask. Duke continues to manage its public image effectively, whether in terms of scandals or as a community partner.

After leaving my interview with Trask, I ran into Scott Selig, Duke's Executive Vice President of Real Estate and Capital Assets, who I had interviewed a few weeks before. He was popping in to Trask's office to see if he would like to go to lunch. I had with me a copy of Selig's interview on DVD that he had asked me for that I was going to drop off to him. He had asked for a copy of his interview to watch himself in order to learn what sounds good, what works, and what doesn't work in future interviews. Selig's request is representative of the priority of public relations for the University. As the face of Duke for Durham's financial class and potential investors, Selig manages a careful line as a champion for both Durham and for Duke, presenting their interests as mutually dependent.

Duke, in Durham, has worked to make itself untouchable and free from critique, understanding the currency of its image to potential students and hires, and developing its real estate development plan accordingly. The real estate strategy and the discursive image-making strategy work together, such that Duke's success through the housing crisis in 2008 is due in part to its diversified financial investments, which are part dependent on Self-Help's role as a community partner. As Trask stated, "I think it is more than [public relations and our image] that we wanted other people to own Durham... We decided early on we needed to do it as silent partner, not, 'Great news: Duke buys Durham, now can't figure out what to do with it.'" ³⁴¹ It is more than image – it is also partly a financial strategy to socialize the risk of the investments. With the market for real estate in Durham rising, Duke developed a strategy to not "get burned" like "the people who made multiple bets in the same direction."³⁴² The real estate investment was cushioned with Self-Help's role as a community development partner, receiving public tax credits for mortgages, and with the new homeowners having the support of their work in professional industries less affected by the collapse. However, the conceptual basis for the financial collapse,

³⁴¹ Trask

³⁴² Trask, Interview

the idea of the subprime, is the same conceptual basis of Self-Help's work: that of extending credit to individuals so that they can help themselves out of poverty.

2.5 The Institutional Formation of The Center for Community Self-Help

2.5.1 The Need for the Appearance of Social Justice

Moral responsibility is equated with the ability to be a utility-maximizing actor forever weighing cost and benefit... With the advent of a marketplace of values, finance over the same period (roughly thirty years) has come to qualify reason with risk. Risk is not simply a calculation that benefits will exceed costs, but a wager on accumulating beyond expected returns... Risk also performs a moral function, by sorting out those with the disposition to embrace it from those relegated to being bad risks. The risk taker is a righteous agent of history; those at risk are left in the ashcan.

- Randy Martin, *Empire of Indifference*³⁴³

The shift for Self-Help from credit union to developer was in line with the principles that Self-Help adheres to – property ownership and speculation, or real estate, allows them to manage and grow their financial liquidity. This transition coincided with the government abandonment of social services, what economist Wolfgang Streeck calls the “moral economy on behalf of the economic” or market economy, or what is commonly called neoliberalism.³⁴⁴ Streeck notes the road to the current increase in public debt incurred after the federal bailout in 2008, leading to this more neoliberal structure. In place of government services has been the rise of nonprofits that receive financial investment from both public grants and tax breaks, and private foundations. Individuals and municipal governments both increasingly rely on credit for survival and maintenance of basic needs, so that as finance-based institutions such as Self-Help and for-profit lenders have been growing, so has public debt. City governments such as Durham rely on public debt mechanisms to build projects from streetscape improvements to performing arts centers. Streeck states:

As the site for the mobilization of future resources for present purposes of political pacification has moved from collective bargaining to electoral politics and from there to markets for consumer credit and finally, public debt, the ability of democracy to distort the economic on behalf of the moral economy has diminished.³⁴⁵

³⁴³ Randy Martin, *An Empire of Indifference: American War and the Financial Logic of Risk Management*, Social Text Books (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

³⁴⁴ Streeck, *How Will Capitalism End?*.

³⁴⁵ Streeck. 215.

Now, in other words, the only option for social survival, which today looks like radical social justice, is in providing finance for social justice, finance for shelter, finance for goods, and finance for starting businesses.

The trajectory of Self-Help has moved along the same path outlined by Streeck –first by financing workers trying to own their own labor and factories, then offering small business loans, mortgage assistance and public policy influence, and now, urban development using public tax breaks and the promise of filling in where governments have left people without resources they once provided. Meanwhile, the owners of finance institutions and capital have been amassing profit from the interest on unpaid debts of nations, local governments, and individuals. Streeck goes on:

Today, owners of financial capital are working with international organizations and debt-ridden nation states to insulate once and for all the economic economy from the moral economy of traditional social obligations and modern citizenship rights – and with greater prospect of success than ever in the four decades since the 1970s. As democratic states are being turned into collection agencies on behalf of a new global *haute finance*, market justice is about to prevail over social justice, for a long if not an indefinite period of time.³⁴⁶

Banks and developers are collecting as each year the gap between the wealthy and poor widens and the debt bubble of the working class and what may be still recognizable as a shrinking middle class increases, and along the same racial lines along which wealth has been historically divided.³⁴⁷

As Streeck noted above, the economic economy has fully replaced the moral economy. However, in order to maintain this, the appearance of social justice is required. The work of Self-Help, and the development media surrounding it and Durham’s development show that the ability to *discursively* distort the economic on behalf of the moral is actually very effective. As banks are vilified as the greedy actors, there is a space carved out for a bank such as Self-Help which is seen as benevolent. However, the problem is not that more people need a “nudge” in the direction of self-help, the problem is that there is greater productivity with lower wages, less labor as a component of production, and an economy that appears to growing but is actually only

³⁴⁶ Streeck. 299.

³⁴⁷ Chuck Collins and Josh Hoxie, “Billionaire Bonanza: The Forbes 400 and the Rest of Us” (Institute for Policy Studies, December 1, 2015), <http://www.ips-dc.org/billionaire-bonanza/>.

growing in speculative wealth.³⁴⁸ This situation, however, presents a greater need for social justice organizations, allowing Self-Help to prosper, partnering with banks, major nonprofits, foundations, universities, and local, state, and federal governments to appear to serve the population while assisting the pro-growth/pro-finance agenda.

While filming and interviewing people in Durham over the course of five years, I was asked several times if I was a Duke student, a reporter, or if I worked with Habitat for Humanity, depending on where I was and who I was talking to. Duke and Habitat for Humanity have a ubiquitous presence in low-income neighborhoods in Durham, and represent the combination of “knowledge city” and “social entrepreneurship” that keeps Durham financially afloat. The prevalence of individual improvement and focus on the self in the form of body sculpting, meditation, extreme athletics, and health food demonstrates one crossover between individualism and humanitarianism: with yoga studios offering various retreats involving community service and donations to various aid groups; charity races; and free ‘community days’ at Cross Fit gyms. Self-Help perpetuates disinformation, because in this context, information operates as disinformation. Self-Help founder Martin Eakes contrasts this to the future benefit of our world, and that “the larger our personal resources, the larger is our trusteeship opportunity.” He does not object to personal resources being controlled by individuals, so long as there is a general trust of where they go. But he also links this to a belief in opportunity as an equalizing force.

The focus on the individual and his or her place in the world and responsibility as a ‘global citizen’ has given ample reasoning and justification for socially responsible consumerism, popularly represented by companies such as Whole Foods - which took over many spaces that were previously run by local cooperatives in cities. Now, in cities such as Durham, NC, businesses that operate as profit-sharing entities are calling themselves cooperatives. By using the rhetorical currency of cooperation, they are able to receive funding and cater to the local progressive population’s self-consciousness about the effects of this development, positioning themselves as the local alternative to Whole Foods because profits go to the local elites, rather

³⁴⁸ Richard H. Thaler and Cass R. Sunstein, *Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth, and Happiness*, Rev. and expanded ed (New York: Penguin Books, 2009).

than to international elites.³⁴⁹ These cooperatives are able to serve as anchors in gentrifying neighborhoods by taking advantage of public financing and cheaper rents to start, claiming to support the surrounding community. In these spaces, a working critique of gentrification operates as the justification for the development for the social justice aware clientele.³⁵⁰

2.5.2 The founding of the Self-Help Credit Union

In this study, most thoroughly in Chapter Three, I present an ethnography of Self-Help's development media through their work in the city, through the media produced surrounding their work, and through interviews and observation with project managers at Self-Help. The Self-Help Credit Union was founded in 1980 by business and marriage partners Martin Eakes and Bonnie Wright in Durham, NC. Eakes, who describes himself as the son of white rural parents, was raised in a poor Black town in Western North Carolina during integration in the 1960s. In order to understand Self-Help's public reception, it is useful to examine how the institution presents itself publicly through Eakes, whose persona is often described in studies about Self-Help as a strong, selfless, intelligent, but approachable Southerner who usually wears blue jeans and an Oxford shirt and tells it like it is.³⁵¹ The philosophy behind Self-Help, according to Eakes, can be summed up as: "The people I grew up with would do anything they could to pay back their loans if ever anyone gave them a chance to borrow money."³⁵² As Eakes tells it, they founded the credit union as a way for factory workers to save money and buy houses because the banks viewed working class people, particularly those with previous delinquencies, as too risky to lend to.³⁵³ During its first four years, Self-Help was funded with a grant from the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, until 1984, when they held a local fundraiser for their first bank deposits, started a Ventures Fund, and began their relationship with the Ford Foundation which continues today.

³⁴⁹ explain this in footnote

³⁵⁰ Expand on this in footnote

³⁵¹ Leslie R. Crutchfield and Heather McLeod Grant, *Forces for Good: The Six Practices of High-Impact Nonprofits*, Revised and updated ed (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2012); Gary Rivlin, *Broke, USA from Pawnshops to Poverty, Inc.: How the Working Poor Became Big Business* (New York: Harper, 2010), <https://www.overdrive.com/search?q=1F46C2FA-2349-4044-8E19-E5E7582BBA0D>; Joel L. Fleishman et al., "Case 56: Self-Help," in *Casebook for the Foundation: A Great American Secret*, 1st ed (New York, N.Y.: Public Affairs, 2007), 166–68.

³⁵² Gary Rivlin, *Broke USA* (90).

³⁵³ Crutchfield and Grant, *Forces for Good*.

Eakes describes Self-Help in a speech to UNC's Public Policy school as their distinguished Lambeth Lecturer in 2015:

Self-Help has four different pieces that tie together. Self-Help Credit Union grew literally from a \$77 bake sale to slightly more than \$670 million. Our mission is to make loans and do work that expands economic opportunities, especially for people and communities that have been underserved by conventional lenders. The Self-Help Ventures Fund is an affiliate that has a billion dollars of funds that we lend for all kinds of purposes. It's a nonprofit 501(c)(3) that manages Self-Help's higher-risk business loans, real estate development and programs related to buying and selling home loans. We set up Self-Help Federal Credit Union in 2008, primarily to build relationships on the West Coast and in Chicago. Much of that work focuses on helping black and Latino communities that were destroyed by the financial services industry in recent years. In 1998, we started the Center for Responsible Lending and formally incorporated it in 2002.³⁵⁴

The Ventures Fund, started in 1984, allowed Self-Help as a nonprofit credit union to invest in private markets and take risks to secure more capital, as well as receive direct grants from foundations: "because it was not subject to the same federal regulations as the Credit Union, the Self-Help Ventures Fund was able to assume a higher degree of risk, and to be more aggressive in supporting those whom conventional wisdom insisted were unworthy of credit."³⁵⁵ Also in 1984, the Ford Foundation began its relationship with Self-Help, first through direct financing which covered more than half of Self-Help's operating expenses from 1984-1994.³⁵⁶ The Ford Foundation gave additional grants as well, including \$90,000 for small business investment in North Carolina, but none of the businesses survived the late 1980s and early 90s after tobacco and textile manufacturing had left the state, rural poverty was skyrocketing, malls and transnational companies dominated retail, and few resources were being used to support Durham's inner city.³⁵⁷

Having the Ventures Fund as a vessel enabled Self-Help to receive the Ford Foundation grants and grants from other major donors including Z Smith Reynolds and the John D. and Katherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and by 1994, to receive funds from Duke University. Beginning in 1994 with one deposit of \$2 million to purchase homes in Walltown, and totaling over \$10 million to date, Duke University has provided Self-Help with a rolling cushion of

³⁵⁴ Martin Eakes, Lambeth Lecture, 2015, 8

³⁵⁵ Fleishman et al., "Case 56: Self-Help."

³⁵⁶ Fleishman et al.

³⁵⁷ Tucker Bartlett, Author Interview, December 16, 2013. Fleishman et al., "Case 56: Self-Help."

investment dollars. While the fund is technically a zero-interest loan, as long as Self-Help continues to invest it in real estate projects in the city, Duke will never collect the funds.

Tucker Bartlett is Self-Help's Executive Vice President, a former banker, project manager for a major Durham development firm, and Peace Corps microcredit officer in West Africa, handpicked by Martin Eakes in 2010 to oversee and coordinate lending and real estate development activities. Bartlett "got the skills from the private sector" and did micro-lending work in Benin. He came to Durham while his wife was in medical school at Duke. He explains how he started at Self-Help:

That's when I discovered Self-Help, my perfect combination of combining my interest in community economic development, and I decided when I came back from the Peace Corps that I wanted to focus on urban [development], partially just because of my upbringing in Atlanta, but also because my wife's career was going to be domestic. So I wanted to focus on community economic work in the states, and combine it with finance and the skills I developed in the Peace Corps. So Self-Help was sort of the perfect place for me in terms of a community development institution. So I started working at Self-Help... so I came to work in Self-Help in February 2000 doing commercial lending work and ended up going to grad school at UNC, and did a joint Masters in Business and Planning Administration." This was when NMTC just came back, and we were using them to do urban redevelopment projects. So American Tobacco was my first.. I was a loan officer on the American Tobacco project.... I switched to our commercial redevelopment team, buying vacant or dilapidated buildings in downtowns, often historic buildings.³⁵⁸

Bartlett has worked for both private developers and for Self-Help. He explains how Self-Help does the work that banks are required to do but – "this space right outside of what banks will do... and we try to put a stretch on this limit, we do things banks wouldn't do because they deem it too risky. We combine the capital market with getting capital directly to loan to lower income families."³⁵⁹ Their secondary lending program, for example, allows loans to people who cannot afford homes without refinancing and second mortgages.

An extremely important, but little understood reality, is that Self-Help invented the subprime loan and greatly expanded the secondary mortgage market. In 1998, The Ford Foundation gave Self-Help a \$50 million grant to partner with Wachovia in purchasing 50,000 mortgages for 4.5 billion dollars. Known as the "Self-Help Initiative," the Ford Foundation grant was to back and insure the mortgage partnership that Self-Help began with Wachovia. Self-Help

³⁵⁸ Bartlett

³⁵⁹ Bartlett

was developing the structure of the first subprime loans as a joint venture with Wachovia, who then exponentially expanded their subprime market without Self-Help's vetting. Self-Help is the institution that created the secondary mortgage market, otherwise known as subprime loans. Self-Help convinced Wachovia to give \$20 million in loans to "risky" lenders, who had terrible debt but reliable work histories and futures. Wells Fargo eventually consumed Wachovia after collapsing due to too many subprime loans. Self-Help, however, survived, and worked with Bank of America and First Union banks as well. They had begun buying subprime loans from banks across the state and eventually bought \$6 billion in subprime loans, all of which were held by individuals who passed their stringent guidelines.³⁶⁰ They were indeed blamed by political commentators on the right for the housing crisis of 2008, looking to find a liberal institution to blame.³⁶¹

This money moves in and out of the Ventures Fund, which Self-Help can freely invest as it is kept separate from the nonprofit organization. Most Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFIs) are one or the other but not both. As Tucker Bartlett discussed, Self-Help is the largest national CDFI, asset-wise, in what Bartlett refers to as "the opportunity finance network."³⁶² As a credit union, it is harder to take risks in investments because they operate as a mission-driven nonprofit and are accountable to their members who invest to keep their money secure. In 2015, for example, they bought a former church property on the outskirts of East Durham with little development around it, because it was for sale, could be part of a historic tax credit designation, and they may want to do something with it at some point.³⁶³ Self-Help's buying power flexibility is possible due to the Ventures Fund, and Self-Help can do what it does because it has both of these sides – it appears to be on the moral side of the economy while being squarely on the side of finance. Its projects may keep people in mind and be oriented towards working and middle class populations, but this orientation does not lead to general uplift of lower classes; instead it leads to the further intensification of the speculative economy. What Self-Help's efforts show is that despite intentions to use individual property ownership and real estate to promote what they claim is a social justice agenda, without an actual movement of organized

³⁶⁰ Rivlin, *Broke, USA from Pawnshops to Poverty, Inc.* page 325.

³⁶¹ <http://www.responsiblelending.org/mortgage-lending/policy-legislation/iowa-Subprime-Symposium.pdf>

³⁶² Bartlett, Author Interview.

³⁶³ Dan and Micah interview

community, or even a political strategy, Self-Help as an institution and their investments in the speculative economy can only further the pro-growth agenda.

In Durham, Self-Help given loans to hundreds of small businesses and own and help finance dozens of commercial properties. In 2014, they report that they lent \$125 million to small businesses and projects to strengthen communities, in addition to investing in affordable housing and downtown development, and lent \$264 million overall, providing “fair and affordable financial services to more than 100,000 members” and helping “a record number of families buy homes.”³⁶⁴ According to Executive Vice President Tucker Bartlett, their main goal is wealth creation, and their focus on cities is because cities are diverse, have been made poor, are potentially better dwelling places for the health of the environment, and are the major commercial districts for whole regions. The Ventures Fund, the Ford Foundation and Duke University have enabled Self-Help to expand their real estate and finance portfolio through the purchase of investment properties in Durham and other cities. Since their founding, they have invested \$144 million in downtown revitalization projects nationally, including \$30 million in 2014 alone.³⁶⁵ As Chapter 3 will detail, each neighborhood that Self-Help has worked in since the mid-90s has been steadily experiencing rent intensification, property costs rise, and displacement of former low-income residents.

The structures of debt, credit, and finance are based on inequality, on the promise of higher returns for lenders.³⁶⁶ Those who most need to borrow are most taken advantage of. The current manifestations of the value and risk assessments are based on the same formulas as racist urban spatial planning. As Wyly, Moos, and Hammel write:

Racial-ethnic inequalities in high-risk lending should be understood not as market-equilibrium responses to consumer demand and borrower credit characteristics, but as contemporary reincarnations of a previous generation of urban exploitation – class-monopoly rent (Harvey 1974). Subprime lending exploits the legal and regulatory

³⁶⁴ Self-Help Annual Report, 2014.

³⁶⁵ Self-Help Annual Report

³⁶⁶ The lack of value, and negative value ascribed to African Americans is still built into banking and finance, as it has been built into the institutions since the business of slavery created the contemporary securities and debt structures that govern the market today. While overt racial discrimination is illegal according to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and individual acts of racism still affect the ability of African Americans to open accounts, sell homes, and borrow money.

loopholes created and justified by risk-based pricing in order to provide profitable opportunities to extract class-monopoly rent.³⁶⁷

Martin Eakes and Self-Help in the mid-1990s used credit and financing for home mortgages to allow more families to own homes who otherwise would not have been able to, by convincing and proving to banks that they would actually make money off of riskier lenders, because riskier lenders were determined to work hard to take care of their asset. There was indeed risk, which Self-Help was able to cushion with the \$50 million grant from the Ford Foundation and a partnership with Fannie Mae to secure and insure the mortgages.³⁶⁸ Wachovia, Bank of America, Lehman Brothers, Citibank, JP Morgan and other major banks and investors leading to the 2008 housing crisis used these same loans, with less oversight and without a cushion, to sell debt packages and make billions off of the promise of the long term repayment of these loans. When that failed and the economy collapsed, the low-income borrowers were blamed for thinking they too could own a home. While Eakes and Self-Help only loan to individuals and families they screen and determine are eligible and able to pay back their loans, and are not loaning to sell off debt packages and profit off of the *inability* of borrowers to pay back their loans, they are also operating in the same mortgage market and institutional structure as the major subprime lenders that uphold homeownership through debt as the most important form of wealth creation. They are also intervening in the racism, classism, and sexism that prevents many from owning homes and building wealth, but, rather than intervening in the structures that maintain this inequality, they support and modify this structure so that it is more adaptable to borrowers.

In the Lambeth lecture quoted earlier, Eakes walks through a history of Self-Help and gives facts about the rise of income inequality in the United States, warning that if we don't reduce this inequality there will be civil unrest and that "an unjust economy that takes advantage of people who are barely making it will ultimately destroy the economic fabric for everyone in that community."³⁶⁹ This inequality is racially divided, he emphasizes: in cities such as Ferguson, Missouri, where Michael Brown was shot by police, Africans Americans are "harassed by a

³⁶⁷ Elvin Wyly et al., "Cartographies of Race and Class: Mapping the Class-Monopoly Rents of American Subprime Mortgage Capital," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 33, no. 2 (June 2009): 332–54, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.2009.00870.x>.

³⁶⁸ Self-Help self-publication, Wall Street Journal, Ford Foundation press, Eakes' lectures.

³⁶⁹ Eakes, Lambeth Lecture, 14

government operating with low wealth and a small tax base.”³⁷⁰ He continues, saying that Moody’s credit rating agency had just “lowered the City of Ferguson’s bond rating by five notches... from investment grade to junk bond status”³⁷¹ in order to demonstrate that inequality is not sustainable. Now, the IMF is admitting to this as well, with Christine Lagarde stating:

What has not changed, though, is that the recovery is not complete. Last year, 47 countries experienced negative growth on a per capita basis, including many small and fragile economies. Far too many people across all types of economies are seeing their aspirations limited by the impact of technology and the repercussions of excessive income inequality. The result is growing political tensions in many places and increased skepticism about the benefits of globalization.

Economist Michael Roberts analyzes the IMF’s new stance, and ends up categorizing the IMF’s current position as near to that of Martin Eakes as expressed above:

I think the IMF, and that clip shows it, is worried that the huge increase in inequality of income and wealth in many countries, like the US and the UK, over the last 20 or 30 years is reaching such extreme levels that there is serious danger of social and political unrest. The great status quo of globalization and neoliberal policies and international activity in the direction of big business is being threatened by this high inequality. Their economists have now started to switch round and have found evidence to show that it doesn’t really make a lot of difference to growth if big corporations and CEOs at the top of big companies who are earning fat salaries are taxed more in order to redistribute income effectively to those people who need it more and can be more productive.³⁷²

Eakes and Self-Help have been ahead of these criticisms, and publicly testifying and attempting to create policy at a federal level to stop predatory lending.

On July 26, 2001 at a special Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee hearing on Predatory Lending, Eakes testified in order to urge the Committee to come to a definition of predatory lending. This was before Obama signed Dodd-Frank into law and before the housing crisis of 2008. Eakes had also testified a year before in May 2000, several other committee hearings, and then again in 2007 after the subprime bubble burst. He stated in 2001:

I come to you today in two roles. The first is in my role as CEO of Self-Help, which is a \$800 million community development financial institution, that makes us the largest nonprofit community development lending organization in the nation, which is also about the size of one large bank branch. Self-Help has been making subprime mortgage loans for seventeen years. We are probably one of the oldest still remaining subprime mortgage lenders. We have provided 1.6 billion in financing to 23,000 families across the country. We charge about a half of one percent higher rate than a conventional rate mortgage. We have had virtually no defaults whatsoever in seventeen years. If you have

³⁷⁰ Eakes, Lambeth Lecture, 14.

³⁷¹ Eakes, Lambeth, 14.

³⁷² Michael Roberts and Sharmini Peries, “IMF Worried That High Inequality Could Threaten Global Capitalism.”

twenty three percent default, I can almost assure you it is lending with fraud in that process. Subprime lending can be done right, we agree there are good subprime lenders, we hope that we are one.

I come to you secondly as a spokesperson for an organization that started in North Carolina called the Coalition for Responsible Lending. The Coalition that formed in North Carolina was really a remarkable event... this coalition started in early 1999, and started with 120 CEOs of financial institutions who came together to ask for a law to be passed in order that they could squeeze the bad apples out of the lending industry in North Carolina... the bill passed almost unanimously... we started with two key principles, that this bill would add no additional disclosures whatsoever [in the real estate industry]... The second principle that we had is that we would pass no cap on the interest rate on mortgages. Now this was somewhat controversial...there can be no rationing of legitimate subprime credit in the state of North Carolina.. Instead what we did was we focused on all of the hidden elements of pricing in a mortgage loan and try to prohibit those, and force the price into the interest rate, the price that borrowers understand best.³⁷³

Nothing happened after this testimony until the federal bailout under Obama. As reported in 2011 by the *New York Times*, the federal government had invested or planned to invest a total of \$9 trillion in banks, spent an additional \$1.7 billion insuring investors, and an additional \$1.4 trillion lending to financial institutions.³⁷⁴

Like microcredit, these mortgages allow for certain individuals in communities to receive loans but little else. The borrowers' ability to grow wealth is leveraged on their ability to pay back their loan, and earn individual wealth. This is the liberal ideology of the Ford Foundation, of the homeownership focus of the New Deal and then the Great Society, and of the construction of Durham's Black Wall Street and Hayti. Self-Help particularly benefits from the history of Black Wall Street and Hayti and through their use of Civil Rights discourse. They are able to bring forth an image of their work as community-driven and benefitting African Americans and Latinos and the white working class and poor. However, just like the subprime lenders, Self-Help's work is based in the same logic of risk that allows stability only on the basis of, essentially, one's credit rating.

2.5.3 Self-Help as urban developer

After all, as one presenter argued, "the scoreable unbanked were the next avenue of growth," and this meant that "credit scoring" had to tackle these "risk frontiers." Especially

³⁷³ Martin Eakes, "Predatory Mortgage Lending," § Senate Banking Committee (2001), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bl7vlgjyZ1Q>.

³⁷⁴ "Adding Up the Government's Total Bailout Tab," *The New York Times*, July 24, 2011, sec. Business Day, <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2009/02/04/business/20090205-bailout-totals-graphic.html>.

prominent at the conference was Moody's Research Lab, a "research incubator" recently established within Moody's Corporation and providing credit ratings for debt instruments and securities. The task of the lab is to map the risk frontiers associated with hitherto unbanked markets. This, too, was seen to be "responsible" finance.

– Ananya Roy, 2012³⁷⁵

Self-Help's founding was based on expanding the 20th-century savior of capital – credit – to workers who no longer had an option to survive through work alone, if they ever did. Thus, as markets were going overseas and unions were being undermined by technological advances, the debt that was imposed on developing nations to build infrastructure that could better serve the corporations coming in to bring jobs was expanded rapidly to the domestic working class. As Panitch and Gindin write:

The very financialization through which global capitalism was realized was also the means through which workers were disciplined; and the political and organizational defeats they had suffered since the 1980s were closely linked to the recovery of corporate profitability-albeit a recovery characterized by new vulnerabilities, above all that so much consumption was dependent on credit.³⁷⁶

They apply this reasoning and logic to urban development as well.

In 1994, Duke gave Self-Help \$2 million to buy a neighborhood and in 2004, Self-Help gave a \$40 million loan to American Tobacco, the first New Market Tax Credit loan in the program that was developed by Martin Eakes and the Self-Help staff. The Clinton presidency had brought nearly \$400 million in federal support for domestic microenterprise with the Riegle Community Development and Regulatory Improvement Act of 1994;³⁷⁷ expanding the urban real estate bubble. In Durham, a massive effort of urban reinvestment was started by the government and corporations through public debt and corporate tax credits, as Self-Help positioned itself as the required community partner shepherding federal New Market, Low Income, and Historic Tax Credits to developers and banks, and began organizing advisory groups in neighborhoods to stand in for formal democratic processes. The following chapter explains and analyzes how the idea of self-help, developed over time throughout Durham, has been used for massive development projects in the city through Self-Help the institution and its embeddedness in the

³⁷⁵ Ananya Roy "Subjects of Risk: Technologies of Gender in the Making of Millennial Modernity" Public Culture 24:1 doi 10.1215/08992363-1498001, 2012 Duke University Press

³⁷⁶ Panitch and Gindin 337

³⁷⁷ Lesk, Jeffrey S.; Price, Richard M. "An Introduction to the Community Development Bank Network." 4.4 J. Affordable Hous. & Cmty. Dev. L. 267, 274 (1995)

economy of disinformation. First, however, in this last section of Chapter 2, I analyze current development media in Durham that sets the contemporary stage for understanding the city I will further explore in Chapter 3.

2.5.3 The Redundancy and Disinformation of Local Political Gentrification Discourse

For many in Durham in the early 2000s, the new investments in Downtown were not gentrification because they were seen as cultivating and retaining Durham's "grittiness" and "diversity," and were often led by locally-based developers and residents and based in former industrial structures. Durham-based writer Matt Hartman embodies this position in a 2015 article entitled "Branding the Commons" in *Jacobin Magazine*, writing that now, not only is development privatizing public space and doing so with public funding, but developers are selling the very culture it is destroying back to the population: "Yet development is now not only targeting public land, but the public itself, the very culture that ties a community together."³⁷⁸ He makes a distinction between a past development that he was happy with just a couple of years earlier that did not include "cultural capitalism" to a current development that now capitalizes on the "grittiness" that had been under the proprietorship and stewardship of the "people of Durham" who "developed a pride in the 'grittiness' of the city, seen most visibly in its architecture: large swaths of old factories, closed auto-body shops and gas stations dotting city blocks, old mill villages interspersed between it all."³⁷⁹ His observations are indeed true; however, his perspective invisibilizes the people who were living in these so-called gritty structures because they were affordable, communities struggling against slumlords, exploitative or abusive employers, deportation, and a precarious service-oriented job market. The poorest populations, in other words, are always targeted, and are less concerned about losing pride in decaying industrial architecture and more concerned about evictions from these properties and the displacement of their families and communities. Behind the culture that is being destroyed and sold back to Hartman are populations that are being divided and pushed out of the city while their

³⁷⁸ Matt Hartman, "Branding the Commons," *Jacobin Magazine*, n.d., <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/06/gentrification-cultural-capitalism/>.

³⁷⁹ Matt Hartman.

former homes are being redeveloped based on tax credits given based on the existence of this poverty.

Hartman's critique of the exploitation of Durham's cultural capital is based on the idea that the cultural capital that is amassed is sourced from the decline of the city, and does not differ from the idea of "pioneering" so present in the language of gentrifying development. The source of pride for his "people of Durham" is their ability to live in the city despite its neglected spaces, and this is the very reason that it is possible to sell it back to them. Hartman aptly critiques poverty and the displacement of communities at the hands of such developments as American Tobacco, citing, as I do here, the manipulation of the idea of "community" to sell the space as open to the public when it is actually a privately-owned space. Furthermore, the developers brand it "as part of being a Durhamite,"³⁸⁰ again profiting off of the idea of Durham while using public investment in the private complex. He calls instead of public funding to go towards public spaces, an idea that could benefit a wider population in Durham³⁸¹ and espouses a Marxist orientation towards gentrification and the city that aims for a redistribution of wealth by socializing the surplus wealth, or profit, that is produced through the exploitation of labor and government-assisted property development. In line with the "Right to the City" movement governed by the ideas of David Harvey, he concludes by arguing that surplus capital must be publicly controlled, not given to private individuals or companies for reinvestment.³⁸² However, as I will discuss in Chapter 4, without enough surplus capital for this strategy to actually be possible, we are left with the necessity to think and create other strategies. The public funding that is necessary for development to occur, the diminishing of public welfare and services, the imprisonment of a third of a generation of potential workers, and the management of these processes by nonprofit institutions are signs that growth is stagnant, not that the owners of production are getting greedier.³⁸³

³⁸⁰ Hartman, 2015

³⁸¹ Ironically, Hartman's plea is to protect Central Park, which is run through a public private partnership by a nonprofit controlled by developers. In other words, his nostalgia is actually for a space that he doesn't realize was already effectively privatized several years earlier.

³⁸² David Harvey, *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*, 2013.

³⁸³ El Kilombo, "Value Seminar"; Pierre Bourdieu et al., eds., *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

The commodification of culture and profiting off an image of style, authenticity, and hipness that consumers are after, a mechanism rampant in Durham, is another necessary site of investment and appropriation, and in turn supports the acquisition of the public investment necessary for private projects like American Tobacco. Moreover, the appropriation and investment in this cultural capital is necessary for even Hartman's work, and for the work of the artists and others that present themselves as gentrifiers with a conscience. Everyone is scrambling. This idea of Durham's grittiness is used by a collective of artists and musicians who grew up in Durham, calling themselves "Durdy Durham," and is repeated by nearly every resident I interviewed when asked to explain what they like about Durham.³⁸⁴ Durham's "brand" is this grittiness, which is linked to the years of industrial decline and disinvestment in Durham; the sourcing of blackness for an idea of culture, creativity, and survival;³⁸⁵ and the continuation of centuries of exploitation and dispossession – a wringing out of the last vestiges of potential wealth accumulation from the those populations historically gutted. This Durham brand is the source of social capital, and ultimately, actual capital for a whole generation of homegrown artists and entrepreneurs. Even the Duke football team took on the Bull City hand gesture to advertise its 2017-18 season, calling its season campaign, "Bull City Proud."³⁸⁶

The need to address gentrification and inequality has been a key theme of the 2017 mayoral race in Durham. Mayoral candidate Pierce Freelon discusses the "cultural capital" of Durham in an email to his campaign followers on August 20, 2017:

I'm going to indulge in Durham's most abundant resource: our cultural capital. I caught the Holy Ghost at Antioch Missionary Baptist Church this morning; I'm going to dance my heart out at Black August in the Park this afternoon; I'll be performing with my band The Beast on the roof of The Durham Hotel this evening; then I'm going to watch my favorite band ZooCru perform alongside Rapsody and The Materials tonight. This is how I will recharge my cosmic batteries so that I can continue to advance the principles of our elders. As Mayor, I will work tirelessly to uplift the arts in Durham. I will bring public and private stakeholders to the table to ensure that artists, venues, galleries, restaurants, and

³⁸⁴ The term "grittiness" is used to describe Durham by over twenty individuals from my interviews between 2013 and 2017. When asked to follow up on what grittiness means, responses have varied from dirty, poor, rough, crime-ridden, edgy, and always discussed as a source of value for the city.

³⁸⁵ cite Reyes, Spillers

³⁸⁶ Duke Athletics Marketing, "Duke Football Launches 277 Club for Durham Residents," May 15, 2017, <http://www.goduke.com/ViewArticle.dbml?ATCLID=211595991>.

festivals have the resources they need to continue challenging, inspiring and healing in our community.³⁸⁷

Freelon touches on several new developments in Durham – Black August in the Park occurring in Central Park, the site of displacement of black and brown communities near downtown, and the Durham, an upscale hotel and rooftop restaurant catering to the city's growing wealthy population. What his statements show is that in Durham today, you buy into the commodification of culture and consume it, or you get left behind. Who actually is paying for this culture, gets to participate in this culture, or even wants to? His point at the end of his statement – that the Durham community needs to be challenged, inspired and healed – alludes to the underlying conditions of poverty and police violence, but his answer is to participate in the very culture supporting the intensification of inequality and policing and displacement of these populations. As he posts photos on *Facebook* and *Instagram* with residents of McDougald Terrace, Durham's largest and one of the last public housing communities, he entertains and gives a sense of authenticity to the same populations supporting the privatization of that neighborhood.³⁸⁸ I do not mean to suggest that Freelon or Hartman are supporting inequality or even that they are hypocritical – the point is that we all now live within a structure where discourse and imagery that appears to be in the best interest of the poor is being used to advance the projects of the wealthy, and to work our way out of this relationship requires a better understanding of how it is actually working.

The invisibility of the poor except in an unstated image of “grit” in Hartman's article represents another common trope about gentrification in Durham: that the city was empty before the millennium-era development. One of the speakers at the Southside ribbon-cutting in Section 1.1.8, Duke's director of Durham and Regional Affairs Phail Wynn, said in 2013 of the Southside neighborhood, “it is not gentrification because there is nobody there.”³⁸⁹ While occupied housing density was low, there was in fact a population who managed to hold onto their homes or find a rental, and a small group of residents who held onto their homes ran the

³⁸⁷ Pierce Freelon, “Love. Eclipse. Hate.,” August 20, 2017, <https://act.myngp.com/el/3170881529583241728/-6892381072925390336>.

³⁸⁸ “Freelon For Mayor,” n.d., <https://www.freelonfordurham.com/>.

³⁸⁹ Wynn, Author Interview.

Southside Neighborhood Association, a key stakeholder and partner in the redevelopment of the neighborhood. Other residents understood that they were not actually a consideration in Self-Help or the city's plans for the neighborhood at all because they held no political or economic sway, and some of them demanded that the city pay their increased property taxes in 2017 when reappraisals were done. Wynn's comment does reflect reality however in two ways: the community that lived in the neighborhood in the 1960s was long gone, to be replaced by a nostalgia for the city's industrial past; and the residents were not the focus of the revitalization strategy, the property was. Scott Selig, Duke's Executive Vice President of Real Estate put it another way:

Generally, cockroaches will go away when you turn on the lights and put feet on the street. And that's what we were doing. We weren't solving all of the social ills that are Durham and every other city in America, but we were turning the lights on and putting feet on the street and putting money into restaurants because people were going to lunch and that sort of thing, which allowed for that redevelopment, and the less desirable issues vacated. But downtown Durham was never unsafe from a crime perspective, it was a perception issue that it was unsafe. It was actually one of the lowest crime districts simply because no one was here. So we had to refill it with people.³⁹⁰

Selig's "people," are the ones that bring in revenue for the city and make Duke appealing to what he calls "the best and the brightest:" doctors, researchers, and students. Selig's "cockroaches" are the poor, almost exclusively Black and brown people who lived in the center city of Durham. He is not denying the city's gentrification: he knows, as do the other executives at Duke, that perception is what is most important, regardless of the contradictions. The work of redevelopment is improving the perceived value of the neighborhood for propertied classes to purchase property. But the starting point of revitalization is strategically, not coincidentally, the perception of a "bad neighborhood," the material conditions of poverty.³⁹¹ Without these two elements, these projects are both discursively and materially impossible.

Duke University, a major actor in the redevelopment of Durham for the past two decades, sponsored and hosted a talk in one of its redeveloped warehouse spaces about gentrification in the city. The talk, by Melissa Norton, a former city planner and homeowner in one of the most rent-intensifying districts in the city, offered a brief history of unequal development in cities,

³⁹⁰ Selig, Author Interview.

³⁹¹ Robert A. Beauregard, *Voices of Decline: The Postwar Fate of U.S. Cities*, 2nd ed (New York: Routledge, 2003).

detailed research on the levels of rent intensification in gentrifying neighborhoods, and a discussion about what to do about it. The discussion centered on solutions such as being a good neighbor, supporting land trusts, and voting for compassionate representatives – all of whom have supported pro-growth policies or ‘development for all’ policies.

Norton’s talk was so popular that she gave it three times, including again at Duke University in one of their more recent warehouse acquisitions, and was later interviewed in the local newspaper, the *News and Observer*:

Q: What is the distinction between gentrification and revitalization of a neighborhood?
 Norton: Gentrification, by definition, is displacement. It’s when people move into areas traditionally occupied by lower-income people and displace them. These areas have been places of disinvestment, so property values are very low. Revitalization is a bottom-up concept by which the needs of a community are identified. There is some sort of collective effort to figure out how to meet those needs, be it affordable housing, services, something as simple as infrastructure and drainage issues, safety issues. To say, “This neighborhood could use a little gentrification” is an incorrect use of the term. I would love to see more revitalization and less gentrification in our central Durham neighborhoods.
 Q: What can we do if we move into these neighborhoods?
 Norton: I’m very intentional about placing myself in this narrative. These are things I wrestle with as a white person who has benefited from an affordable home in a traditionally disinvested part of town. We need to be very careful about racial profiling on neighborhood listservs and in our neighborhoods. We need to make neighborhood associations reflective of the communities in which they are embedded, such as advertising meetings in different ways, through fliers, having food, creating spaces where people can get to know each other face-to-face.³⁹²

In fall of 2014 at the grand opening of the Scrap Exchange, a used art supply warehouse that had just relocated from one gentrified neighborhood (Old North Durham), to gentrify another (Lakewood), City Councilman Steve Schewel expressed his excitement over the new location in similar terms: “It’s going to be a tremendous boon for the whole area. That’s all I got to say.”³⁹³ Then, in April 2017, the Durham Herald Sun wrote two articles supporting a project in that same rent-intensifying neighborhood, Lakewood, followed by an op-ed in the Independent Weekly about how the neighborhood is not actually gentrifying, it is just improving.³⁹⁴ Lakewood has been an affordable neighborhood of primarily African American and Latino residents for several decades. The center of the neighborhood is a shopping plaza with a chain supermarket, several

³⁹² Lisa Sorg, “Take 5: Durham’s Gentrification Challenge,” *The News & Observer*, November 3, 2015, 5, <http://www.newsobserver.com/news/local/community/durham-news/article42202857.html>.

³⁹³ Interview with Schewel at Lakewood Scrap Exchange, Oct 5, 2014

³⁹⁴ Ann Woodward, “Op-Ed: Revitalization Without Gentrification: The Scrap Exchange in Durham’s Lakewood Neighborhood,” *Indy Week*, April 14, 2017, <http://www.indyweek.com/arts/archives/2017/04/14/op-ed-revitalization-without-gentrification-the-scrap-exchange-in-durhams-lakewood-neighborhood>.

businesses that have closed in recent years, and now, the Scrap Exchange, a reuse arts supplier that has bought 85,000 square feet of the plaza to turn the strip mall into what they are calling, The Reuse Arts District. The op-ed was written by the director, Ann Woodward of the Scrap Exchange, whose point in titling her editorial, “Revitalization Without Gentrification,”³⁹⁵ was to defend gentrification – not by redefining the term, but by calling it revitalization. Woodward’s stated goal is to redevelop the area without displacing residents, and to rent only to tenants that “believe in community.”³⁹⁶ This demand, however, amounts to gentrification without gentrification, an impossible demand.

One of the new tenants in Lakewood, the café Cocoa Cinnamon, has opened its third location, and is branding itself based on one of its owners, Arely Barrera de Gotsky’s Mexican heritage. It is championed by local activists for being a successful Latino-owned business in a sea of white businesses, and before it opened its doors at its latest location, the café received publicity for its efforts to be “Mindful of the Longstanding Latino Community in a Changing Lakewood.”³⁹⁷ The article focuses on the fact that its new location in a gentrifying Latino and Black neighborhood serves *churros*, features a sign in the front door that says *Hola*, and has a new logo that was designed by the founder of Runaway Brand to reflect the floor tiles of its owner’s grandparents’ home in Mexico – features all presented and focused on in an *Indy Week* article announcing the opening of the café’s third location.³⁹⁸ Cocoa Cinnamon has grown in its five years of operations from a pushcart to having three locations in neighborhoods undergoing demographic change and rent intensification. It represents how race, ethnicity, and struggle are used discursively in urban development projects to sell a business and a product in order to fulfill the desires of a consumer class of ethically-minded liberal consumers. Being “mindful” of the gentrification one is participating in is sufficient to garner the support of Durham’s progressive

³⁹⁵ Ann Woodward.

³⁹⁶ Cliff Bellamy, “Scrap Exchange Seeking to Finish Leasing of Lakewood Building,” *The Herald-Sun*, April 11, 2017, <http://www.heraldsun.com/news/local/counties/durham-county/article143901519.html>.

³⁹⁷ Maddy Sweitzer-Lamme, “Cocoa Cinnamon’s Third Shop Will Be Mindful of the Longstanding Latino Community in a Changing Lakewood,” *Indy Week*, August 2, 2017, sec. Food, <https://www.indyweek.com/indyweek/cocoa-cinnamons-third-shop-will-be-mindful-of-the-longstanding-latino-community-in-a-changing-lakewood/Content?oid=7314066>.

³⁹⁸ Maddy Sweitzer-Lamme.

class, and these are the most popular and successful businesses among the progressive population in Durham.

Barrera de Grotsky's first café is located in Old North Durham and has served as an anchor to the neighborhood's gentrification, resulting in the ongoing displacement of the neighborhood's Latino community. In the article, she states:

"When we were just starting the business, we lived in this apartment building where Leon was the only native English speaker," she says. "They saw us hustling, they saw us on the bike, they saw us toting our stuff up and down the stairs. They knew that we were building out that first location on Geer Street and we had a great relationship [but] they still didn't feel comfortable coming in."³⁹⁹

Her answer is to change the face of her new café, even though it is dependent upon the business of the people moving in and gentrifying Lakewood. However, the *Indy Week* presents Cocoa Cinnamon as struggling against gentrification by "being mindful." Her statement, and the article itself points to the misunderstanding of how gentrification works in the city: that it can be dealt with through concessions, whether a few units of affordable housing, or signs written in Spanish, and how this misunderstanding is leading to further gentrification as new businesses catering to the incoming populations receive publicity and funding for their efforts. These solutions all share a common focus on the gentrifier being able to continue operating as such, but with concerted efforts towards vague aspirations of community and responsibility. Most people are concerned about the inequalities in cities and their role in perpetuating them, resulting in a turn towards individual actions as solutions. But even when carried out by many individuals, these efforts (employing the local residents threatened with displacement, learning neighbors' names, protesting developers' projects) continue to fall short of an actual organized critique or resistance to the decline of social welfare and housing, the displacement of communities, and the inequality of resource availability.

Durham's growth patterns are part of an ongoing trajectory of the growing inequality of the long twentieth century, and the current methods of development can be seen as the completion and realization of the failed vision of urban renewal, or "urban removal" from the

³⁹⁹ Maddy Sweitzer-Lamme.

1950s, finally brought to light with increased public funding put towards private development.⁴⁰⁰ However, half a century later, this funding arrives through new mechanisms and has a softer appearance of equality, multiculturalism, and community support. And so, these development mechanisms are still held up as the way towards equitable development, not as the cause of inequality. Policymakers, businesses, and activists learned lessons from urban renewal but unfortunately those lessons were not that the efforts of attracting private capital actually increase inequality and geographic disparities. They learned, rather, that in order to make this development happen, new strategies must be employed. At the same time, since the 1960s the economy has become less and less stable, with credit expanding and the financialization of industries increasing as ways to manage crises and feign growth.⁴⁰¹ Global financial crises since the 1970s are “fixed” through the increase of debt, most recently observed in the bailout of the 2008 recession. The work of Self-Help fits squarely in this realm of disinformation where gentrification is understood to be a problem but the only answer is more gentrification.

Self-Help project manager Micah Kordsmeier discussed:

I think it's good for Durham, I think growth is good for Durham, I think it relieves pressure on the neighborhoods to be bringing in housing downtown, and it unlocks a lot of possibilities for what people want in downtown, in terms of retail and I think it will be interesting to see what we can do to keep Durham, Durham...local, DIY, entrepreneurial in its own way, there is a little bit of grit about it, but it is not so much about grit, I hesitate about romanticizing that because a lot of that has to do with property. Just, people do it themselves here, and you see some things work and some things not, and I hope we can keep seeing that experimentation I guess.”⁴⁰²

As one of the largest Community Development Financial Institutions in the country, Self-Help has implemented various methods of investment, credit, and property development. Founded in 1980, Self-Help was originally a local credit union focusing on granting microcredit to populations systematically excluded from lines of credit. In the 1990s, Self-Help grew into a developer with the purchase of its downtown office building in a devalued downtown real estate market, and began by using its reputation to partner with Duke to reinvent Duke's tarnished image among

⁴⁰⁰ Giovanni Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power, and the Origins of Our Times* (London : New York, NY: Verso, 2010).

⁴⁰¹ Robert Kurz, “The Apotheosis of Money: The Structural Limits of Capital Valorization, Casino Capitalism and the Global Financial Crisis”; Streeck, *How Will Capitalism End?*; Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein, *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

⁴⁰² Emily LaDue, *Interview with Micah Kordsmeier*.

Durham residents.

Chapter 3: Self-Help in the City

All the many institutions of the modern world-system operate to promote, or at least are constrained by the pressure to promote, the endless accumulation of capital.

–Immanuel Wallerstein, 2014⁴⁰³

Martin [Eakes] likes real estate because it's visible and a good asset to own.

– Self-Help project manager⁴⁰⁴

3.1 Introduction: The Rhetorical Strategy in Practice

This chapter focuses on the work of Self-Help in Durham as a real estate developer, a lender for real estate projects, and an institution of disinformation and development media. This first section introduces the relationships among these three components.

3.1.1. *Do Durham*: “Speak Progressive Great”

Perhaps the most illustrative example of development media is an 80 second video released on September 4, 2017 called “Do Durham,” commissioned by Scott Selig, Duke University’s Executive Vice President of Real Estate and Capital Assets. The public relations piece is styled as a music video, featuring local hip hop artist and Vice President of Member Investment at the Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce, Josh Gunn, rapping over a backdrop of quick iconic scenes from Durham about why Durham is the best place to live and do business. In less than a week, the video was viewed over 500,000 times, shared over 4,000 times on social media, and received thousands of comments about how proud and excited people are of Durham, and of Gunn’s rising success.⁴⁰⁵ Gunn and Selig hold out Durham’s entrepreneurial potential to potential investors and developers. Over corresponding footage, Gunn raps:

It’s the bull city/They tell tales of tobacco/with bulls so hard to lasso/
Decades of smoke just to rise from the ash tho/ That’s what we do/
Doing Durham means doin’ you/
From the Eagles on Lawson street to the Devils in Duke Blue/
We fluent and inclusive and we speak progressive great/

⁴⁰³ Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein, *Does Capitalism Have a Future?* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

⁴⁰⁴ Emily LaDue, *Interview with Micah Kordsmeier*.

⁴⁰⁵ Data from Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and The Herald-Sun, Joe Johnson, “‘A Love Letter’ to Durham. A Local Rapper’s Take on the Bull City Goes Viral.,” *The Herald-Sun*, September 6, 2017, <http://www.heraldsun.com/news/local/counties/durham-county/article171627897.html>.
<http://www.heraldsun.com/news/local/counties/durham-county/article171627897.html>

Master, manufacture, PhD and innovate
 Where ideas liberate and Broadway comes to stage/
 On any given day hit the bull win a steak/
 The home of John Shepherd, Spaulding, John Merrick/
 Black Wall Street the legacy we inherit/
 From Hayti to Walltown, Research to Underground, Eno to Jordan/
 All people our town/ We even pioneer life-saving medication/
 Over a craft beer/the best food you taste it/ It's Durham/
 The H is silent the A too/ Speak with a southern drawl say y'all and bruh too/
 It's the Bull City please allow me to welcome you/
 They'll be more time for talk but in Durham we just do/
 It's the bull city/they'll be more time for talk but in Durham we just do.⁴⁰⁶

The theme, "Do Durham," sells the idea of self-help to people potentially coming to the city, assisted by the many verses about "doin you" and "we just do." The video speaks of inheriting "the legacy of Black Wall Street," but does not speak of Duke's founding or the history of urban development that cut Hayti in half. The past is brought up in the video to imply a continuation of support for future business. The video beckons investors to Durham, where you can make it, you can profit, and you will be supported by a young, racially diverse, energetic population who "just do."

Three clips from the video stand out in particular for the purposes of this study and as a useful introduction to the themes of this chapter. One is a scene from a weekly evening rap cypher in the middle of the city near the iconic bull statue, in which a large group of African American young men shake hands with a taller white man, who approaches them, dressed in a hoodie, and pats one of the apparent rappers on the shoulder, while Gunn raps about speaking in a southern drawl. The video tells the investors: the South is cool, Durham will give you street credibility, and the symbols of southern and black culture are available and profitable. This image relates to the most striking element of the video, that Gunn is welcoming potential investors to Durham to do business with Duke as a hip hop artist, without mentioning his role as an executive in the Chamber of Commerce. He is speaking to them from the street, in casual clothes, providing an edge that Selig thinks that Durham has over other cities looking for investors. When Selig gives his presentations, he wears a suit and provides what Duke provides in its support of Durham real estate – the guarantee of stability.

⁴⁰⁶ Joshua Gunn, *Do Durham Remix*, n.d., <http://storyboardmedia.co/>.

Nearly every hip hop artist in some rap will cite their hometown, and in general take pride in and represent their neighborhoods to varied purposes. This video is a play on that idea, and, being released on the heels of another viral music video about Durham – “North Cack” featuring Gunn and other local artists – its popularity among a wide range of the population is not surprising. What may be surprising, is that while hip hop is a business that is currently defined most dominantly by “getting paper,” its origins are from a position of anti-establishment politics, and fighting against institutions such as real estate that threaten neighborhoods and communities.⁴⁰⁷ We are far from these early 1980s origins of hip hop in the streets of the South Bronx; however, those origins are being used to market Durham as authentic and hip, and also in support of real estate development. The video represents a total collapse of neighborhood pride, struggle, black culture, and southern drawl with real estate investment that is displacing neighborhoods and increasing inequality: a conjugal relation which holds out the pro-growth agenda as the way to achieve the real desire and need for community, resource, culture, entertainment, and expression. In other words, it is a piece of development media that serves to reproduce disinformation.

The second notable clip occurs when Gunn says, “rise from the ash, tho,” and the camera shifts focus from him sitting in an overgrown lot, to the new One City Center skyscraper being constructed downtown, the most visible symbol that Durham is open for business and worthy of what Selig wants to sell it as: “a world class city.” The implication is that real estate is the new tobacco, and Selig, as one Duke faculty member joked, is Duke’s Real Estate Czar.⁴⁰⁸ Selig was approached by a Durham-based video marketing company to improve the pitch video he shows to “the best and the brightest” companies, investors, and professionals in order to attract them to Duke by selling Durham.⁴⁰⁹ In addition to attracting Duke employees and investments, Selig also attracts private companies and investments as part of a strategy to make the area more attractive for collaborations, and to continue upselling the city’s reputation. At a

⁴⁰⁷ See for example, H. Samy Alim, Awad Ibrahim, and Alastair Pennycook, eds., *Global Linguistic Flows: Hip Hop Cultures, Youth Identities, and the Politics of Language* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009); H. Samy Alim, J. Lee, and L. Mason Carris, “Moving the Crowd, ‘Crowding’ the Emcee: The Coproduction and Contestation of Black Normativity in Freestyle Rap Battles,” *Discourse & Society* 22, no. 4 (July 1, 2011): 422–39, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926510395828>.

⁴⁰⁸ Duke Real Estate Club, *Duke Real Estate Club*.

⁴⁰⁹ Selig interview

panel organized by the Duke Real Estate Club on September 24, 2014, Selig had already concluded: “Our work here is done... we are past the tipping point.”⁴¹⁰ He continued, “What Duke is trying to do, we are competing, not with anybody here. We are competing in the world with Austin, Boston, Palo Alto, Seattle, Princeton – for the world-class faculty, staff, students, researchers – all those kinds of people.”⁴¹¹ For Selig, and thus, for Duke, the business competition is not with any other businesses in Durham, but between Durham and other cities, so as this video and its reception show, several stakeholders in real estate development and Durham residents alike imagine themselves and collaborate with a common interest to promote pro-growth development in Durham.

The underlying theme of cooperation is an essential factor in defending these developments, and there is in fact a great deal of cooperation occurring among all of the institutions working to make this development happen as cited in the video. This is a central theme used in negotiations around gentrification in order to reduce the appearance of conflict. John Heffernan, Principal of Central Park School for Children, the charter school that was working with developers to privatize the park in the Geer Street neighborhood, used this logic when claiming that “everyone in the neighborhood came to the table” except for El Kilombo, stating that the organization rejected their invitations to discuss their plan for the neighborhood. In fact, no one from the neighborhood came to the table, except new homeowners and the managing institutions and businesses that were financially invested in or were interested in financial investment in the neighborhood. This also occurs in planning charettes for new developments in Durham that the city publicizes as democratic participation, and uses images from these events to promote Durham.⁴¹² The participation is from a certain population who stand to make or lose money from these projects - new business owners, government officials, homeowners, investors, architects and planners, developers, and university officials, what is characterized by the local

⁴¹⁰ Duke Real Estate Club, *Duke Real Estate Club*.

⁴¹¹ Duke Real Estate Club.

⁴¹² Shelly Green, “Durham Bull-Etin,” n.d., <https://www.durham-nc.com/>. Durham City Government, “City Hall This Week,” n.d., <https://www.durham-nc.com/>.

government and other governing and economic institutions as the “public sphere.”⁴¹³ Consistently not present, but necessary for both the tax breaks, tax credits, and authenticity, are the poor and working class residents that are under threat of rent intensification, job loss, deportation, and racial profiling, whose livelihoods are at stake as a result of pro-growth development. Under the radar, this population is being moved out of the neighborhoods that are being redeveloped using the justifications of “community support” and “affordable housing.” The ideas of authenticity, community, and diversity that Gunn is selling in the video is only valuable when it can be marketed and sold to the new desired populations, and business owners are under threat as well. As developer of the new skyscraper Greg Hills asked, “are retailers going to be able to reinvent themselves?”

The other notable clip is of an old classic car when we hear “Hayti,” and houses that have been renovated by Self-Help when we hear “Walltown” named as an example neighborhood. There is no sign of the wealthy golf community of Treyburn, not the Nordstrom that Trask noted years ago as one of the markers of the turning point for development in any city,⁴¹⁴ but two historically black neighborhoods, one dismantled by the construction of the Durham Freeway to make access to the new Research Triangle and to growing suburbs easier, and another redeveloped by Self-Help and pricing out its original residents. The car holds a dual meaning of representing the freeway history as well as the simple idea of a classic legacy, all part of a history that is being leveraged to represent Durham’s future. The current state of urban development rests on this ability to invest in the symbolic and cultural capital of a place.⁴¹⁵ The old “stodgy”⁴¹⁶ business presentation is not lucrative, it now must include struggle, diversity, black culture, and the ability to “speak progressive great,” as Gunn raps, in order to yield a return.

The Durham presented in this video is distanced from the Durham presented in a 2004 documentary about the presence and influence of gangs and violence in Durham, called

⁴¹³ Jürgen Habermas, Thomas Burger, and Frederick G Lawrence, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989).

⁴¹⁴ Trask noted that in the late 1990s and early 2000s, a Nordstrom entering a city or town was a sign that the city could support a wealthy population because of the extensive research that they do before opening. When Nordstrom opened at the upscale mall in Durham, Southpoint, it was a sign to Trask that things were going well, but in 2002, he was still surprised that they chose the Triangle. Emily LaDue, *Interview with Tallman Trask III, Vice President, Duke University*.

⁴¹⁵ Harvey, *Rebel Cities*; Perkins 1989 (Chapel Hill study).

⁴¹⁶ Joe Johnson, “‘A Love Letter’ to Durham. A Local Rapper’s Take on the Bull City Goes Viral.” 4/17/18 5:33 PM

Welcome to Durham. Produced by local celebrity hip hop artist, Christopher “Play” Martin, *Welcome to Durham* argued that low-income African American and Latino neighborhoods in smaller cities were also sites of gang organizing, and Martin urged organizing around hip hop as a solution. That same year, rapper and producer Kanye West played to a campus-size crowd of Duke students and Durham residents on Duke’s Last Day of Classes celebration, one of the last years that Duke allowed non-Duke student attendees. The trailer to film opens with, “I’d like to welcome you to the Bull City, better known as Durham, right now we are in the heart of it...” and an off-camera voice states, “you might fuck around and step in some feces around this bitch.”⁴¹⁷ By 2017’s Duke real estate rap video, Durham changed its image so that hip hop was no longer associated with gangs, but with cultural pride, and rising “from the ash.”

Welcome to Durham was released during a critical turning point of Durham’s self-image and outward image. Duke was able to offer a free screening and discussion of the film, using the image it projected of Durham, to support its efforts in community partnerships, and encourage change and development in the city.⁴¹⁸ While the film initially gave Durham a negative image, as one reviewer commented after its DVD release in 2007, the film also argues that “Yes, things can definitely change for the better, but it’s not like the city is poised to descend into utter chaos.”⁴¹⁹ In other words, while the clear message of the film, emphasized in interviews and other footage, is that there is a gang problem in the city that needs attention, there is also an underlying message that Durham is not quite as bad as it could be. This provides a platform for Martin to stand on to encourage and promote the city’s hip hop as worthy of attention and investment. The film also provided a justificatory platform for the city’s large scale gentrification to stand on. The filmmakers interview Mayor Bill Bell, who discusses the lack of funding for community policing as a cause of the rise of gangs. In a news piece on the local ABC channel covering the release of the film, nonprofits, churches, and cooperation with the police are featured as the answer to controlling crime and gangs. The snapshot of Wacquant’s neoliberal “carceral state” is invoked, where the answer to the rise in poverty and loss of state resources for human welfare is replaced with

⁴¹⁷ Trailer, “Trailer: Welcome to Durham, USA,” October 22, 2006, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bAw_9RsifMo.

⁴¹⁸ Selig interview

⁴¹⁹ .Jake Meaney, “Welcome to Durham (2006),” January 25, 2007, <http://www.popmatters.com/review/welcome-to-durham-2006/>.

increased incarceration and policing.⁴²⁰ In the film's trailer, Bell states that the rise in gangs can be partly attributed to the fact that "you had a transition in the economy where unfortunately, some people were not able to keep up."⁴²¹ As this chapter will show, Durham's redevelopment over the past twenty years has been focused on the *ideas* of uplifting the poor and improving life in the city's most devastated census tracts, which has meant displacing poor residents, building up the city's wealthy population, and glamourizing the downtown.

The documentary teeters on the same edge that current development media, such as the promotional video, now firmly stands on – on one side, the image of a black city, described ubiquitously as "gritty" and "dirty," with high poverty rates, high crime rates, and gangs; and on the other side, the image of a wealthy, white suburban city, tied to "Duke University and its world-class medical center."⁴²² Now thirteen years later, the film shows how even a negative portrayal of Durham, in the midst of pro-growth development, is part of the development media landscape. The idea of a crime-filled city with a "gritty" subculture and all that brings to mind, has proven lucrative in the promotion of community development projects that use the idea of "uplift" to gather financial, political, and social capital.

3.1.2 Self-Help's community engagement for development

As the promotional video literally states, Self-Help, City Council, the County Commissioners, and Duke "speak progressive great," and state their support of community health, neighborhood strength, financial stability, and the well-being of all – rhetorically fulfilling the actual needs of the population.⁴²³ They implement programs, policies, and developments that appear to do this by using the language of reform and equality, but the overall direction serves to stratify the population. As discussed by Tallman Trask, Duke is invested in its image, and answers to a Board of Trustees of corporate leaders, carefully and strategically maintaining a balanced image of "community partner" and competitive research institution. Durham city and

⁴²⁰ Loïc J. D Wacquant, *Urban Outcasts: A Comparative Sociology of Advanced Marginality* (Cambridge; Malden, MA: Polity, 2008).

⁴²¹ "Trailer: Welcome to Durham, USA."

⁴²² Lenny Bourin, "Gang Comeback Not Just a Big City Problem," *ABC News*, September 19, 2004, <http://abcnews.go.com/US/story?id=96673&page=1>.

⁴²³ Joshua Gunn, *Do Durham Remix*.

county answers to its voting electorate, corporate tax base, and funders who want to live comfortably and increase their assets. Self-Help answers to its own mission of creating and protecting ownership and economic opportunity for all, and as an independent institution, fills the need for the financial and development work of shepherding and managing public resources, individual wealth, and the relations with residents who may otherwise (and still do) organize against the effects of pro-growth development. John Burness was Duke's first and former Senior Vice President for Public Affairs and Government Relations from 1991-2008, overseeing a major transition in Duke's relationship to Durham. He is no longer an administrator but teaches a course called "Higher Education and the News Media" in Public Policy. In an interview with me in his office in 2014 Burness stated:

Duke doesn't [fill in for a lack of government services]. You see NGOs step in where government is stepping back. I wish government was more engaged and effective, but the reality is, if you look at government expanding, it's not in these areas of social need, in any of the ways it was in an earlier time, but you have places like Self-Help that step in and do what government should be doing. The whole idea of tax-exempt status is for that.⁴²⁴

Burness emphasizes the roles that Duke, the city government, and Self-Help play in Durham in the context of declining state support under neoliberalism. But his statement also reflects the misunderstanding about both what Self-Help does and what the government "should be doing." Moreover, he underlines the key mechanism for all development that has been happening in post-industrial cities since the neoliberal turn – tax exemption, tax credits, and other grant and debt-based methods of public financing that allow private companies to profit off of otherwise risky development.

Duke is Durham's single largest employer, and is the second largest employer in the state, which has made it a powerful institution shaping the city. Regarding urban development in Durham specifically, Duke plays two strategic roles: to provide a sense of financial security and stability to potential investors, and to provide capital and financing to Self-Help and other nonprofits, all in the name of community support, but used for its own public image. Self-Help implements and manages these development projects, as well as buys, develops, and rents

⁴²⁴ Emily LaDue, *Interview with John Burness*.

properties, primarily through public, private, and Duke financing. The city facilitates the smooth implementation of these projects through legislative support, zoning permits, cash flows, and public debt. Burness stated that he sees Self-Help as providing necessary “social need” services to people in Durham, part of Self-Help’s identity as a social justice institution. Self-Help does provide access to credit for individuals who may not otherwise have access, land banking services for Duke and Durham, relatively expensive commercial rental properties for nonprofits and other “community-minded” institutions, and access to tax credits for Duke, Durham, and private developers. The services that Burness said government “should be” doing that Self-Help is doing, are in fact, not happening at all. The actual activities of Self-Help are taken to be the equivalent of what people actually need, due to the development of the discourse of self-help.

In this chapter, I analyze the activities of Self-Help in the city to show how Self-Help relies on the discourses promoted through development media and public financing available to pro-growth projects to advance the disinformation of the American Dream narrative and the possibility of equal and diverse prosperity through credit and property ownership. The two sides of Self-Help’s success – its discursive strategy and its financial strategy, are how stakeholders in urban development have learned to adapt to the current political and economic climate. Now, the places to invest for the highest profit margins are disinvested urban neighborhoods, and the financing available requires a nod to “helping” these neighborhoods out of poverty. The information presented below demonstrates how Self-Help uses these strategies in development projects, and the material effects that they have on the built city and its population. Duke plays a key role as a driving force behind much of Durham’s development with the critical assistance of Self-Help.

Next, I outline the discursive strategies that are operationalized as development media in Self-Help’s various sites and projects in Durham. I use these discursive strategies to organize the ethnographic data from each of Self-Help’s major real estate projects over the past thirteen years, beginning with an important community struggle and precursor to Self-Help’s work.

3.1.3 Discourses of Development Media

In Chapter 1, I outlined the various neighborhoods across Durham that have struggled in the last half century and are now sites of Self-Help's development efforts. Because of the major signs of crises in cities, revealing the cracks in the pro-growth agenda, or the signs of lack of growth, development must take on a gentler face, incorporating its critique in its plan. For the stakeholders in urban development today – local governments, banks, non-profits, small and large businesses, architects, universities, and neighborhood groups – the critique of gentrification is the fresh face of their gentrification projects and the condition of its possibility. Six key discursive strategies are systematically employed by city politicians, developers, Self-Help officials, neighborhood leaders, builders, and other stakeholders to vindicate the significance and public importance of these developments, in order to justify their practices, which I argue are forms of disinformation. These discursive strategies draw on the collective memories of actual historical struggles or social services that give credibility and a progressive rationale for rent-intensifying development projects. The six strategies are reflected in and reference actual mechanisms that allow the pro-growth development to take place and in turn support the discursive strategy, maintaining a cycle of disinformation within a closed logic of perceived growth. In each neighborhood development discussed below, the following corresponding strategies of acquiring financing are employed to get political and financial backing for projects. While these strategies are linked to the rationales and financial mechanisms, there is also much overlap among them.

Figure 3: Discursive Strategies, Rationale, and Financial Mechanisms

Discursive Strategy	Progressive history/rationale	Financial Mechanism
Section 3.2 Partner institutions to leverage various institutional resources as a local community development project; and	The goal of urban renewal to receive private backing for public projects; to present Duke as a benevolent partner and not an antagonistic force; to present institutions as cooperating as a progressive action	Grants and loans from Duke University; housing agencies; Self-Help Ventures Fund; other bank loans; various public funds; nonprofit tax abatements; and shared institutional executive boards and individuals common to public and private enterprises.
Section 3.3 Create jobs and employ local working class residents	History of small businesses, tobacco, and medical industries and	Local economic development tax incentives

	the decline of working class jobs in Durham	
Section 3.4 Are organized with the backing of the local community ;	Crest Street neighborhood struggle, the history of Walltown, and the collective memory of radical struggles for neighborhood empowerment such as the Black Panthers; the idea of community as the people and authentic democratic voice	City Council approval and dispersal of funds from Neighborhood Stabilization grants, Community Development Block Grants, and bid approvals; Certificates of Participation
Section 3.5 Support the government's commitment to affordable housing ; ⁴²⁵	A past reality of actual public housing in the past, and Durham's more recent past of housing in the city center more affordable to poor and working class residents	Federal HUD funds directed towards developers rather than residents through New Markets and Low Income tax credits
Section 3.6 Honor and invoke the neighborhood's black and/or working class history as a model for the future;	Civil Rights and Black Wall Street resistance to white supremacy; a memory, if flawed, of stable working class industrial jobs	Historic, Low-income, and New Market tax credits;
Section 3.7 Maintain Durham's current momentum for propelling into a prosperous and diverse future ;	Hopes for success and history of the American Dream; poverty uplift	Public funding for charter schools and child-focused, place-based nonprofits

Each of these points, while used as a critique of the gentrification agenda, is also used to further the gentrification agenda, by excusing and masking its brutal effects, by refocusing attention and effectively distracting and disassociating perception from the lived situation, and hooking the attention of the public, and the rationale of developers and city leaders, to various histories and collective memories.⁴²⁶ In other words, these strategies are the purpose of development media, which in turn furthers the disinformation agenda of urban development. Thus, publicly invoking these points, with their embedded critique of gentrification, is rhetorically and materially useful, and necessary to every major development project in Durham. Whether or

⁴²⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/housing-network/2014/feb/03/affordable-housing-meaning-rent-social-housing>

⁴²⁶ Cheyfitz, *The Disinformation Age*.

not the leaders of development projects and city officials believe them to be actually effective in curtailing the effects of gentrification is not the point. From my interviews, the intentions of those making development decisions is to further pro-growth development, which remains questioned as a political and economic project. They also state their intentions as wanting to lessen inequality and improve the lives of all residents of Durham. Thus, the concept of disinformation is useful for explaining the confusion of what is and is not possible for the city: the structure of our political thinking and action regarding inequality is layered in a closed logic that relies on discursive tools for justifying the single option presented in any urban policy situation. I organize this chapter according to the major discursive themes that emerged, how they are implemented in each neighborhood site, and how the financing structures are used to develop each area. While these themes overlap and are used in conjunction with one another, drawing each out as a distinct discursive device helps clarify where each idea has emerged and how it is used.

3.1 Partnerships: Duke, Durham, and Self-Help Learn Together

The [cities] that had turned things around were the ones that had a pretty large partnership at work – between the local business community and the entrepreneurs, academe, and government.

– Professor Charles Maxwell Becker, Duke Real Estate Club Advisor⁴²⁷

A life scientist, a start-up CEO and a heavily tattooed chef walk into a bar... It's not a joke, It's just Thursday night. There's something serious going on in Durham, NC.

– Sign, Durham Innovation District⁴²⁸

⁴²⁷ Duke Real Estate Club, *Duke Real Estate Club*.

⁴²⁸ Durham Innovation District Poster, Emily LaDue, *Durham Innovation District Ribbon Cutting*, Digital Video and Audio (Durham Innovation District, Duke St, Durham, NC, 2014).

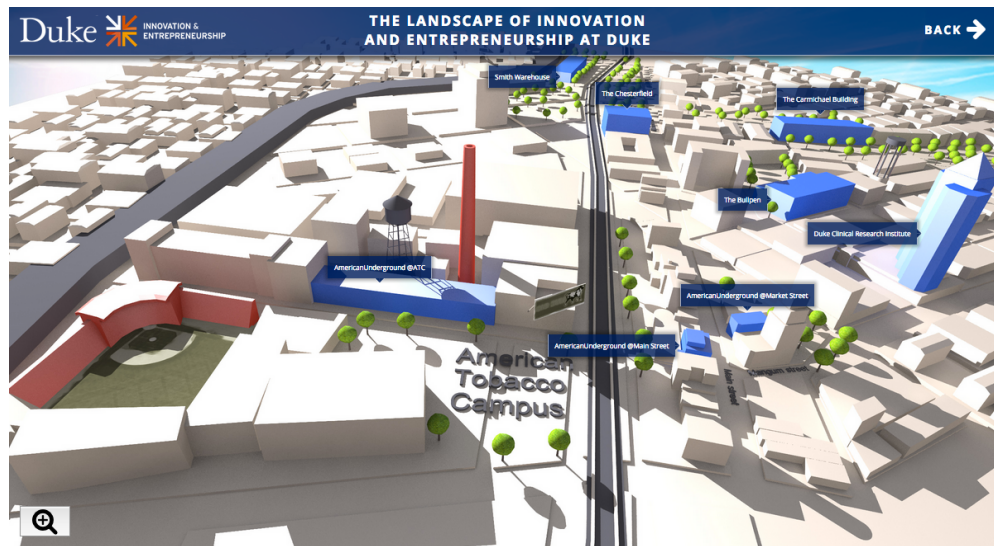


Figure 4: Duke's Vision of Entrepreneurial Geography⁴²⁹

The advisor to Duke's Real Estate Club misses the important role of Self-Help as a community partner who holds together these relationships. The model developed by Duke, Durham, and Self-Help was tried, tested, and innovated for twenty-four years, leading now, to a situation where Self-Help is working independently as a developer, Duke has various downtown campuses, and the inequality rate is skyrocketing as poverty initiatives are urged. When, in 2001, Scott Selig was hired as Executive Vice President of Real Estate and Capital Assets, he had the lessons from other universities he worked at and knowledge and networking from a regular meeting of major research and medical universities that are in postindustrial cities. Hired because of his work at the University of Washington in acquiring properties, and his experience in Arkansas running his own real estate firm, Selig now manages over 3 million square feet of leased office space belonging to Duke in Durham.

The strategy to lease instead of purchase land was another lesson learned from the network of universities that were developing in cities. Leasing land requires that property taxes are still paid on the property, or at least, that they are not the entity receiving the tax break. In the Kent Corner example, Self-Help is that entity. Most importantly, this allows Duke to maintain its image of community partner, instead of property owner, preventing attacks for receiving tax

⁴²⁹ "The Landscape of Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Duke," *Duke Innovation and Entrepreneurship* (blog), n.d., <https://entrepreneurship.duke.edu/map/>.

breaks, and keeping necessary funds in the tax rolls of the city and the county. However, as a financially stable organization, Duke understands that receiving these tax breaks is not actually as useful to them as receiving the social capital from claiming that they are a community partner. Moreover, keeping money in Durham is valuable to Duke as well; Durham uses the majority of its tax base for new construction and policing, which holds more value for the university.⁴³⁰ As I will further discuss in Chapter 4, the structure of value is far from only one of finance and capital. The value of property and services is becoming more and more of an asset for universities to buy into. They already hold the stability of capital, and can leverage that to receive in exchange the reputation, services, and powerful control over other entities. Again, Self-Help is critical for helping Duke manage these value relationships.

Selig stated that he knew Durham had finally arrived to a stable point of development when the first new housing complex went in without public or Duke financing, a student-focused apartment complex along the West End – Downtown Durham corridor, Chapel Hill Street. Similarly, the Durham Innovation District (DID) brought in the urban research park that has solidified the relocation of wealthy professionals to the city. Financed with the usual structure of Duke investments, tax credits, and Durham land grants, the area was built for private research companies to relocate, attracting a new partnership base for researchers, doctors, and faculty. Selig stated at its ribbon cutting: “We have almost 300,000 square feet of research” and the DID is another step towards “making Durham truly one of the brightest spots in the country at one of the lowest costs. It is not competitive, it is very much cooperative with what is happening at RTP.”⁴³¹

As one leading researcher in the DID remarked, he would like to now move downtown to a condo, where he can retire comfortably in the city and be surrounded by life:⁴³²

Empty nesters you know... we are hoping to move downtown and enjoy downtown Durham a little bit more... I know that several people who will soon work in this building have condos immediately next door, there are some small nice condos immediately next door. And it's a very pleasant environment down here. We come down all the time and

⁴³⁰ “Final City Budgets,” 2018 2009, <http://durhamnc.gov/209/Final-City-Budgets>.

⁴³¹ Emily LaDue, *Durham Innovation District Ribbon Cutting*.

⁴³² Emily LaDue.

visit the farmer's market and all this. So I think that the downtown is developing in many ways that make it very liveable.⁴³³

The conditions for the *life* that he sees, that support his lifestyle, are the systematic removal of the lives of others from the city center and surrounding location. Officials and architects are now conscious of gentrification as something that should be done, and so they are doing it with more care – a strategy of disinformation. As Duke's Phail Wynn had initially stated about the Southside neighborhood, it is "not gentrification because there is nobody there."⁴³⁴ This points directly to the uselessness of a discourse of gentrification for critics of neoliberal urban development, and the need for a more complete and historically and economically grounded understanding of urban development. The long term implications of the "inner-city" of knowledge is still unclear, but the role of the state in providing support for private development and high-income growth in city centers is quite clear. Moreover, local actors with access to capital such as Duke and Self-Help provide the necessary community relations to care take for the damage done by mid-century disinvestment through market-based models of uplift.⁴³⁵

3.3 "Adding Jobs" and Downtown Durham Development

One of the best ways to help folks is to make sure they get a jobs. And you think about all the jobs that are going to be created in downtown Durham... you're going to have thousands and thousands and thousands of jobs. Hopefully that will then take that income and improve their life and hopefully it will be better housing for them as well.
-Greg Hillis, Austin and Lawrence Partners⁴³⁶

Our economy is going to be driven by the Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, and Mark Zuckerberg's of the world.
-Phail Wynn, Duke University Vice President, Durham and Regional Affairs⁴³⁷

Together with the City of Durham, Duke, and other partners, Self-Help has communicated that their developments promote community, affordable housing, a prosperous future, historical legacy, and productive partnerships. These ideas work together in order to build an image that Self-Help is the "good developer" amidst a self-conscious reflexivity in the city that

⁴³³ Emily LaDue.

⁴³⁴ Emily LaDue, *Interview with Phail Wynn, Vice President, Durham and Regional Affairs, Duke University*.

⁴³⁵ There are many further studies needed that are made clear through this analysis, such as an institutional ethnography of both Duke and Self-Help and a thorough financial analysis of public and private funds over the past sixty years.

⁴³⁶ Duke Real Estate Club, *Duke Real Estate Club*.

⁴³⁷ Wynn, Author Interview.

has been convincing residents that they can save gentrification. Another promise that is given to the public with each new development is that pro-growth development will bring more jobs to Durham. Self-Help has given hundreds of businesses in North Carolina small business loans, with most given in the Durham region, usually in the form of federally-backed 504 loans for property and capital to start or to expand existing businesses. Self-Help used direct subsidies through New Market Tax Credits to support one of these ventures, the 21c Museum Hotel, an upscale hotel and art museum concept, with rooms starting at \$250/night, or more than the daily pay for a family making the area median income. Self-Help also owns three buildings downtown; one holding their Credit Union; another the policy and research branch of the organization, the Center for Responsible Lending; and the third rents offices to non-profits.

Both Self-Help and Duke, however, appear to work for the best interest of Durham. Dan Levine discusses this work in one major Self-Help tenant (see Section 3.2.3), the Durham Central Market:

They are trying to figure out ways to make sure their offerings are more affordable. I don't know if they've solved it yet but there has been a lot of thoughtfulness about how to make it as successful as possible recognizing that as a small grocery that is focused on local foods, you are never going to be selling a lot of food at the prices that a super Wal-Mart sells it at. But it's on their radar.... We don't see the market as once particular solution to the problem; we think it is a piece of the puzzle. In terms of groceries, there is a Food Lion that is less than a mile away right there on Lakewood... if you're looking for local produce or something, hopefully there will be people from right inside the community coming to buy it. And there will also be job creation so we hope there will be some job opportunity at the grocery.⁴³⁸

Ultimately, the focus is not on its value for the current community, or for low-income people at all, although the leaders in the market are *aware* of these needs. The focus, for Self-Help, is on revaluing the commodities – be it land, houses, or “local foods.”

Dan Levine first mentioned Self-Help's loan to the 21C hotel in an interview in November of 2013 in the Self-Help offices, while explaining the importance of Self-Help to the new investment in Durham's downtown:

Levine: Right now we have a large loan to the building right outside there, the old SunTrust Bank Building is being renovated as a hotel. That's through the same New Markets Tax Credit Program.

LaDue: *You act as a manager of the financing?*

⁴³⁸ Emily LaDue, *Interview with Dan Levine, Project Manager, Self-Help*.

Levine: So we take them [the tax credits] in, there is a lot of risk, it is our money involved too, but it's part of a broader program that is meant to invest in areas in need of investment.

LaDue: *So you get the burden of the risk?*

Levine: Yeah.⁴³⁹

In Chapter Two, I discussed how some of the Duke students who were taking the Black Wall Street Documentary class are oriented to be interested in Durham's history and "explore" downtown and places in Durham as an altruistic act of appreciating an underappreciated city. Durham had been previously sold to them, and had the reputation of a crime-filled city that was subpar to the university. Students used to be warned to not leave the campus at all, and if you must, leave in a group.⁴⁴⁰ Like the orientation of the Duke student who is interested in Durham's history and new development, and of the founder of Runaway Brand who sees Durham as an "underdog" city, Levine's telling of the investment in the 21C Hotel, and that it qualified for New Market Tax Credits at all, carries the same reasoning.

Durham's poverty, crime rate, and reputation, and history of downtown only having a few businesses, and in the popular imagination of being the third city of the Triangle compared to the nearby wealthy college town of Chapel Hill and state capitol city of Raleigh, justified new development as being good not only for the major developers and investors, but for the poor population that lived in the neighborhoods surrounding downtown before redevelopment, who gave Durham its image of "cool" "grittiness."⁴⁴¹

This is how the federally-backed New Market Tax Credits and the loans made by Self-Help – the actual capital going into downtown redevelopment, work with and rely on the discourse created by the development media to operate effectively. In this conception, Durham is symbolized as a poor and desperate city, and the only answer to this, is to bring in amenities that are appealing to those who will bring in more consumption to the city. The poor, unemployed, and low-income citizens are not the actual focus of these measures, the disinvested real estate that now is needed to generate financial growth, is. However, without the existence and perceived

⁴³⁹ Emily LaDue.

⁴⁴⁰ Duke students, including myself, report that the message being communicated from the Freshmen Orientation Services.

⁴⁴¹ Matt Hartman, "Branding the Commons"; "Find Your Cool: Downtown Durham Inc," n.d., <http://downtowndurham.com/>.

benefit to these populations, the New Market Tax Credit program, and its other related programs, would not exist. Or, as stated on the front page of the New Market Tax Credit Program:

Historically, low-income communities experience a lack of investment, as evidenced by vacant commercial properties, outdated manufacturing facilities, and inadequate access to education and healthcare service providers. The New Market Tax Credit Program (NMTC Program) aims to break this cycle of disinvestment by attracting the private investment necessary to reinvigorate struggling local economies.⁴⁴²

While the “cycle of disinvestment” in the downtown is broken, the cycle of disinvestment in low-income communities is not.

While discussing Self-Help’s developments in Durham, Self-Help’s Micah Kordsmeier described the 21C Hotel a bit sheepishly, admitting that the development is clearly attracting more high end development downtown, but citing the addition of jobs as making it worthwhile and relevant to Self-Help’s mission:

Everybody wants to see the direct benefit to low income people but the nature of development can be fairly indirect and it can get kind of complicated... There is sometimes criticism whether a luxury hotel should have new market tax credits financing a project... but if you think about that though, a hotel is one of the only sort of genuine job creators in real estate development, you know, hotels don’t relocate from one location to another. So there are all new jobs, they are available to people with fairly low skill sets – who keep those fairly low skills sets in those jobs – and they have the potential to be fairly good paying jobs. So you can see how the direct benefit isn’t always obvious from what the use is.⁴⁴³

The owners, developers, and construction company of the 21C Hotel held an information session in the lobby of the former bank building before construction began to answer any questions about the construction schedule and long term street closures downtown. In addition to business owners, residents from downtown, City officials, and press, representatives from Duke and Self-Help were in attendance. Phail Wynn brought up his attendance at the event with me, stating that “If you’re visible at events of importance then citizens know you care.”⁴⁴⁴ Self-Help does not speak of adding jobs as much as the government does, who has to answer to their voters. Or developers, who must bring in jobs to receive subsidies and breaks from the Office of Economic and Workforce Development.

⁴⁴² Community Development Financial Institutions Fund, “New Markets Tax Credit Program,” CDFI Programs, n.d., <https://www.cdfifund.gov/programs-training/Programs/new-markets-tax-credit/Pages/default.aspx>.

⁴⁴³ Emily LaDue, *Interview with Micah Kordsmeier*.

⁴⁴⁴ Interview, Phail Wynn

In the winter of 2015, a local media producer and social commentator, Aaron Mandel, organized an exhibition in the city called *Durham Under Development*. Mandel has been publishing a blog called *Clarion Content*, whose twitter account states, “We curate Durham.” His blog is part of the city’s development media, and exemplifies disinformation in its coverage of Durham’s current local discourses of gentrification and its critiques, and gentrifier reflexivity. It covers local gossip and announcement in a feature called “What We’ve Heard;” and varied posts with new and recurring writers about the newest restaurants, hotels, businesses, events, art, and music; and politics, following City Council, and development news. The blog represents the importance of the idea of gentrification and development itself to defining what is cool and hip in Durham’s social and arts scene. For example, their coverage of the recent opening of the *Unscripted Hotel* focused on developers Jane and Greg Hills, who through their company *Austin Lawrence Partners* developed the hotel and the new adjacent 26-story condo and retail building next door, *One City Center*. The hotel was an afterthought for the couple, who needed a parking garage for *One City Center*, and the former *Jack Tar* hotel across the street had one, as well as a hotel that had been closed for decades for sale.

One City Center has been criticized by many in Durham, and conversations about the new building always touch on a theme of “there goes the neighborhood.” There is a Durham identity that residents take seriously, which involves the commonly invoked, “grittiness,”⁴⁴⁵ that for over a decade was represented in part by a green decaying wall in the center of downtown, in what will be the center of the new tower. The green wall was the site of film shoots, marketing materials, photographers wanting to represent a Durham “feel.” When the wall was demolished at the end of January 2015, editor of the *Indy Week* Lisa Sorg, chronicled it day by day, focusing on details such as a piano that had been stored inside the building for years, that was claimed by local musician *Des Ark* in a post responding to the article.⁴⁴⁶ Sorg wrote: “I’m fortunate to have captured the moments before the piano bit the literal dust.” The nostalgia and desire to hold onto an idea of Durham being rough and gritty may be read as a desire for a closeness to the

⁴⁴⁵ Matt Hartman, “Branding the Commons.”

⁴⁴⁶ Lisa Sorg, “Demolition of the Green Wall in Durham, Day 2,” *Indy Week*, January 30, 2015, <https://www.indyweek.com/editor/archives/2015/01/30/demolition-of-the-green-wall-in-durham-day-2>.

commodification of poverty and blackness, or perhaps as a style choice, or perhaps these are the same. Durham's so-called grittiness allowed residents to live close to poverty and wear it as an accessory without experiencing it. Why it feels so brutal as gentrification happens now, is that the critique of gentrification built into the gentrification rhetoric is this same idea, taken to the next, and more profitable step.

Walkers downtown scoff at the towering construction, longtime residents predict the end of Durham, and some media outlets have criticized the skyscraper as "a tower of concrete and glass."⁴⁴⁷ The tone of most articles about the tower is slightly critical, but not so critical as to appear to be speaking negatively of Durham's development. Even articles that are critiquing Durham's development are careful to not actually critique it, but instead try to offer ways to make up for the resulting inequality with various policy initiatives, as discussed in Chapters 1, and Chapter 4.

Self-Help is both rhetorically, and financially, the glue that holds together the progressive critique of Durham's development with the development itself. As project manager Micah Kordsmeier stated, Self-Help does projects that otherwise would not happen at all.⁴⁴⁸ Without the public subsidies and tax credits, ability to purchase property cheaply and in bulk, task forces that work with locals to approve projects, and influence and reputation with City Council that Self-Help provides, the flipping of Durham into a high income city with a progressive ethos of anti-gentrification, would not be possible.

3.4 Walking Through the Minefields: Community as Image Control

This section begins with a history of community struggle in Durham that set the groundwork for much of the rhetorical strategy used by Self-Help and Duke. Then, I examine how the idea of community was used to justify and expand the flipping of the neighborhood in Walltown, by relying on the collective memory of community and the participation of one or a few homeowners in the area in the neighborhood committees formed by Self-Help. Finally, I discuss Self-Help learned to do this work more effectively in the West End neighborhood.

⁴⁴⁷ Lisa Sorg, "Tower of Power," *Indy Week*, July 30, 2014, <https://www.indyweek.com/indyweek/tower-of-power/Content?oid=4216572.4/17/18 5:33 PM>

⁴⁴⁸ Emily LaDue, *Interview with Micah Kordsmeier*; Emily LaDue, *Interview with Dan Levine, Project Manager, Self-Help*.

3.4.1 A Local Memory of Community: The Crest Street Neighborhood

The idea of community was used in the late 1970s and early 1980s in setting up Self-Help's neighborhood redevelopment strategies. The Crest Street neighborhood is a working class and poor African American neighborhood in Durham that faced total dispossession in the mid-1970s with the incoming Durham Freeway. Witnessing the destruction of Hayti and the loss of businesses in anticipation of the Freeway razing the area, the neighborhood successfully invoked Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits race, gender, or class discrimination in the receipt of federal financial assistance, to win the relocation of their entire neighborhood instead of the dispersal of residents.⁴⁴⁹ The neighborhood formally organized itself as the Crest Street Community Council in 1975, and sought strategic alliance: with a student environmental group at Duke who were protesting the Freeway for its negative environmental impacts; with the People's Alliance, then a new progressive organization also focused on the environment; and with Legal Aid of North Carolina. The coalition argued that predominantly white neighborhoods in the path of the Freeway were given resources that Crest Street residents were not offered, and the loss to the neighborhood as a community with mutual benefits warranted more federal relocation assistance.⁴⁵⁰ They won, and the relocation of the Crest Street neighborhood became "the first time in U.S. history that highway relocation funds were used to benefit an entire neighborhood instead of individual homeowners."⁴⁵¹

The history of the Crest Street neighborhood and their struggle against displacement from the construction of the Durham Freeway serves several functions in forming the current uses of the idea of community in Durham. It is used as a demonstration of successful community organizing for advancing a pro-growth agenda that involves getting the image of the backing of the local community. The coalition, that was actually a result of the strength of the neighborhood ties is both one of the few successes against urban renewal, and also serves a liberal argument

⁴⁴⁹ "Title VI Of The Civil Rights Act Of 1964 42 U.S.C. § 2000d Et Seq." (US Department of Justice, n.d.), <https://www.justice.gov/crt/fcs/TitleVI-Overview>.

⁴⁵⁰ NC Dept of Transportation, City of Durham, and Crest Street Community Council, "East West Expressway Environmental Impact Statement," Title VI Administrative Complaint, Mitigation and Enhancement Plan, Housing of Last Resort, Collaborative Planning, 1997.
N"Hickstown/Crest Street," *Open Durham* (blog), n.d., <http://www.opendurham.org/buildings/hickstown-crest-street>; "Our History," *People's Alliance* (blog), n.d., durhampa.org/our_history.

that there is room for compromise in urban development projects, cited at convenience by Durham planners and by groups such as the People's Alliance to justify ideas that do not actually lead to successes for communities, such as "development with displacement."⁴⁵² The main argument used in this struggle was that the Crest Street neighborhood was a cohesive community that provided a high quality of life and a social network that would be torn apart if the residents were relocated across the city. As noted in an analysis published by the North Carolina Department of Transportation, the housing stock and physical infrastructure of the community was deteriorating, with only one paved road before 1960 and several flimsy houses. The community's desire to save their neighborhood was not about preserving historic housing stock or their beautiful yards:

To those who looked beneath the exterior, however, Crest Street was, in fact, a strong community. Despite limited material wealth, residents seemed content with their lives. Sociological surveys showed that the Crest Street community had several characteristics of a highly cohesive community. Most of the residents had relatives in the community, and many families had been in the community for generations. The presence of extended family and close friends enabled Crest Street residents to survive quite well, although 40 percent of the households were living below the Federal poverty limit. Residents provided child care and transportation to one another, cooperated during times of need, and participated freely in neighborhood improvement activities such as periodic community clean-up days. These informal, social-support systems provided access to jobs for people who might otherwise have depended upon unemployment compensation or welfare. They also allowed elderly and disabled residents to live in their own houses and near their families, thereby avoiding the substantial expense of State-financed, long-term care facilities. Two other characteristics of the Crest Street community also deserve special notice — the presence of a strong church and the continuity of its leadership.⁴⁵³

The neighborhood was already organized, so that when they came under threat, they used their church and other ties to build a formidable political coalition and pull in other organizations strategically.

The Crest Street history is used by the Durham's People's Alliance, a Democratic Party PAC who partly built their reputation from their partnership with this low-income African American neighborhood. In their own publicity and history telling, the People's Alliance claims success for this struggle, in which they played a part, but what was initially, and ultimately, a result of the

⁴⁵² This information is from the an information meeting held by the NC Department of Transportation Light Rail Committee Crest Street to inform Crest Street participants about new developments that will affect their neighborhood. All information about this neighborhood meeting comes from my notes. Participants asked not to be identified.

⁴⁵³ NC Dept of Transportation, City of Durham, and Crest Street Community Council, "East West Expressway Environmental Impact Statement."

neighborhood organizing for their own survival. Today, the People's Alliance is the most influential PAC in Durham, composed of Democrat Party leaders, liberal homeowners, long time neighborhood association leaders, and members of other political organizations that look to it as a way to politically back candidates. It supports and partners with Self-Help, and as a PAC endorses candidates, influences elections, holds candidates' forums, and sets certain terms of the debate. Before the late 1990s, the PAC with the most influence was the Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People, but that has gradually shifted, and most of the winning candidates in the past ten years have been endorsed by the People's Alliance. In 2017, the Durham Committee was unseated in the mayoral race and City Council, except for one of their endorsed candidates who straddles the People Alliance's and the Committee.

While the fight started with the formation of the Crest Street Community Council in 1975, convened by residents to organize against the construction of the Freeway through their homes, and continued to be led by the Council, the People's Alliance cites their involvement in helping to lobby and raise funds for the fight as one of their central accomplishments in supporting housing in Durham.⁴⁵⁴ Perhaps it was a turning point in the struggle. Regardless, the currency of community is key in giving the PAC credibility as a progressive organization, and the Crest Street struggle is one of the few fights in Durham that is both legible as "successful" to a progressive middle class constituency, with the coalition's use of symbolic protest and a t-shirt sale, use of policy through a federal court case, and debates and compromises with the state and local governments

The People's Alliance maintains an image of being a leading progressive voice of Durham, but its history in Durham, like Self-Help's, has also mirrored the course of history in Durham leading to further inequality and increased displacement in the city.⁴⁵⁵ Like Self-Help, it occupies a position of progressive politics while supporting various pro-growth policies in the city. It has backed several policy items, such as a minimum wage increase and halting the cutting of utility costs for businesses, but has also thrown its weight behind candidates that are

⁴⁵⁴ "People's Alliance PAC," n.d., Progressivealliancepac.org.

⁴⁵⁵ Virginia Bridges, "Will the Durham People's Alliance Endorse the City Council Winners, Again?," *The Herald-Sun*, July 28, 2017, <http://www.heraldsun.com/news/local/counties/durham-county/article164124337.html>.

unabashedly supporting pro-growth development items without reserve, and defends their decisions as “guiding revitalization sensitively.”⁴⁵⁶

The Crest Street struggle against the Durham Freeway in the late 1970s also created a backdrop for the future strategies of Self-Help, Duke, and Durham regarding neighborhoods, forcing the city and Duke to acknowledge the residents of Durham and to appear sensitive to the history of racism in urban development projects before they begin, or else face a potential organized community of residents. In practice, this has taken the form of Self-Help organizing community groups through relations it has with certain neighborhood leaders, by attending neighborhood meetings and researching potential allies, and by using their attendance and attention to the community as a claim to democratic decision-making. The city has learned from Self-Help and has taken on this practice regularly, inviting resident input for development projects that will happen either way.

Crest Street, however, remains organized, despite changes such as its public school closing and turning into a community center, receiving funding from Duke University’s Office of Durham and Regional Affairs. Pocketed between the Duke University Medical Center and the Durham Freeway, the neighborhood is now again fighting for survival in the face of the new light-rail project.⁴⁵⁷ In a meeting in October 2014 regarding the re-zoning of parts of the neighborhood to build mixed use development along the new light rail corridor, the Durham Planning Commission held what they called a neighborhood consultation, to which one Crest Street resident declared was not in fact a consultation, but the city coming to Crest Street and telling them what was about to happen and asking if they had any ideas that may fit in their already laid out plans. Other residents spoke out against the new developments stating that they did not want or need them, and they would only serve to gentrify the neighborhood that they worked so hard to preserve. They did not trust the process and the majority of residents stood together against the development. Others chose to participate in the meeting and give the Planning Commission feedback, stating that it was clear this was going to happen anyway and arguing that they may as

⁴⁵⁶ PeoplesAlliancePAC.org

⁴⁵⁷ This information is from the an information meeting held by the NC Department of Transportation Light Rail Committee Crest Street to inform Crest Street participants about new developments that will affect their neighborhood. All information about this neighborhood meeting comes from my notes. Participants asked not to be identified.

well have their views on record. Those in opposition asked for it to be recorded that they did not support the development at all. The city planners leading the meeting were left speechless, and turned back to their presentation slides.

Neighborhood organization and democratic decision-making are used by the city for their discursive weight, rather than for their practice. This practice works effectively in Durham. The People's Alliance supports the candidates and commissioners that support the light rail project, and have participated in the neighborhood consultations as individual members. Liberal, majority white neighborhood associations sponsor such meetings, and those in opposition are not given an option to oppose; instead, residents cynically resign themselves to get whatever they can from the development. Often, this takes the form of individual benefits, as it did for most urban renewal projects. Instead of everyone in the neighborhood receiving a guarantee that they won't lose their housing, the city, or Self-Help or Duke, gives concessions, and in many cases, employs certain leaders.

The history of community organizing lives only in the idea of itself, through such mechanisms as information sessions posing as democratic decision-making practices.⁴⁵⁸ Durham's strategic goal to "expand engagement with neighborhoods to ensure residents feel empowered to preserve or improve the quality of their neighborhoods"⁴⁵⁹ is sourced from a memory of community organization, and communities demanding democratic participation in planning. The residents of Crest Street who fought to keep their neighborhood brought attention to this difference, and declared their intention to fight the oncoming zoning changes and new developments as part of the light rail. However, the landscape of political organizing has changed, partly due to the lessons that government and developers learned from struggles such as Crest Street. If they organize using the same means in the past, their would-be allies in local government and activism are already positioned as and a part of promoting the pro-growth agenda, viewing these planning sessions as adequate for ensuring that neighborhoods are not razed as they were in the not-so-past of urban renewal. The methods of razing have now

⁴⁵⁸ See the case studies discussing the takeover of grassroots organizations to developer-led nonprofits in Arena, *Driven from New Orleans*.

⁴⁵⁹ Durham City Council, "Strategic Plan," 2017, <http://durhamnc.gov/183/Strategic-Plan/Goals/>.

changed, are more gradual, and include feedback sessions such as this. Generally in Durham, the communities that are at risk of displacement and rent intensification are also more vulnerable. While Crest Street “continues to be socially cohesive” with “strong leadership” and “a well-maintained community,” in Durham overall, unemployment is higher, social services and job benefits are more sparse, addiction rates have increased, students are more dispersed in schools across the city, and there are fewer stable working class jobs.

Moreover, particularly relevant from the city’s perspective, there is less federal funding to support the direct needs of residents, and instead, community development funds from HUD go towards developers to incentivize affordable housing concessions, and institutions such as Self-Help that serve the role of “community partners” to receive tax credits and grants, such as Community Development Block Grants and HOME Funds. Organizations such as the People’s Alliance and Self-Help base their platforms and fundraising on the idea that they are the community. The People’s Alliance’s vision statement is for a “just, equitable and inclusive community where all people can thrive,” Self-Help’s is “creating and protecting ownership and economic opportunity for all,”⁴⁶⁰ and both institutions continue to support a “development for all” model, but no new development actually supports or protects. When Duke wanted to improve its public image, it turned to Self-Help to develop a plan and do the groundwork.

3.4.2 Owning the Neighborhood: Duke Enlists Self-Help

3.4.2.1 Building Walltown: Community as Survival

The first effort was the attempt to buy and renovate Walltown.
-Tallman Trask III⁴⁶¹

Built at the turn of the twentieth century by a small black working class population, the history of Walltown is one of community struggle in the face of economic exploitation and dispossession by Duke University and structural racism in employment and housing. Walltown was forged out of necessity and struggle, and its history has been continuously yoked to the

⁴⁶⁰ “People’s Alliance PAC”; Center for Community Self-Help, “Our Mission,” n.d., <https://www.self-help.org/who-we-are/about-us/our-mission>.

⁴⁶¹ Emily LaDue, *Interview with Tallman Trask III, Vice President, Duke University*.

history of Duke. The neighborhood is named after George Wall who was born into slavery in 1856 to an administrator at Trinity College (Duke in its early years), and lived in bondage until he was fourteen. He then worked as a custodian for Trinity College and in 1890, purchased a plot of land in an area just a mile off of Duke's campus.⁴⁶² Soon after, his family and other black working class families and individuals built homes in the neighborhood that became Walltown. One history of the neighborhood at the time describes it:

"Walltown was poor and isolated, surrounded by white neighborhoods, the university, and a trash dump... the neighborhood was notable for its sense of community, quickly establishing community institutions and creating a familial atmosphere."⁴⁶³

By 1910, the community built a church and a school, and schoolchildren could finally avoid walking through physical and verbal attacks on their way to school from the surrounding white neighborhoods and Trinity College students.⁴⁶⁴ Residents built this neighborhood in the face of severe hate, abuse, and inequality. From 1910 until the end of the 1960s, Walltown steadily grew in population, and remained a black working class neighborhood. Many residents continued to work for Duke, and many others worked for the tobacco and textile mills. Several oral histories attest to the neighborhood's intimate community life and interdependence. By 1990, household income in the neighborhood was \$11,000 below the city median and 26% of residents were living below the poverty line.⁴⁶⁵ Duke University was the largest employer in Durham, and most Walltown residents still had ties to Duke employment through the network of families and colleagues who had first built there.

In the late 1960s, factories began downsizing their workforce as technology improved and unions demanded higher wages, until eventually, production moved out of Durham and went overseas in the race-to-the-bottom model of industrial production. Many Duke employees kept their work in various service sector jobs – primarily custodial work, food preparation, and cleaning services. Then reserved for the lower working class, and now dominant in the current economy, these jobs were not paid as highly as production jobs, and attempts to organize were thwarted

⁴⁶² Heather Chrisine Deutsch, "Walltown: The History of a Neighborhood and a Housing Renovation Program" (UNC-Chapel Hill, n.d.), History of a Neighborhood. I quote this history with reserve. Deutsch cannot in her accounts

⁴⁶³ Deutsch, Walltown.

⁴⁶⁴ Deutsch, Walltown.

⁴⁶⁵ US Census, "Durham, North Carolina Income Map, Earnings and Wages Data."

with threats of replacing the relatively unskilled labor force, and paternalistic enticements from the university to the employees.

3.4.2.2 A two-million dollar community partnership

The wealth and power disparities between the university and its employees were, and are striking, and in the mid-1990s, were most clearly represented by several visual reminders of structural racism and inequality. On campus, nearly all university service employees were, and are African American, cleaning classrooms, offices, and dormitories; landscaping; driving buses; and preparing and serving food for the student body, faculty, and administration. Employees, several who were and are Walltown residents, had been referring to Duke as the plantation for decades, and many still do today. A fight for unionization led by nurses and other hospital faculty in the mid-1980s ended in Duke dividing the union leadership and attacking the leaders of the movement, leading to vitriol, major accusations of racism and corruption among employees, and no union.⁴⁶⁶ The wall around Duke's East Campus was a particular image of the separation between Duke and the rest of the city, marking the proverbial boundary between town and gown. Incoming students were told by university welcoming committees and upperclassmen to stay inside the wall, where their needs could be met, and to only travel outside in groups.⁴⁶⁷

Bill Bell, outgoing seventeen year mayor who was, at the time, just voted out County Commissioner, referred to Duke publicly as a plantation in the early 1990s, perhaps to reinforce his own relationship to Durham residents and position himself as on their side.⁴⁶⁸ Because of his public role and certain level of trust among certain sections of the African American community in Durham through his work with the Community Development Corporation, United Development Incorporated (UDI), Bell and City Councilmember Sandy Ogburn were hired by Duke President Nan Keohane and VP of Public Relations John Burness to survey Walltown. According to Burness, they hired Bell in order to get a pulse on what residents were saying about Duke, and to figure out what they wanted and needed. It was at this time that Duke decided to build their public relations campaign that focused on "neighborhood partnerships," creating the Duke-Durham

⁴⁶⁶ Liz Wildermann, September 2017.

⁴⁶⁷ Sophomore coordinating committees give freshmen advice including as they enter the university.

⁴⁶⁸ Interview, John Burness.

Neighborhood Partnership. The Partnership is a community service program for Duke students to spend summers or semesters in community organizations created and funded by Duke and Self-Help in Durham's neighborhoods surrounding Duke.⁴⁶⁹ As Duke's Vice President of Durham and Regional Affairs Phail Wynn stated:

Now, these neighborhoods had fallen on hard times because of the disappearance of more than 3,000 cigarette manufacturing jobs that were high-paying which were located in downtown Durham. And of course these neighborhoods thrived because they were proximate to the campus and to these jobs. Even though part of the reason for doing that was kind of a self-serving reason, you know, concern about neighborhoods around the campus, they had become less safe, had more abandoned homes... from that grew a broader and deeper engagement.⁴⁷⁰

Placing the responsibility on the loss of tobacco from the city, Wynn positions Duke as a saving grace for the poor of the city. This was the beginning of what is now a major priority in Duke's identity and brand. The University re-wrote its mission statement in 1994 to focus more squarely on "attending not only to [students'] intellectual growth but also to their development as adults committed to high ethical standards and full participation of leaders in their communities."⁴⁷¹

By 2006, their Strategic Plan was entitled "Making a Difference." This strategic plan was supported in part by these programs in Durham, and eventually, the humanitarian study abroad program with a Durham-focused option, called Duke Engage. John Burness explains how Duke began changing its image to one of community partner:

When Nan Keohane came in to Duke, we had a long talk about Durham. And Duke was on this trajectory [points up]. I think universities get involved in their communities for a number of reasons. But one of them is self-interest. You can never underestimate that. To the board, and the board was really supportive of a lot of the things I was trying to do, but to them, it was, this is in Duke's interest. It's great that Durham benefits from it, but the board has to look out for Duke in the long haul. It was just going to be unsustainable that Duke was going like this (gestures up) and Durham was going like this (gestures down). So mid-90s we had a 5 year plan for the university and there was a section on Duke and the Community, and what it essentially said was that Duke is a citizen in this community and we need to be more active as a citizen. And we have a special obligation to pay attention to the neighborhoods near our campus. And part of that was, we had lots of students doing a lot of things, a lot of faculty doing a lot of things. There was no economy of scale or power from that investment.⁴⁷²

⁴⁶⁹ The program is in line with other university community relations initiatives across the country. See for example, Rodin, *The University & Urban Revival*.

⁴⁷⁰ Emily LaDue, *Interview with Phail Wynn, Vice President, Durham and Regional Affairs, Duke University*.

⁴⁷¹ Durham City Council, "Strategic Plan."

⁴⁷² Emily LaDue, *Interview with John Burness*.

Burness indicates that there was no economy of scale from the money and time they invested into Durham neighborhoods, but there is a financial reward from this type of marketing and public image management. For a university competing with other universities for a small pool of whom they see as the most attractive faculty and students, this is actually a huge economy of scale. Across the country, students must include in their resumes, experience-enhancing opportunities to appear more competitive to prospective employers. Humanities and social science faculty are interested in work that involves the public through service learning and making their research more relevant and useful, an added value to precarious scholarship that is seeking ways of adding value. Hard science and other social science faculty look for contracts with private companies to use their research for additional funding, profit, and prestige. The University administration is looking to attract investments from alumni and serve the Board of Trustees to continue growing and fulfill the goals of their positions. The money and attention that Duke was putting on its surrounding neighborhoods is instrumental in moving forward the agenda of real estate growth in all of Durham.

After Bell and Ogburn returned the findings of their community survey to Keohane, Duke began to strategically focus on two major areas of concern for residents: violent crimes and drug crimes, and vacant and boarded up houses. Linking the two, rehabilitating houses was a method to reduce crime while building capital and changing the perception and reception of the city for the population that Duke was attracting. Creating this cause and effect hints at but does not intervene in the reality that poverty puts residents in positions that lead to illegal ways of earning income and organizing gangs to survive. Instead, it uses one effect of poverty – lower homeownership rates and ability to maintain stable housing, to explain another – crime.

Crime and housing are the most visible and shame-filled aspects of their neighborhood, that conveniently, were the most mutually beneficial for Duke to address without examining the reasons that residents were turning to drugs and gangs for survival and losing or being unable to maintain their properties. Using these actual concerns, but as if they were the source of poverty and instability in people's lives, rather than the effects, is in line with the broken windows theory of policing that has dominated urban policing and policy nationally, and used as justification for the

development plans of cities. The theory goes, that if the visible signs of poverty and its effects, and other examples of law-breaking related to the public image of a neighborhood are modified – graffiti removed, vacant houses filled, “broken windows” on buildings repaired – the people of the targeted neighborhood will think more highly of themselves and have a higher desire and ability to get jobs and participate in activities that do not break the law.⁴⁷³

Broken windows policing purported that if the neighborhood appeared to be more orderly, people would be less scared that crime would occur, even though actual crimes committed never decreased. Community policing was based on the same idea, that more officers on foot patrol that were present in a neighborhood would lead to a greater sense of security, and they would “elevate, to the extent they could, the level of public order in these neighborhoods.”⁴⁷⁴ These policies called for more police to control the behaviors of poor people in neighborhoods, and contributed to the increase of street surveillance and policing encompassing the majority of city operating dollars. Part of the strategy was the support of Police-Citizen organizations. In Durham, the “PACs” – “Partners Against Crime” – are neighborhood associations that bring residents and the police in conversation about how to better police the streets, including decisions about security cameras, patrol times, and which businesses may attract or detract from the well-being of the neighborhood. By creating a space for policing to be discussed with police officers, the PAC groups, and the community policing models in general, claim that they are providing a forum for citizens and police to work together, not unlike the planning meetings discussed above. Like the idea of the image having the power to control a community, the image of cooperation between the neighborhood and police by holding an open meeting justifies neighborhood policies being passed by those in attendance, who are the local business owners, investors, and some home owners. At the same time, policing and incarceration were rapidly increasing, and people’s concerns and fears over crime and riots, flamed by disproportionate media attention and racism,

⁴⁷³ As Duke was reorienting its image in Durham, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani was ordering the arrest of homeless people and youth jumping subway turnstiles in Times Square, New York. George L. Kelling and James Q. Wilson, “Broken Windows: The Police and Neighborhood Safety,” *The Atlantic*, March 1, 1982, <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1982/03/broken-windows/304465/2/>; Beauregard, *Voices of Decline*.

⁴⁷⁴ Wilson and Kelling, “Broken Windows,” p 2

were used to justify mass arrests and harsh sentencing rules.⁴⁷⁵ Meanwhile, programs called “community policing” were developed to give the repression a calmer and more congenial face and allow for a constant presence of police in black and poor neighborhoods, naturalizing policing and systemic surveillance of the poor.⁴⁷⁶ This was the environment in which Duke’s community partnership model was modeled and implemented.

The policing models are based on the idea that a *lack* of self help is the reason for crime in the neighborhoods, and they only needed more law and order, and an image of law and order, to improve their livelihoods. This self-help and image-based logic extends to the idea of how and why these neighborhoods are poor. As Duke’s John Burness stated, “We had the resources and we could do things. But we need to see changes, we need to see these communities develop their own capacities to do different things.”⁴⁷⁷ The community is both blamed and pitied. The history of decline in the neighborhood is used as a justification for the need for policing, for larger and more resource-rich institutions taking control, and for a generalized need for change and revitalization.

Duke supports the further policing in the neighborhoods around its campuses, both with its own police patrol who are trained by the Durham Police Department, and through financial support. In 2004, after a decade of investing \$10 million in Self-Help’s efforts to buy and renovate houses in Walltown, to build the Neighborhood Ministries, to start land banking homes in Southside and the West End, and to create its Center for Duke and Durham relations, President Nan Keohane wrote a letter responding to then City Manager Marcia Conner, who asked Duke to increase its commitment to the city, mostly to support the police and fire departments. Part of Conner’s reasoning was that Duke should provide more payments since so many of its students live off campus and create situations requiring police, fire, or EMT on the weekend, when parties

⁴⁷⁵ George Gerbner, *Against the Mainstream: The Selected Works of George Gerbner*, Media & Culture, vol. 1 (New York: P. Lang, 2002); Nancy Signorielli, *Violence and Terror in the Mass Media: An Annotated Bibliography*, Bibliographies and Indexes in Sociology, no. 13 (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988); Beauregard, *Voices of Decline*. Robert M Entman and Andrew Rojecki, *The Black Image in the White Mind: Media and Race in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

⁴⁷⁶ Sean P Hier and Joshua Greenberg, *The Surveillance Studies Reader* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2007); David Lyon, *The Electronic Eye: The Rise of Surveillance Society* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994); John Gilliom, *Overseers of the Poor: Surveillance, Resistance, and the Limits of Privacy*, The Chicago Series in Law and Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Desmond, *Evicted*.

⁴⁷⁷ Burness interview

and drinking dominate the area surrounding the wall.⁴⁷⁸ Another part of her reasoning was that, despite the investments that Duke made over time, the city's population was still struggling, and in some cases, struggling more. Duke agreed to support the police department with an additional \$103,500, divided among an E-citation software program, new radios for officers, and expansion of the Citizen Observer Program, or "COP," which gives civilians who volunteer and train for the program, the authority to offer warnings and recommend citations and investigations to the police. The volunteers for this program have been members of neighborhood councils – all white, male property owners. While Duke continues to discuss its support of community and community relations, and use it as a public relations point for its commitment to advancing the well-being of the city, its partnerships support the dominant pro-growth framework that increases wealth for the professional class, and increases policing and incarceration for those without work or resources. The public letter written by Keohane serves as a development media: creating the idea that Duke's funding of redevelopment work is for the benefit of the Durham population, supporting pro-growth development in her examples of Walltown and American Tobacco. She also perpetuates the logic that along with this development comes the increased carceral state under the guise of benevolence.

In its efforts to continue its growth and move Durham into a position of competing with other cities, Duke presented itself as looking to change its relationship with Durham and be a better neighbor. To do this work, it looked to Self-Help, who had a positive reputation in Durham's progressive population, and through its loan and mortgage programs, worked with low-income residents in Durham: in Burness' words, because of "their ability to walk through the minefields, and... patience... we needed them for that."⁴⁷⁹ In 1994, Duke gave Self-Help a \$2 million non-interest loan revitalize Walltown, where several of its employees lived and where there was abandoned housing, high poverty rates, and drug-related crimes. It became the first local site of Duke's new strategy of "community partnership." Thus, after Duke hired John Burness to fix their reputation in a strategic way, and hired Tallman Trask III, to acquire and manage property,

⁴⁷⁸ https://today.duke.edu/2004/06/conner_0604.html

⁴⁷⁹ Burness Interview

Burness and Trask hired Self-Help to take care of the inevitable critique and community resistance of the campaign they were about to enact.

Burness and Trask learned from other universities where they had worked or networked that this critique was coming, and took precautions to keep themselves at a distance when problems arose, and front and center when they wanted to defend their position in the city. Duke adopted a policy of providing direct finances, staff, and students to neighborhoods. They hired Self-Help to meet residents, establish knowledge on who has what power in the neighborhood, and form new community organizations under their control to support the work that they were doing. This allows both Duke and Self-Help to keep the work that they do on their own terms of what the community is and needs, with their own people on their payroll, and generally, in the business and running the business of the neighborhood.

Former Duke Divinity student and current leader of an intentional Christian community in the neighborhood, Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove stated that the Walltown Neighborhood Ministries acts as a de facto governing board for Walltown.⁴⁸⁰ They hold a monthly meeting where neighbors can bring “issues to the table” and sometimes vote on certain policies. The Ministries is made up of a small group of pastors who are paid by Duke, resident leaders who have been working with Duke, the Walltown Community Association, a Duke staff person, and Self-Help staff. Placing ministers in the neighborhood was a strong tactical move on Duke’s part, as the churches have historically been centers of community life. The Duke Endowment funded, and continues to support, the Walltown Neighborhood Ministries with over \$600,000 in grants since 1999.⁴⁸¹ As described by Sheila, who was born in and is now a homeowner in the neighborhood, every church’s pastor in the neighborhood was replaced with a Duke pastor by the early 2000s.⁴⁸² Divinity School students are encouraged to live in Walltown, with certain homes reserved for them. One area of Walltown that was partly undeveloped was developed by New Urbanist developer Bob Chapman, in partnership with the city and Duke. As part of the development plan,

⁴⁸⁰ Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, June 3, 2017.

⁴⁸¹ President Nannerl O. Keohane, “New Duke Financial Support to Assist Durham Police,” *Duke Today*, June 22, 2004, https://today.duke.edu/2004/06/conner_0604.html.

⁴⁸² Name changed for privacy

several of these houses are owned by Duke to house graduate students, with a particular emphasis on Divinity students.

Much of the work of the Walltown Ministries mirrors work that had been done by Walltown residents for decades, such as organizing senior citizen support groups, neighborhood childcare networks, and community service through the church.⁴⁸³ Several of these programs have been recreated by the Walltown Neighborhood Ministries. Duke takes credit for these programs, and positions itself as a good patron trying to get the community on board with its efforts.⁴⁸⁴ The community organizing that happened on the community's own terms in the past, in the model of self-determination in the face of segregation, poverty, and racist housing policies, contributed to the strength of neighbor ties, developed leadership within the community, and did not present an uneven flow of capital into certain areas. Moreover, residents who moved in were not assisted by Duke or Self-Help, or moving in to fulfill philanthropic requirements of their faith or curriculum. The model of self-determination in Walltown, though struggling in the face of increasing poverty and the influx of drugs in the 1980s and 1990s, was a community ownership model, on the terms of those who faced life in Walltown every day. Today, the model represents more of a colonial-mission model of development in a neighborhood, with a powerful benefactor and a community with less resources to organize itself.

In 2008, Self-Help published a report, "Impacts and Lessons from the Walltown Homeownership Project," to present their successes, as well as outline their mistakes and lessons, which were then improved upon for the next project in Southwest Central Durham. The main lesson learned, according to Self-Help's project managers, was to work in the community early and strategize well. They discussed that the project had many bumps due to what they refer to as "politicking,"⁴⁸⁵ referring to actual disagreements and longstanding arguments among residents. Before they created their own Duke Divinity-led citizens advisory board, the Walltown Neighborhood Ministries, they had to figure out how to work around the existing community association.

⁴⁸³ Walltown Resident, "Sheila," June 2017.

⁴⁸⁴ Staff, "Walltown Ministries Celebrates Anniversary," *Duke Today*, n.d., <https://today.duke.edu/2001/01/walltown112.html>.

⁴⁸⁵ Self-Help Impacts and Lessons

One of the longstanding community organizations in Walltown is The Walltown Community Association. The WCA has been organizing itself since 1949, handling issues regarding schools, neighbor disputes, landlord complaints, and community building. In 1996, members voted out WCA President Randy Mangum after Self-Help stacked those residents who supported their work, and privately met with several residents, enlarging internal neighborhood disputes that already existed. They helped to promote Audrey Mitchell, a supporter of the Walltown Homeownership Project, to become the new President of the WCA.⁴⁸⁶ According to Sheila, Mitchell was supportive of Self-Help's project while Mangum anticipated that many residents would be displaced and Duke would own certain houses. Self-Help argued that Mangum would stall the advancement of the neighborhood and claimed that he was only interested in keeping his own properties. Duke claimed that Mangum was being divisive in the community, and urged residents to participate in their new initiatives. The relationship of Duke to the community however, is not as an equal partner. Duke has funded property ownership and their own idea of community organizing on terms that suits their own educational needs for their students, faculty, and ministry; keeps the neighborhood appearing on aesthetic terms they agree to; and maintains the neighborhood residents as objects of their actions, with a few certain residents being used as leaders to advance their own goals.

Self-Help's representatives in Walltown served to invisibilize Duke.⁴⁸⁷ In turn, Self-Help's interests of establishing more homeowners in the neighborhood, even if that meant the displacement of current residents, were also not represented transparently at these meetings. Self-Help helped to shape a situation of disinformation, representing themselves as progress, community, and affordability, and thereby placing themselves as on the side of the Walltown residents. The residents and the systems of organizations that they themselves organized – as flawed or successful as they may have been – formed the basis for the idea of community that was being invoked. Self-Help managed to gain community support while simultaneously supporting policies that brought forth development, that would not benefit the community, without

⁴⁸⁶ Walltown Resident, "Sheila."

⁴⁸⁷ Walltown Resident, "Sheila."; Interview with John Burness.

lying or misleading them, but rather simply because these ideas of growth, community, and the American Dream remain convincing.

The idea that community well-being will come from the work of Self-Help in redeveloping the neighborhood represents the lack of logic of development media, and the dominance of disinformation as the organizing principle of our thinking. Self-Help used certain residents to represent others in the community, in greater Durham, in reports for federal financing, and in the media, to appear as if Self-Help has the backing of the local community. Further, according to residents, they exploited existing divisions within the community organizations. Certain property owners who spoke out against Self-Help in these meetings were offered concessions, awards in their honor, and one-on-one meetings to appease their frustrations.⁴⁸⁸ Sheila described the process this way: “They find the people without critical thinking skills, and then divide us.”⁴⁸⁹ Her statements begin to elucidate how Self-Help operates as an institution of disinformation.

As Cheyfitz writes, “Disinformation, as a I redefine it, is the historical process of erasing history itself, culminating in a disruption or blockage of critical thinking.” In the Walltown neighborhood, Self-Help began to learn how to effectively manage neighborhoods by effectively managing disinformation.⁴⁹⁰ Duke was able to leverage the history of de-industrialization to displace blame off of their own employment policies, a history of union-busting, and their personal interests in making Durham more appealing to a professional class and their students, while also appearing to take into account structural inequality, maintaining a position of paternal benefactor for the troubled neighborhoods that surround the university. The discrepancies in historical racial and class structural positionality, and current pay and work policies⁴⁹¹ at the University, are not addressed. Walltown was the beginning of a new kind of natural partnership among Duke, Durham, and Self-Help – Walltown is referenced as a success, and Self-Help is trusted with huge sums of public and Duke money to redevelop in what is called a community-centered way. However, in all of their community partnerships, the partnership that proved to be the most

⁴⁸⁸ Reports from discussions with Walltown residents, Feb 2017.

⁴⁸⁹ Interview with Sheila

⁴⁹⁰ The idea of “managing” these neighborhoods is analogous to the state’s management of poverty in John Gilliom, *Overseers of the Poor: Surveillance, Resistance, and the Limits of Privacy*, The Chicago Series in Law and Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

⁴⁹¹ Duke employment stats coming

valuable for Duke was their partnership with Self-Help. In turn, Self-Help learned how to be more efficient and profitable developers.

3.4.3 Kent Corner And The West End: Community-owned/For the [new] community

3.4.3.1: After Walltown, Southwest Central Durham: a new strategy

Some neighbors have expressed concerns that this project is somehow not going far enough to help poor people or something, which is, quite frankly, bullshit. You've got to bring out a microscope to find any kind of dark lining on this silver cloud. Self-Help has a pretty amazing track record, and DCM [Durham Co-op Market] has huge potential; if a member-owned food co-op isn't good enough for you, maybe there's nothing else in the world that would be either.
– durham.io⁴⁹²

As Self-Help continued its work in acquiring and selling properties in Walltown, Duke employed them again to move to other neighborhoods in Southwest Central Durham, another “gateway to the university”⁴⁹³ between downtown and Duke’s West campus. Micah Kordsmeier, the Project Manager for Self-Help’s Kent Corner Project, stated: “In one sense, our success in Walltown obviously gave Duke the confidence to continue working with us and to move to other neighborhoods, so it required success in that way.” John Burness added:

A lot of the work was symbolic, but important in giving a sense that movement was happening. That was Walltown. Then we had the Southwest Central Durham, where there were multiple neighborhoods.... And tons of vitriolic anger directed at Duke. The reputation for this community getting its act together was real bad. So we said, you have to drive it. We’re here to say that to you. We want to be a partner. Then at the fifth meeting came the quality of life program for Southwest Central Durham. Affordable housing was the main thing. Kent Street and around there, boarded houses around there, but now there is a huge change.”⁴⁹⁴

The change that Burness is referring to is a change in the appearance, population, and property values in the neighborhood, which according to him, was a huge improvement from Walltown because development happened more rapidly and drastically. This was due in part to a change in Duke and Self-Help’s strategy. The change was twofold: improved relations with the neighbors by operating through already established nonprofit organizations, and not just the neighborhood association, and using a commercial anchor to redevelop the neighborhood.

⁴⁹² Jeremy, “DCM/Self Help (sic) Pursue Site on West Chapel Hill St,” *Some Guy Writing about Durham* (blog), April 2, 2013, <https://durham.io/2013/04/02/dcm-self-help-pursue-site-on-west-chapel-hill-st/>.

⁴⁹³ Interview with Micah Kordsmeier.

⁴⁹⁴ Emily LaDue, *Interview with John Burness*.

The first strategy refinement resulted in the creation, in 2001, of the Southwest Central Durham Quality of Life Project (QOLP), that merged six neighborhoods all near Duke's West Campus and centered around what would become the Kent Corner/ Durham Co-op Market. The QOLP is comprised of Duke employees from the Durham and Regional Affairs Office, nonprofit leaders, and homeowners in the neighborhoods who support the work of Duke and Self-Help. The steering committee was initially led by two homeowners in the area: John Heffernan, Principal of Central Park School for Children in Old North Durham, and Dorcas Bradley, an African-American woman pictured frequently in Duke's promotional material for their community relations.⁴⁹⁵ Duke created and funds the QOLP, but uses it to demonstrate their commitment to grassroots organizing. As Duke reported in 2005:

The Southwest Central Durham Quality of Life Committee, which has been working to identify community needs and build cohesiveness in the area's six neighborhoods, will receive \$55,000 to support continued facilitation of its grassroots planning process. The group of representatives from neighborhoods, nonprofits and for-profit companies has spearheaded plans to build 13 new affordable houses this spring on Gattis Street in the West End, with help from the city, Self-Help, Habitat for Humanity of Durham and the Durham Community Land Trustees." Duke has helped our committee figure out how to approach and partner with these various groups," said Lyon Park Neighborhood Association President Dorcas Bradley, co-facilitator of the group's steering committee. "We couldn't have done it by ourselves."⁴⁹⁶

Bradley, and many of the other longtime residents in the neighborhood, likely have the best intentions to provide stable housing to their communities. And, like she stated, they could not have done this massive redevelopment project themselves. The problem is, these efforts are inducing changes in these neighborhoods that are only beneficial to people who can afford to purchase new homes – the groups meant to represent the neighborhood such as the QOLP are already signed on to this development. There is no other option, and no room for any other organized neighborhood effort. John Heffernan's remarks regarding El Kilombo's refusal to participate in the talks organized by developers and the Central Park School for Children are relevant here. He stated that "they were the only ones not at the table," criticizing their desire to not participate in the re-organizing of the park as part of the school's plan and removing the

⁴⁹⁵ See, for example: Staff, "Southwest Central Durham Building Blitz," *Duke Today*, June 23, 2006, <https://today.duke.edu/2006/06/southwest.html>.

⁴⁹⁶ Staff, "Grant Will Help Duke Support Community Programs," *Duke Today*, January 7, 2005, https://today.duke.edu/2005/01/tde_0105.html.

soccer field used by their community, a decision that the Central Park School and developers already made. Moreover, his comments show his limited scope of who he categorizes as possibly being at the table: El Kilombo was in his vision only because of the organized effort they put up against the redevelopment of the park, and the majority of the neighborhood (at that time before gentrification) of poor Black and Latino residents, were most definitely not at the table either. Low-income residents who are skeptical of this development and do not want to be a part of Duke's redevelopment plans, including many longtime neighborhood renters, are not in the QOLP. The direction of this new development, to be possible at all, must be towards rent intensification and more expensive property and amenities in order to pay for it – to actually support low-income people in organized communities would require something other than speculative development.

The commercial redevelopment is being built to directly serve these higher income groups of people. Instead of only land banking and flipping as many houses as possible with Duke's financial backing as in Walltown, Self-Help also redeveloped a massive anchor commercial plot at the most visible location in the neighborhood. To make this acquisition, Duke quietly gave Self-Help a \$4 million zero interest loan, which in practice, acts more as a revolving fund. As Kordsmeier stated, "it doesn't cost us anything to have the funds available."⁴⁹⁷ So long as this capital is being used, Self-Help does not have to repay the loan, as they continue to partner with Duke on projects that they see as beneficial for both of their interests through the discourse of community support. The numbers can be confusing, because of the revolving fund. Initially, Duke gave \$2 million for Walltown. Then, they gave an additional \$2 million to the West End to finish buying up properties and complete the renovations. When they started looking at the West End and Kent Corner, they added another \$4 million, totaling \$8 million. As Kordsmeier discussed it, it is all a part of the same rotating fund, which Duke has entrusted to Self-Help, and is guaranteed through 2021.

This fund is thus used as a rotating flow of capital for Self-Help's projects. They work to pay back the fund first with rent, tax credits, and sales after each project. Kordsmeier explains:

⁴⁹⁷ Emily LaDue, *Interview with Micah Kordsmeier*.

Currently it is a zero interest loan, so it doesn't cost us anything to have the funds available, so the loan basically comes in its full amount to self help and we hold that, and when we purchase property, we just sort of code it as having used these loan proceeds, and then when we sell the property for development, that goes to repay what we use to purchase the land, basically. And we have some protection. If we need to sell at a loss, we have, a sort of forgiveness clause with Duke, so they'll forgive that portion of the loan that we sold at a loss if we ask them to, and that is something that we haven't done historically. We can.. absorb the loss ourselves rather than... asking for that forgiveness. But we know it is there and it provides a comfort in a pretty risky activity to just sort of speculatively buy property.⁴⁹⁸

At Kent Corner, they built a structure that is now leased to the new Durham Market Co-Op, and offices for Duke University. The site once housed a neighborhood community center that had existed for decades, and that Duke even sent students to volunteer at in the early years of their Duke-Durham Neighborhood Partnership. In Walltown, Self-Help turned a corner store with a reputation for attracting drug dealers into the Walltown Neighborhood Ministries, and here in the West End, they closed a community center in order to build a food cooperative. In each case, the main community served was not the existing community that the development was stated as serving, but the incoming populations.

The Kent Corner project also makes use of the language and idea of community and cooperatives to gain support and financing. The West End neighborhood where it is located was viewed as a "food desert," and a neighborhood "in need." Because it is one of the neighborhoods surrounding Duke, it was included in Duke's plan to "turn Durham around."⁴⁹⁹ This reasoning was employed to defend putting the Durham Central Market in the neighborhood. As many of the board members of the Market attested, their first choice for a location was closer to both downtown and the farmer's market, just north of the city center and just south of the Old North Durham/Geer Street neighborhood, a former low-income black and brown neighborhood and now a rapidly gentrified bar scene. However, by 2014, because they could not receive New Markets Tax Credits, they could not afford that location anymore which is now the site of high-end luxury condos averaging \$500,000. To afford to exist anywhere in Durham's commercial centers that cater to a wealthier, progressive population, they needed additional financial support from Duke

⁴⁹⁸ Emily LaDue.

⁴⁹⁹ Interview with Tallman Trask interview

and Self-Help, and decided to rent the space as a concession.⁵⁰⁰ Thus, for the Market to exist, it requires the combination of a poor neighborhood that qualifies institutions such as Self-Help for tax credits, a public image boost for Duke to be able to claim that they are supporting the neighborhood, and an incoming population of wealthy consumers wanting, among other amenities, a convenient place to practice politics through consumerism.

The new Market has received direct financial benefit from the city and from Self-Help. From the city, this has come in the form of a \$200,000 streetscape project after Self-Help bought the Kent Corner site, improving the streets, sidewalks, and lighting in front of and surrounding the development. While appearing to be an asset for the community, the Market actually functions much more effectively and efficiently on a broader scale at displacing current residents, while appearing to be a passive business with the community in mind. Their cashiers are mainly all residents within walking distance of the neighborhood, but they cannot become members unless they buy in. Thus, the premise of cooperative-ownership and governance that the Market rests on does not apply to a the population working in the store every day; but is only for consumers that can afford a \$100 membership and attend monthly meetings. Because of its designation as a co-op, and because of its health- and environment-focused selection of food and household items, the Market is able to adopt the identity of a positive neighborhood force that is grounded in community.

Self-Help's project manager on the development, Micah Kordsmeier, explained that the Market's intention is to offer quality and value to its customer base, and expressed that "it will be a challenge to see how you will offer value in a variety of ways to a low-income consumer."⁵⁰¹ Indeed, low-income people still cannot afford much of its groceries. Kordsmeier stated that the Market's main competition is Whole Foods, and not the Food Lion that serves the low-income population in the neighborhood.⁵⁰² To address this discrepancy between their location in a neighborhood with an existing low-income population that is changing, the Market offers a weekly \$3 dinner, a practice that Whole Foods also implemented, and attempts to keep certain produce

⁵⁰⁰ Emily LaDue, *Interview with Leila Wolfrum, Manager, Durham Co-Op Market* (Durham Co-op Market, W. Chapel Hill St, Durham, NC, 2015); Emily LaDue, *Interview with Micah Kordsmeier*.

⁵⁰¹ Interview with Kordsmeier.

⁵⁰² Kordsmeier

and bulk prices down. Regardless of these efforts, the Market is contributing to the slow and steady property transfer occurring in the neighborhood from long-time struggling low-income residents to new middle class residents. Many of these new homebuyers are from out of state, where they were unable to afford their lifestyles, and came to Durham for its “knowledge economy” and lower cost of living.

3.4.3.2 The New Co-op Market and A Memory of Impossibility

The site, called Kent Corner by Self-Help because it sits on the corner of Kent Street and a main corridor, Chapel Hill Street, is located a building away from what used to be the Durham Food Co-op, a small, member-owned and operated cooperative market that was once run by a health-conscious and price-conscious racially and class-mixed group of people in the neighborhood. While institutions such as the co-op, and some former bars and restaurants that have since gone out of business are viewed locally as “old Durham,” the old co-op and its members were in many ways the first institutions of gentrification to hit Durham, occurring at the same time that Neil Smith was observing the gentrification of the Lower East Side in New York. Like the process of gentrification occurring now, the early waves of gentrification were occurring due to the structural changes in the geography and economy of the city. The disinvested sites of the post-industrial city became sites of investment for others. This is perhaps one way that we can better understand the limitations on making the process of gentrification equitable. The old co-op attempted a collective ownership project that served the needs of a diverse group of individuals, including low-income individuals, and kept these interests front and center, which proved to be economically unviable and eventually lead to their accumulation of debt and closing. Without a population actually mobilizing behind collective ownership and community, perhaps requiring a political movement as part of their project,⁵⁰³ or changing their strategy to serve a growing higher income population, the co-op instead became another memory of community to be used in the pro-growth gentrification strategy, and part of the ushering in of further gentrification in the area.

⁵⁰³ See: El Kilombo, “The Beginning of the End, Or the End of the Beginning?” *Building Power in Our Communities: The Fight for Racial and Economic Justice*, Navigating the Storm, 2015, <https://navigatingthestorm.blogspot.com/2015/11/building-power-in-our-communities-fight.html>.

More broadly in Durham, the old co-op is remembered as having closed due to internal fighting and mismanagement. While not untrue, remembering the co-op this way, like blaming individual actors for gentrification, holds the particular people involved in the process accountable for what is actually a structural impossibility. Without serving the aesthetic and consumer desires of a higher-income population, businesses fail, due to the combined pressure of rent intensification and decreasing wages and employment for lower income populations. At its grand opening, the management and board of the Market attested to the Market's success due to its neighborhood, the currently rapidly increasing cost of living, dedicated and formerly successful managers, and a profit-oriented operating style.⁵⁰⁴

Located doors away from the new Market, the memory of the old co-op helps simulate the existence of a functioning community institution. Described by the Independent, for one, as "a vanguard of Durham's funky, community-oriented culture,"⁵⁰⁵ and its efforts to hold to its principles of affordable and healthy foods, the memory operates as part of a "global epidemic of nostalgia, an affective yearning for a community with a collective memory, a longing for continuity in a fragmented world... a defense mechanism in a time of accelerated rhythms of life and historical upheavals."⁵⁰⁶ Founded in 1971 and officially titled, The People's Intergalactic Food Conspiracy No. 1, the old co-op was always struggling, and was small, adhering to the needs of its member base of middle class hippies, low-income individuals and families. From 2003-2005, it worked with Duke University's vegetarian student organization, Plan-V, to allow Duke students to spend their allocated "food points" there, before Duke changed its menus to cater more widely to vegetarian students. In this partnership with Duke, the Co-op, as a community institution, was able to set its own standards. However, given its off-campus location before redevelopment nearby, and the small population able to use these points, the partnership actually ended up costing the co-op more money to cover the processing of Duke's food points.

The old co-op was present on West Chapel Hill Street from 1990 until 2009. In a letter to the board of the old co-op, one member worked to convince them to each contribute an equal

⁵⁰⁴ Zachery Eanes, "A Flourishing West End Sees Real Estate Prices Soar."

⁵⁰⁵ Fiona Morgan, "Durham Food Co-Op Building Sold: New Owners Intend to Preserve Neighborhood Presence," *Indy Week*, January 14, 2009, <https://www.indyweek.com/indyweek/durham-food-co-op-building-sold/Content?oid=1213336>.

⁵⁰⁶ Svetlana Boym, "Nostalgia and Its Discontents," *The Hedgehog Review* 9, no. 2 (Summer 2007).

share to get a physical space for the co-op in 1990, which was eventually this space on West Chapel Hill Street. In making his case that the co-op should stand on a platform of “profit for the people, not for capitalists” and that “the co-op is the people and the people are together,” he also stated, “But co-ops are neither ‘cause’ nor corporation; they are instruments of economic *self-help*.”⁵⁰⁷ This statement stands out as a defining marker between the old co-op and the new co-op, and between the distinctions made in Chapter 2 between self-help and self-determination. The co-op was self-determining their organization, managing themselves so that they would not have to answer to profit, but to the needs of their members. The use of the term self-help in this instance, being used to describe a more explicitly anti-capitalist effort, is an example of how the idea can signify radical economic and political movements. But, this association works to communicate Self-Help as an institution working for more radical changes than they effectively are. So although the Market is a profit-sharing business with a buy-in for a vote for the board, it benefits from the memory, principles, and organizing of the old co-op.

After thirty-eight years, the old co-op closed, unable to pay rent and draw enough customers with less selection than nearby Whole Foods. They eventually accumulated debt, and in addition to selling their building, took out a loan from Self-Help due to their inability to receive credit from other banks.⁵⁰⁸ In a January 14, 2009 article in the Independent announcing the purchase of the old co-op building by general contractor Nick Hawthorne-Johnson, his affective memories of the building and the co-op are highlighted. Even in this article, the focus is on his needs and individual desires. The journalist writes: “But his deeper love is alternative medicine. He hopes his acupuncture clinic will cater to people living nearby, just as the food co-op strove to offer affordable, healthy food to the neighboring community.”⁵⁰⁹ The orientation towards community is not community ownership and operation, but how to run a business that is both profitable and serves its neighbors. As Kent Corner is showing, if the neighbors are low-income, this is not a possibility. Hawthorne-Johnson wanted to open an acupuncture clinic, but he was not able to develop a viable business plan to make it happen in the space. Instead, he opened a food

⁵⁰⁷ Lee Altenberg, <http://dynamics.org/Altenberg/PAPERS/LeePIFC.html>

⁵⁰⁸ <https://www.indyweek.com/indyweek/durham-food-co-op-building-sold/Content?oid=1213336>

⁵⁰⁹ <https://www.indyweek.com/indyweek/durham-food-co-op-building-sold/Content?oid=1213336>

truck commissary and upscale event space called the Cookery. The Cookery has been the incubation site for several new restaurants and bars in different neighborhoods in the city, including Hawthorne-Johnson's own Ponysaurus Brewery at the edge of downtown, which I will discuss in Chapter 3.4.

3.4.3.3 "Something new and exciting for the area"

Hawthorne-Johnson was eager to buy the location because of his memories of going to the co-op with his mother, a realtor. He and his mother bought "several" properties in the West End area in 2007, after he convinced his mother to cash out her retirement fund.⁵¹⁰ This "worked out well" because she was able to reinvest her money in cheap properties and not lose it to the housing crash, wait out the reverberations of the crash, live off of the properties, and "not have to go back to work like a lot of her friends did."⁵¹¹ Now, they co-own a property development company in the neighborhood where they attempt to redevelop homes and properties and keep them at affordable prices, being forced to slowly increase rents each year, for example raising his one-bedroom apartments in subdivided houses from \$365 to \$400/month. These individual efforts exist in pockets within the city. In interviews with managers at Self-Help, in fact, they often pointed me in the direction of these efforts as ways that property owners are attempting to curb the rent intensification. Indeed, like the examples of reserved spaces for affordable units in the previous section attest, there is an interest, and often, a state-assisted financial benefit, for efforts to keep rents low.

Hawthorne-Johnson's mother is on the board of the Durham Community Land Trust (DCLT), a nonprofit with its offices and main scope in the West End neighborhood, organized in 1987 to collect the vacant houses from families who could no longer afford to keep them up, or landlords with no capital to maintain rentals. Several studies of Land Trusts nationally argue that the land trust model is effective for maintaining community control of residential properties.⁵¹² Like

⁵¹⁰ Nick Hawthorne-Johnson, January 8, 2016.

⁵¹¹ Nick Hawthorne-Johnson.

⁵¹² Jeffrey S. Lowe and Emily Thaden, "Deepening Stewardship: Resident Engagement in Community Land Trusts," *Urban Geography* 37, no. 4 (May 18, 2016): 611–28, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2015.1101250>; Elaine Paterson and Michael Dunn, "Perspectives on Utilising Community Land Trusts as a Vehicle for Affordable Housing Provision," *Local Environment* 14 (September 2009): 749–64, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13549830903096486>; NC Dept of Transportation, City of Durham, and Crest Street Community Council, "East West Expressway Environmental Impact

Self-Help, the DCLT is focused on homeownership as a means to get out of poverty. Through the land trust, homeowners are required to live in their homes or keep rent stabilized for thirty years or more, attempting to curb displacement. One study of the DCLT's impact in homeownership rates across race and poverty in the neighborhood between 1990 and 2000 suggested that the DCLT may have helped more Black and Latino families own homes, and contributed to overall home ownership in the neighborhood.⁵¹³ While Self-Help land banks homes to then sell individually, the DCLT keeps the house deeds in the trust of the nonprofit, so that homeowners cannot flip their homes to make a profit. The land trust maintains ownership of the land, which is leased to the homeowner, and as land prices rise in value in a neighborhood, the trust is able to build capital. Land trusts may be an important stopgap for certain families to be able to own homes, and for the land in a neighborhood to not fall to speculative rent intensification. The DCLT operates nearly 250 units of housing at rates affordable to families making 80% of AMI. However, as I will discuss in Chapter 4, over time, these efforts may not be able to sustain, and are not enough to cover, the rapidly increasing income and housing gaps in Durham and beyond.⁵¹⁴

As is occurring throughout the city, DCLT is incorporated into the forefront of gentrification activities itself. DCLT is increasingly partnering with Self-Help, Habitat for Humanity, and the city as another mechanism for providing homeownership options to lower income families, and that they can claim to be working with the DCLT while also contributing to rent intensification and displacement is part of the contradiction. Several families who purchase DCLT houses receive mortgage loans in partnership with banks and Self-Help. The model of DCLT is also used by anti-gentrification activists as an alternative model to gentrification.⁵¹⁵ DCLT partners with the city in neighborhoods undergoing pro-growth development, providing, like Self-Help, an image of community investment, regardless of the broader scope and effects of its work. The strategy that Duke and Self-Help engaged in, building a commercial center to attract a

Statement"; Karen A. Gray and Julie E. Miller-Cribbs, "The Durham Community Land Trustees," *Journal of Community Practice* 20, no. 4 (October 2012): 402–13, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10705422.2012.731638>; Karen A. Gray, "Community Land Trusts in the United States," *Journal of Community Practice* 16 (May 22, 2008): 65–78, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10705420801977999>.

⁵¹³ Gray and Miller-Cribbs, "The Durham Community Land Trustees."

⁵¹⁴ Arena.

⁵¹⁵ Melissa Norton, "Gentrification and the Dynamics of Neighborhood Change" (Smith Warehouse, Bay 4, September 30, 2015).

wealthier class to the neighborhood – took the land trustee model into account, somewhat sidestepping the contradiction of needing a wealthier population to move in to the area while also supporting affordable housing by wearing the idea of community on the main façade of the neighborhood. In the West End, like in Walltown, the decreasing rates of poverty are used as signs that the efforts of Self-Help are working to increase the quality of life for residents, however the decreasing rates of poverty go hand in hand with poor residents leaving the neighborhood.

As Hawthorne-Johnson stated, “It’s the end of that particular era of the co-op, but maybe something new and exciting for the area is possible.”⁵¹⁶ Since 2009, his business, Kent Corner, and now, additional businesses, have worked towards increasing property values in the neighborhood, and stamping the site as “up and coming” due to the presence and attention of new investment and white, middle and upper class patrons: Duke and Self-Help’s strategy when they decided to invest in and redevelop the site. The community center that the DCLT helped to form in the late 1990s has been taken over by the Kent Corner project and no longer exists. As a discursive comparison, a historic house that Self-Help renovated has been turned into a community service living house for Duke Divinity students interested in community change. In this way, the Kent Corner site particularly leverages the idea of a future community to fulfill the development goals of Self-Help to promote equity for all.

The ups and downs that the Market engaged in until opening is *presented* as a struggle, one that that board members and others waged to selflessly open what they saw as a needed community asset. Moreover, the memory of the old co-op, a nearly forty year institution in Durham, is in the public memory as actually having struggled, and the Market is observed as a continuation. The current gentrification, as represented by the Market, wears the idea of community and localism anew, as it seeks to cater to their progressive politics and to a population that knows the ills of gentrification and is looking to be more considerate and accountable to where they are moving. In 2001 in the previous wave of gentrification, Whole Foods took over a local natural foods store, Wellspring, off of Duke’s East Campus. Now, Amazon Inc. has acquired Whole Foods, and thus the Market in Durham as a local, cooperative business holds extra

⁵¹⁶ Fiona Morgan, “Durham Food Co-Op Building Sold: New Owners Intend to Preserve Neighborhood Presence.”

interest for a Durham population looking to support what are perceived as local and progressive businesses. Whole Foods caters to a higher income population, and the Market can compete by drawing in those who want to partake in supporting what they perceive as grassroots initiatives in Durham.

Certain new businesses also present themselves on social media and in the press as precarious and in need of local financial support, because they are either serving low-income populations, or in the case of the Market, because they are not built on a structure that puts profits first. The stakeholders in the Co-op rhetorically take on the burden of the precarity of stability of the local community, as an underdog as compared to national and international chain supermarkets. On the one hand, the co-op is as precarious as any other development, dependent on the survival of the real estate market and financial-based economy ensuring a population of middle and upper class liberal shoppers looking for higher end, but responsibly-sourced grocery items. At the grand opening for the Market in 2015, the speakers spoke from a position of struggle, based in working hard to get the Market open, and some emphasized its precarious existence. Local NPR radio host Frank Stasio, for example, in my interview with him at the grand opening celebration, qualified his remarks about the Market three times, saying, “should we survive.”

Stasio described the structure of the “cooperative:”

Democratic ownership, not worker ownership... It does mean we have to take into account community standards, community values. Our shareholders don't live thousands of miles away and they're not demanding the highest financial return on investment. And those 2 key differences make this a store people want, it provides the kind of service and products people want, and it also serves this neighborhood, which is one that badly needed development, economic development. By having a triple bottom line, including social capital, as part of our investment model, you allow more input and all of the stakeholders including neighbors to have a democratic input into what your model is, into what the store, what this retail outfit is. You pay \$100 and you get a membership card, and then you're a voting member.⁵¹⁷

Two facts are underlined here: the first is that the Market, like most any venture made today, is indeed precarious and could be bought out by a larger corporation seeking to develop that commercial corridor. This tension shows up in many of the smaller businesses that build

⁵¹⁷ Interview with Frank Stasio. Emily LaDue, *Grand Opening of Durham Co-Op Market*, Digital Video and Audio (Durham Co-op Market, W. Chapel Hill St, Durham, NC, 2015).

themselves up out of cheap property and who are often the first white, middle class businesses opened in a neighborhood. Moreover, they are precarious because any business can be viewed as precarious today, a reality made clear to the global elite with the demise of Lehman Brothers and Bear Sterns in the housing crisis. As I will discuss in Chapter 4, this crisis, and the current instability of the market, may not be signs of a normal healthy market, as some politicians and economists claim, but may be pointing to the underlying structural reality of a lack of growth in the economy.⁵¹⁸ They must continue to serve the higher income classes in order to survive, but, unlike other small businesses, this is a reality that is available to them as an institution backed by Duke, Self-Help, SunTrust Bank, and local politicians. It is not a reality available without these conditions.

The second point that Stasio underlines is that they are controlled by a governing board elected by their member-owners. In this way, they are able to use the idea of community while not having any responsibility to the community geographically surrounding the co-op. While several speakers at the ribbon-cutting mention that they are controlled by the community, this perspective is from the board members who wanted to build the market in the first place. Their idea of “serving the neighborhood,” is twofold, it is serving an idea of Durham that they participate in, and that the West End neighborhood is becoming, which is rooted in an idea of serving the neighborhood that exists by transforming it into a higher income destination. As Stasio remarked, it is a neighborhood that “badly needed development,” and this development can only go one way.

3.4.3.4 Banks and New Market Tax Credits

Self-Help got involved and Self-Help brought a ton of financial weight, [for] this big and beautiful development that we became an anchor tenant for... We got our project manager on board, [City Councilman] Don Moffitt, who without, most of us would easily admit, this never would have happened.

– Leila Wolfrum, General Manager, Durham Co-op Market, 2015⁵¹⁹

We are not only an investor in this community through our development work, but we are also a community development credit union that is investing in the people of Durham. So

⁵¹⁸ Streeck, *How Will Capitalism End?*.

⁵¹⁹ Emily LaDue, *Grand Opening of Durham Co-Op Market*.

I want to make sure that you all know that there will be a full service ATM located inside the store.

-Micah Kordsmeier, Project Manager, Self-Help, 2015⁵²⁰

In accord with its claims to be uplifting the current community for the future, Self-Help used New Market Tax Credits and Duke's financing as part of their campaign to rebuild community relations in order to build and develop. The Kent Corner project used the Duke loan to purchase the project, but paid it back after closing, the same structure of financing that was used for the KIPP school. As part of the agreement for the NMTCs, Self-Help must remain an owner for seven years. As Kordsmeier explained, they usually prefer to use Historic Tax Credits because they have more flexibility, as they only have to remain an owner for five years to hold onto the historic tax credits.

The New Market Tax Credit Financing structure used for the Kent Corner Development was acquired through SunTrust bank. The Federal New Market Tax Credit Program, as part of the Community Renewal Tax Relief Act of 2000, permits "individual and corporate taxpayers to receive a credit against federal income taxes for making Qualified Equity Investments (QEIs) in qualified community development entities (CDEs)" in low-income (80% or less of Area Median Income) census tracts.⁵²¹ These QEIs must be designated to push for growth in distressed tracts. Self-Help is a CDE that is able to partner with other banks, or its own Credit Union, to receive these tax credits as it is a qualified community partner because of its funding and credit union structure. The Community Development Financial Institutions Fund monitors these activities. The NMTC program allows for 39% of the QEI to be recollected as tax credits over seven years. This diagram⁵²² shows the central role of the CDE, which for these developments, is Self-Help, or the community development entity as part of another private bank that Self-Help may partner with.

In this case, SunTrust bank was the investor, and Self-Help manages the partnership and guarantees that the funds will be used for community-minded partnerships. Duke provided the additional financing on this project, as well as leased the office building beside the co-op,

⁵²⁰ Emily LaDue.

⁵²¹ IRS, "New Markets Tax Credits," n.d., <https://www.irs.gov/businesses/new-markets-tax-credit-1>; IRS, "Picture: New Markets Tax Credits," n.d., <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-utl/nmtcpicture.pdf>.

⁵²² IRS, "New Markets Tax Credits"; IRS, "Picture: New Markets Tax Credits."

because, as Kordsmeier explained, no one else could. In order to fit Self-Help's criteria for a community-minded investment, and fit the requirements for a community-centered project under New Market Tax Credits, the tenant in the office building must provide a certain number of jobs, show commitment to the city, and ideally, be working towards improving the well-being of the census tract.⁵²³ In this case, Duke was the only tenant that qualified and could afford this office space, and relocated their Center for Child and Family Health, which provides counseling and services to youth and families who have experienced trauma, and conducts research on these issues.

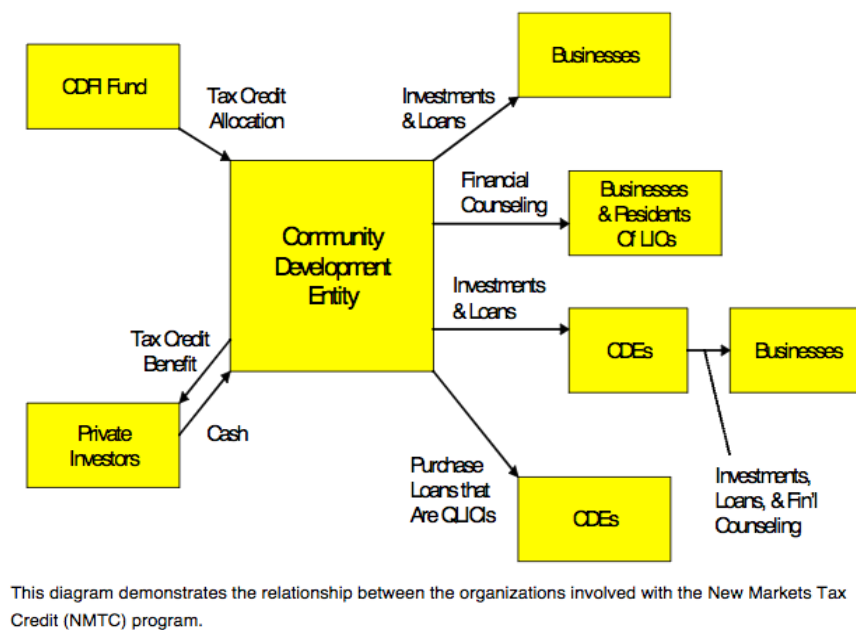


Figure 5: Institutional Structure of New Markets Tax Credits⁵²⁴

NMTC's claim that they are "not top down" and are decided on by "communities," however, the level of community control is managed by an entity such as Self-Help. The word community is again used to describe relations and decision-making that involved a number of municipally-based entities, however there is no actual accountability to any organized community. In part, there is no organized community in most cases to make such decisions, but Self-Help creates a makeshift body that acts as if it is this organized community and that body then authorizes and

⁵²³ Interview, Kordsmeier, and Interview, Bartlett.

⁵²⁴ IRS, "Picture: New Markets Tax Credits."

legitimizes the project. Billions of dollars are invested each year through the NMTC program, and most of the credits go directly to Banks making investments – Wells Fargo, SunTrust, Bank of America, Chase, and smaller operations such as Self-Help, that can either receive the tax credits directly or manage the entire financing apparatus, as happened in this project, and in American Tobacco, discussed in Section 3.4. As Kordsmeier explained:

We'll pay for the development and then the market and office users will be tenants that help sort of generate the return on the investment in the development. so we always have sort of taken a landlord developer role where we will develop the project, instead of developing and selling or something like that. And that's partly the nature of the tax credit programs we use. We have to retain the property and the same ownership for a number of years. 7 years NMTC, 5 years Historic.

The use of the tax credits are justified by claiming a value to history, and a value to private investment to make the lives of poor residents in distressed communities better. However, those living in the neighborhoods where the credits are allocated can never actually cash in on these benefits, a reality that continues to be out of reach. New Markets Tax Credits themselves are disinformation – as if somehow, the high end developments will improve the lives of the people living in these distressed communities.

The other building on the property is the office space which is currently rented to the Duke Center for Child and Family Health. Kordsmeier discussed the fact that the first floor of the office building could be retail given how it is constructed, but because of the high rents possible on office space, nobody, including Self-Help, is willing to trade in office space for retail. At the Market ribbon-cutting, Kordsmeier, the Mayor, and Duke's Director of Durham and Regional Affairs Phail Wynn, spoke of the relevance and utility of the Center's research for the surrounding population.

Since the Market opened in 2015, several other businesses have opened on West Chapel Hill Street near Kent Corner, all owned by and serving a higher income, majority white, professional class of restaurant goers and café patrons: a Joe Van Gogh café, a local coffee company that also has a location on the edge of Walltown; Local Yogurt, a local frozen yogurt parlor; and in the same building as the Cookery, a local video marketing company that makes videos for nonprofits. The owner of Local Yogurt, and the owner of the building, stated that she

“loves the sense of community in the area and the mix of commercial and residential buildings.”⁵²⁵

The brand manager of Joe Van Gogh Café added, “The new location will be more high traffic with the Durham Co-op across the street and Grub opening next door.”⁵²⁶ At the grand opening of the Market, I had a conversation with one of Self-Help’s Credit Union representatives about the role of the co-op in attracting wealthier populations into the black working class neighborhood where it exists. She stated that the Market is trying to stop gentrification, but it is gentrification too.⁵²⁷

Across the street from Kent Corner, Self-Help purchased an old gas station that a church operated out of from 2004-2013, for \$175,000 in 2013. They sold the property to the owners of a local restaurant company that caters to RTP and Duke, to open a fourth restaurant called Grub. The owners describe their work as restaurateurs as having “the intent of creating place based residences and small commercial projects that support the redevelopment of the urban core of Durham.”⁵²⁸ They created an LLC to purchase properties, Habitable Space, to fulfill this mission. Because they work from this mission, Self-Help was happy to sell the plot to them, as they cover the mission of redevelopment of the area that Self-Help’s asks of its partners as well. However, these missions of redevelopment amount to what we typically understand as the unequal process of gentrification.

The owners asked the City of Durham for an investment of \$170,000 in the form of a Neighborhood Improvement Grant “to help fund the project,” ultimately only receiving \$100,000.⁵²⁹ The new restaurant caters to a middle class clientele with mid-range prices and hip décor, with meals averaging at ten dollars without a beverage.⁵³⁰ The city approved \$100,000 as a business incentive for the site, due largely in part to the history of the site as a gas station that is now categorized as a Brownfields, so renovating the site, in theory helps to clear up environmental damage.⁵³¹ On the first day of its opening, the restaurant had a line of patrons out

⁵²⁵ Leah Asmelash, “Joe Van Gogh Joins New Restaurants in Durham’s West End,” *Bites of Bull City* (blog), n.d., <http://bitesofbullcity.com/joe-van-gogh-durham-west-end/>.

⁵²⁶ Leah Asmelash.

⁵²⁷ Emily LaDue, *Grand Opening of Durham Co-Op Market*.

⁵²⁸ “Grub Durham,” grubdurham.com.

⁵²⁹ “Property Permit Listings: Restaurant at 1200 West Chapel Hill Street” (Durham [N.C.], n.d.), <https://www.durham-nc.com/listings/Restaurant-at-1200-W-Chapel-Hill-St-Name-TBA-/6747/>.

⁵³⁰ “Grub Durham.”

⁵³¹ Grace Dzidzienyo, “Public Hearing and Recommended Agreement for Economic Development Incentive with Habitable Space, LLC,” Memo to Thomas J. Bonfield, City Manager (Durham, NC, n.d.),

the door, but none that I observed were part of the community of working class African American and Latino residents that have lived in the neighborhood for decades and are the stated targets of the new economic uplift. This is not to say that the working class residents may never go to this restaurant, or that they do not want to see new businesses open in their neighborhood.

Unfortunately, these businesses have been shown to encourage more and more pro-growth development that makes the area attractive to wealthier populations that can buy out the area. The idea that these new businesses are helping the neighborhood does not apply to those who are not networked into a market of property ownership and social capital.

The idea of economic uplift is inherently laden with the paradox that all of this development contains: To be successful, the Market needs the higher income populations to move in, leading to the displacement of the residents that the Market is supposed to serve. This idea is clearly represented in the development media in Durham. The stakeholders in the Market use the idea of community to promote the business, and want to support the well-being of their neighbors. But in order to succeed, despite their best or worst intentions, the Market must serve higher income populations, but receive public funding that rests on the idea that the neighborhood is serving a disinvested population. This multi-sited neighborhood strategy, combined with the multi-neighborhood strategy, is the overall strategy of Self-Help and Duke in Durham, and it works to effectively usher in rent-intensifying development.

3.5 Affordable Housing

This section begins with Walltown and the West End again, and the way that the need for affordable housing in Durham has in effect, been used to dispossess the very communities in need of affordable housing. I then explore Self-Help's most recent housing developments, in Southside and Downtown as refined projects using lessons from their past work.

http://bullcityrising.typepad.com/files/11088_memo_habitable_space_llc_387974_692589-1.pdf; Habitable Space LLC, "NC Brownfields Land Use Restrictions Update" (Durham, NC, February 11, 2016), <http://bullcityrising.typepad.com/files/1200-w.-chapel-hill-brownfields.pdf>; "Nosh Owners Ask City for Grant to Open New Restaurant on West Chapel Hill Street," *Bull City Rising* (blog), May 20, 2016, <http://www.bullcityrising.com/page/3/>; "Grub from Wendy Woods Opening across from Durham Co-Op Market," *Clarion Content* (blog), July 1, 2017, <http://clarioncontentmedia.com/2017/07/grub-from-wendy-woods-opening-across-from-durham-co-op-market/>; "Property Permit Listings: Restaurant at 1200 West Chapel Hill Street."

3.5.1 The Walltown Experiment and the West End

In addition to the rhetoric of community, both the Walltown and the West End projects relied on the discourse of “affordable housing” to take place. Promoting affordable housing and minority homeownership was Self-Help’s primary strategy on their path to becoming a key institution in Durham’s gentrification. As described in section 3.2.2, Walltown was a testing ground for this strategy, and the lessons have been used to refine other projects. With their image as an institution that gives credit to minorities and low-income people, Self-Help was trusted in Durham, unlike Duke’s reputation in Walltown and other neighborhoods, “where the lack of trust was enormous.”⁵³² As Duke’s VP for Durham and Regional Affairs Phail Wynn explained: “The focus for the first ten years was to stabilize these neighborhoods, to promote home ownership, to restore the homeowners, many of whom had left, through affordable housing initiatives.”⁵³³ In the early 90s, other elite private institutions across the country had also been working on reinvestment strategies in the cities they were in: Columbia and NYU in NY, University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, Johns Hopkins in Baltimore, and the University of Washington in Seattle. According to Duke’s Executive Vice President for Real Estate and Capital Assets Scott Selig, those in charge of real estate at these schools – often an Executive Vice President position, such as Duke’s Trask (who came from University of Washington) and soon, new positions specifically for real estate development such as Selig’s, and for Durham and Regional Affairs such as Phail Wynn’s – were communicating with and learning from one another how to effectively manage these projects and grow. Redeveloping Durham’s housing in the downtown corridor and surrounding Duke for the incoming population of young professionals, many of whom are first-time homebuyers, has proven to be a lucrative endeavor.

In Walltown in 1994, funded with Duke’s \$2 million gift and the promise of community uplift, Self-Help was able to broker a deal with the dominant landlord in the neighborhood, Dr. Rosenstein, a white ophthalmologist whose father acquired several homes in Walltown beginning in the middle of the century, as families lost work and sold or lost their homes. Self-Help

⁵³² Emily LaDue, *Interview with John Burness*.

⁵³³ Emily LaDue, *Interview with Phail Wynn, Vice President, Durham and Regional Affairs, Duke University*.

purchased 30 dilapidating homes for \$11,000 each, and eventually bought 55 more houses and renovated them, with a total project cost of \$5 million, with Self-Help providing the capital for just over half of that amount. The city of Durham then stepped in and gave Self-Help over \$800,000 in funds to cover operating and administration funds, redevelopment costs, and mortgage financing for potential homebuyers.

The poverty and lack of stable housing in Walltown, due to the years of disinvestment, was Duke's justification for investment to support affordable housing, and the condition for its possibility, through the speculation on this housing. Self-Help was banking on Duke's stability and growth, and the promise of a population wanting to move near Duke and to Durham more widely to buy these homes. Without the idea that growth was coming, there was little to invest in, and Self-Help changed the name of the project from "Home Ownership" to "Revitalization." Self-Help, Duke, and Durham, with the help of state and federal funding, relied on the need for and promise of affordable housing to make the development of Walltown possible.

Meanwhile each year in Walltown, several houses are still foreclosed on, with residents unable to afford the rising property taxes, or their mortgage payments.⁵³⁴ While there are low-income homeowners who still can afford their homes, and are paying Self-Help for their mortgages, as well as smaller homes that are still sold at lower prices, the cost for renting or buying in the neighborhood is intensifying. Residents also report that energy costs are becoming unaffordable as electric rates increase and an initial electric rate adjustment provided by Self-Help for new homeowners expires.⁵³⁵ In 1994, the houses in the neighborhood were in need of repair and ineffectively managed. However, they were affordable to low-income renters. When Self-Help bought the homes from Dr. Rosenstein, they were \$7-12 per square foot. After these thirteen years, larger three bedroom houses now sell for over \$500,000 in the neighborhood, and smaller two bedroom houses for over \$200,000.⁵³⁶ The price per square foot for most listed homes in the neighborhood is currently between \$240 and \$270. However, the reported average price per square foot remains lower, at \$162. This is due to the several houses being sold at

⁵³⁴ Data from Trulia, Zillow, and interviews with realtors.

⁵³⁵ Conversations with residents in Walltown, 2015-2016.

⁵³⁶ Data accumulated from trulia.com, Zillow.com, and interviews with realtors.

foreclosure by longer time homeowners that still cannot afford to survive in this market, despite all of Self-Help's work. Self-Help's work has not helped those who have been living in the neighborhood and are struggling, only incoming populations or those in the neighborhood who securely owned property and worked directly with Self-Help to do their community outreach. Even given these foreclosures, the price per square foot is still rapidly increasing, up 93% in one year from \$129. Within the city of Durham, the average price per square foot is also rising each year, reaching \$127 in 2017, still lower than the price in Walltown. The median rent in Walltown is about the same as it is in the whole city of Durham, \$1400 per month for a 2-bedroom house.

In the West End, house prices are also rising. While Duke and Self-Help's strategy was to provide a commercial anchor in that neighborhood, they also purchased and held onto several properties, many of which they then sold to the Durham Community Land Trust. The Durham Co-op Market/Kent Corner Project Manager Micah Kordsmeier explained how their land banking strategy has historically operated through the example of houses in the West End:

We purchase the land and hold it. A colleague of mine, Roger Childs, he is our acquisitions manager, he knows pretty much everybody that owns any number of properties in the neighborhood, so there is a lot of landlords that have 5,6,10,12, properties. So when we are trying to grow the land bank, hopefully there is someone who tries to purchase the land at a somewhat reasonable price, and then from there, we just manage it, we make sure the lawn is mowed, if there is a structure on it and it is dangerous and falling apart then we usually go ahead and take it down, rather than leaving it sitting there, because a vacant house can be a problem for the neighborhood, so basically it sits in the bank until we get an offer to build on it. A lot of the organizations we partner with, they're kept apprised of what's in the land bank and so they will sort of claim properties ahead of time, you know, we are going to build on these in 2014, and we are going to build on these three others in 2015, so we can sort of plan for that. But then every project is sort of vetted by a community group, the quality of life project, the Southwest Central Durham Quality of Life project. So there we have an agreement with them, they will look at every proposal, they have established some guidelines in particular in regards to design, they have a pattern book of what they want housing to look like in the neighborhood. So the buyer will come to a meeting with that group and they will ask about affordability and quality with that track record, and then consider whether to approve it or not. It is a good cooperative project, it is not combative at all, and it always ends up working out where they support the proposal. And that's cause we do screening as well before we take it to a group like that.⁵³⁷

These partners are nonprofits that work with Self-Help such as Habitat for Humanity, the city, and Duke University. The QOLP, as described in the previous section, stands in for what Duke calls "grassroots," when it is actually designed by Duke and Self-Help, and it is not combative because

⁵³⁷ Emily LaDue, *Interview with Micah Kordsmeier*.

everyone at the table already agrees with the work being done. The discursive “community” strategy feeds the “affordable housing” strategy.

Kordsmeier went on to describe how Self-Help has begun selling homes for market rate developers in the West End neighborhood:

So typically it has been specifically affordable housing developers that purchase the land. So they have ongoing relationships with this group as well, and some of them sit on different committees of the quality of life project, more recently it started to get more interest from private buyers and so we have been working with the QOLP to lay out, what are, what are we looking for when we sell property to a private buyer, do we have the same affordability standards, what are we open to when we look at market rate development, so those are some of the current issues that are playing out, but that is really quite recent.

LaDue: *Can you give me some examples?*

Sure I can give you two recent examples. One is on some vacant property we own a couple of blocks from the Kent Corner site, and a local homebuilder who has done a lot of sort of urban infill work was interested in purchasing those properties and putting their sort of standard product on there. It absolutely met our, sort of, quality and design preferences in terms of what's built, it is consistent with the character of the neighborhood, built to a high quality, and they tend to be homes for first time homebuyers even if they're not income restricted necessarily. So we thought it was a great fit for trying to test out trying to bring in market rate developers that would start contributing to housing stock in the neighborhood, and we think it is important to have a mixture of both, and it is only just now that that is starting to take place. So you know we just needed to understand what they do, get to know them, feel comfortable with them, and the same with quality of life, they needed to feel that same comfort level. So they would've built homes to sell. Another example is somebody who was interested in a house that we own that needed quite a lot of rehab in order to be occupied, and she has been buying houses for rent around Durham, and she typically does a fairly lowcost renovation, very cost-conscious renovation, so still done in a quality way and they are safe, decent homes, just not fancy finishes or anything like that, just very basic. But she is able to put housing out on the market that is much better than what is typically rented at those rents and keep those rents at an affordable level for people. Again she is not an affordable housing developer, she is not using public subsidy to do her work, and that is part of the reason we were really interested in seeing that happen.⁵³⁸

In the West End, the price per square foot in 2014, just before the opening of the Market, was \$104, while in 2017, it rose to between \$172 and \$186. The median rent in the neighborhood has nearly doubled in the past year alone, rising from \$1,000 to \$2,000 overall. Despite the rapidly increasing rents and home prices, and overall inequality in the city, the idea of affordable housing is still being used to defend the public investment in projects that are leading to further rent intensification. The land banking strategy as described above was used in the Southside neighborhood as well. As the photograph below shows (Figure 4), Self-Help used the Southside

⁵³⁸ Emily LaDue.

Neighborhood Association, a group that they curated, to demonstrate that they were a community partner as they land banked the neighborhood.

3.5.1 Southside and Rolling Hills



Figure 6: Map of Downtown Durham featuring Southside and Rolling Hills⁵³⁹

3.5.1.1 Rolling Hills: The City saving face at the end of public housing

Across the street from Southside is Rolling Hills, a former mixed commercial and residential 20 acre neighborhood connecting the cultural and commercial core of Hayti, Durham's historic black community, and the Southside neighborhood. Rolling Hills and Southside round out the development of the inner city, capitalizing on the areas closest to downtown that, without massive public financing, would not have been able to flip as part of the city's long term pro-growth strategy and capital improvement plans. The history and development Rolling Hills displays the necessary and prominent role of the state in current gentrification. Hackworth and Smith examined the way that New York development was becoming too expensive for the private sector to enact themselves, the decline of the welfare state and more resources going towards private development, and the increased role of local government in supporting development. In these ways, current development in Durham is a mature version of urban renewal, but is still part

⁵³⁹ Samiha Khanna, "While Downtown Durham Flourishes, Blocks Away Lies Ailing, Blighted Rolling Hills: An Epic Embarrassment," *Indy Week*, October 7, 2009, <https://www.indyweek.com/indyweek/while-downtown-durham-flourishes-blocks-away-lies-ailing-blighted-rolling-hills/Content?oid=1218481>.

of the same idea of using public resources to attract private development, in the hopes that the private development leads to better and more equal development.

The Rolling Hills development hung a banner for the last couple of years trying to attract residents: “Be the New Kid on the Block.” In 1958 – the entire neighborhood was demolished by the city to build Highway 147 as part of the national urban renewal project to attract investment in cities through razing neighborhoods to make way for development. A portion of it sat barren until 2013, and rental houses with low-income families populated the rest.

It received public financing in three failed redevelopment attempts that embarrassed the city, so that as Mayor Bill Bell began to anticipate the end of his terms, he made sure that something was built on the site before he left office.⁵⁴⁰ As a 2009 *Indy Week* article summed up:

1980s—Development consultant Marshall Isler works with N.C. Mutual Insurance Company to build a dozen patio homes and 30 townhouses at Rolling Hills; The project is started, but not completed.

1990s—A second developer, Southeast Durham Development Corporation takes an \$860,000 loan from the city to build another 56 single-family homes at Rolling Hills; 11 homes are built, nine of them completed.

2003—City forecloses on properties, taking ownership of 33 vacant parcels and two partially built single-family homes.

2005—City issues request for qualifications and identifies McCormack Baron Salazar, a St. Louis firm, to revitalize Rolling Hills.

2007—Rolling Hills/Southside Steering Committee formed, includes more than 40 community members and city representatives; City council authorizes city to spend up to \$6 million buying out homeowners in Rolling Hills and relocating them to prepare the site for renewal.

2008—McCormack Baron Salazar and City of Durham agree to split \$650,000 in planning costs.

2008—National recession; McCormack Baron Salazar is unable to raise its \$325,000 for planning.

2009—City agrees to pay for the entire [now higher] \$745,000 cost of planning the revitalization of 125 acres in Rolling Hills and Southside; City owns or is under contract to purchase 46 of the 51 homes in Rolling Hills.⁵⁴¹

The \$860,000 initially put up was never repaid to the city, so the public is paying that back as part of the city’s debt. Additionally, and not included in this article, however, is that McCormack Baron Salazar, the developers, also received \$11 million in Low Income Tax Credits to rent 80% of the housing to people at 60% AMI for fifteen years. In describing this development, Levine stated that the city’s payments to MBS were “not necessarily the most efficient use of dollars, but at least

⁵⁴⁰ “Bell to Rolling Hills Opponents: This Project’s Moving Forward,” *Bull City Rising* (blog), February 8, 2011, <http://www.bulldcityrising.com/2011/02/bell-on-rolling-hills-state-of-city.html>.

⁵⁴¹ Samiha Khanna, “While Downtown Durham Flourishes, Blocks Away Lies Ailing, Blighted Rolling Hills: An Epic Embarrassment.”

there is a commitment to low-income housing.”⁵⁴² It is now a 284-unit apartment complex with 65% “affordable” units, which range in rent from \$1142 for a one-bedroom to \$1474 for a 3-bedroom – barely affordable and only slightly cheaper than high end downtown one bedroom apartment at the West Village which rents for \$1249-1899, or a 3- bedroom which ranges from \$2099-2949, leaving the question: affordable for whom? The rent at Rolling Hills goes directly to the property managers that MBS hires.

The city also began dedicating funds to Southside as they bankrolled the developers for Rolling Hills, putting \$95,0000 aside to purchase homes from Self-Help, where they knew the institution had begun land banking homes. Combined, the Southside and Rolling Hills projects total \$48 million, raised through state, federal, local, and foundational grants. Additional funds to redevelop Southside have come from Durham’s “penny on the property tax,” generating about \$2.3 million a year; a \$950,000 Neighborhood Stabilization grant from the state of North Carolina; and a \$300,000 federal HOME planning grant through the Durham Housing Authority.⁵⁴³ All of Durham’s funds for housing production from 2010-2020 – over \$15 million, were directed to the developers of these projects - \$7.6 million to Rolling Hills, and the rest to Southside – and a small portion to subsidize certain down payments and initial years’ rent. In sum, the city has paid \$7.6 million for the Rolling Hills development and the federal government allocated \$11 million in competitive Low-Income Tax Credits to MBS as well.

Many in the city argued that too much money was going towards this one site, but Mayor Bell insisted that it be done as part of the long-term vision of developing the city. The opponents however, mainly local housing-oriented nonprofits, were not necessarily opposed to the site, but concerned that other areas in the city would not receive funding. These sites too, however, are part of the rent intensification plan of the city – namely, the West End and East Durham, as discussed in this dissertation. Mayor Bell stated to City Council in 2011:

I can assure you that we will find a way to continue to fund those programs that have proven to have measurable success...However, in this new economic climate, we have

⁵⁴² Emily LaDue, *Interview with Dan Levine, Project Manager, Self-Help*.

⁵⁴³ Interviews with Dan Levine and Phail Wynn.

to recognize that it may no longer be business as usual for all previously-funded programs when it comes to obtaining city funding.⁵⁴⁴

What Bell's comments points to is the fact that no development in the city can occur without massive public financing, and this development must be towards supporting the high income populations and a pro-growth, pro-gentrification agenda. Five years later, Bell expressed some regret over not incorporating more affordable housing plans into his work, but the plan was clear the whole time: put funding towards moving the poor out of the city center, and eventually, out of the city, and towards amenities and developments that attract and serve higher income populations so that they can make profits off of the speculation. The only way to do this, however, is through using the public and sometimes foundation-based or university-based financing that promises help for the poor, such as in this case, low-income tax credits, and in the other cases in this chapter by using Self-Help as a marker of do-gooder development. Discussing Southside and Rolling Hills, a Durham Herald-Sun article stated: "This time, though, the credibility and track record of the institutions involved are imposing, and it seems probable that in a couple of years we will indeed see a newly vital community in an area characterized in recent years by too many vacant lots and abandoned buildings." The city is left with a showpiece near the growing downtown, more living options for a young professional class moving in who want to be close to the amenities of the city, and the poor populations moved to the outskirts of town.

3.5.1.2 New Homes for New Residents

And so in 2004, Southside was the closest neighborhood to downtown that had the most overtly distressed housing that Self-Help could buy for redevelopment. It was "distressed" because it had high vacancy, as residents moved out when the tobacco factories closed, many lost jobs and could not find new ones with their specialized skills, and wages in new service jobs were only 40% of what they were in the tobacco industry.⁵⁴⁵ Phail Wynn explains the history:

The neighborhoods were vibrant until the mid-80s and then all of a sudden everything changed. They became working poor and then they became even poorer poor and many left... Southside – that neighborhood thrived because of all those cigarette-manufacturing jobs. It was literally a 200-yard walk across the interstate to American Tobacco.⁵⁴⁶

⁵⁴⁴ "Bell to Rolling Hills Opponents: This Project's Moving Forward."

⁵⁴⁵ Emily LaDue, *Interview with Phail Wynn, Vice President, Durham and Regional Affairs, Duke University*.

⁵⁴⁶ Emily LaDue.

In the early 2000s, many homeless people lived in the vacant homes. As recounted by one resident, he and others were left with nowhere to live after the closure of Lincoln Apartments, a nearby affordable housing complex made private that by 2013 could no longer afford cheap rent or renovations.⁵⁴⁷ Some of the owners of vacant houses in Southside quietly allowed people to sleep in the homes so long as they did not damage them further; they could not afford the necessary renovations either.⁵⁴⁸ This resident's family lived in the neighborhood since the 1940s, when a portion of it, now entirely destroyed and rebuilt, was called St. Theresa.

Observing the vacant homes and proximity to downtown, Self-Help turned its attention to Southside in 2004 after their land banking in Walltown leveled off and homes were being redeveloped without them, and they were in the middle of collecting properties in the West End. Self-Help intentionally kept a low profile while buying houses so as not to attract other investors and developers who would see Self-Help's activity in this disinvested and institutionally forgotten neighborhood and foresee future returns, a lesson they learned from Walltown. Sitting just past Highway 147 from the American Tobacco Campus, Southside is in an attractive and lucrative location for single-family housing. Duke gave Self-Help \$8 million to assist in buying properties in the neighborhood in 2004, which the city then bought from them, and managed the development.⁵⁴⁹ According to Dan Levine, Assistant Director of Real Estate for Self-Help, their role was to "get enough land to give people the confidence that there would be significant change."⁵⁵⁰ They first acquired 94 properties, about a third of the total neighborhood stock, 85% were vacant and remained vacant until they began to be demolished starting in 2013. In 2008, they acquired eleven more foreclosed homes, bringing the total to 105. About 15 other families were moved out. Phail Wynn stated that it "was not gentrification because there was nobody there,"⁵⁵¹ but indeed, there was a bustling, but poor community and on each of my visits between 2012 and 2014 there were families out and about.

⁵⁴⁷ Emily LaDue, *Interview with Leadbetter Family, Southside*, Digital Video and Audio (Roxboro St, Durham, NC, 2013).

⁵⁴⁸ Emily LaDue.

⁵⁴⁹ Interview, Kordsmeier, 10-1-14

⁵⁵⁰ Interview, Levine.

⁵⁵¹ Emily LaDue, *Interview with Phail Wynn, Vice President, Durham and Regional Affairs, Duke University*.

In 2013 as houses were starting to go up, the City of Durham's Community Development Department together with the Duke Center for Community Affairs, a sub-department under Phail Wynn's Office of Durham and Regional Affairs, wrote in a special supplement to *Durham*

Magazine:

For the next several years, we will focus on one neighborhood: Southside. The 125-acre tract is in a strategic area between downtown and N.C. Central University. It has the city's highest concentration of vacant lots and buildings and the lowest rate of home ownership. We are assisting in the construction of more than 200 architecturally distinctive mixed-income rental units and about 90 home-ownership units. This will attract private reinvestment.⁵⁵²

It did, and the neighborhood is unaffordable now for most. In 2014, Durham city and Self-Help were still "holding vacant land and waiting for broader redevelopment to start... it has taken longer than [Self-Help] had hoped."⁵⁵³ Eventually, seventy-five properties were sold to the City of Durham to do renovation and begin their home ownership plans.⁵⁵⁴ After investors began re-speculating after 2008, Durham built 48 new homes, and is now under contracts to build more with local developers, for market-rate development.

Durham has contributed an unprecedented combined \$19.7 million from Community Development Block Grants, low-income housing tax credits, the city's penny on the dollar affordable housing tax, and other areas of the city budget. In a 2010 city council meeting, leaders of the city's non-profits focusing on poverty and housing all voiced dissent to the city's plan to put all of its low-income housing funding into the project, arguing that their successful programs would lose their funding while this project, taking over three years to complete (it is still unfinished), is not a guaranteed success. The project passed with \$14.7 million of the city's contribution to developer McCormick Baron and Salazer to be repaid to the federal government over twenty years. In short, the city is borrowing against its own CDBG and HOME funds over the next two decades to build this project. The developer's fee of \$800,000 is being waved, and the developer is not contributing any funds for this project, in essence being sponsored for its commitment to redevelop this area. The project amounts to a publicly funded project being

⁵⁵² Phail Wynn, "Special Supplement: Duke University Durham and Regional Affairs," *Durham Magazine*, September 27, 2013.

⁵⁵³ Interview with Levine, 2013.

⁵⁵⁴ Levine

managed and owned by private developers, with a 15-year requirement for low-income housing, but with more than half of all of the city's budget for low-income housing for twenty years going towards the project.

The city is eager to complete the development for two major reasons: two failed attempts in the past with lost public funding and the strategic location of the development: on the southeastern edge of downtown, near American Tobacco Campus and the American Tobacco walking and biking trail, and the fact that it was the only neighborhood that was not being newly developed surrounding downtown. It sits in between downtown and the former Hayti district, Durham's famed thriving black commercial district through the first fifty years of the twentieth century. The Hayti neighborhood is a designated historic neighborhood, and has been the subject of several master plans to redevelop it after urban renewal and the building of Highway 147 disrupted the life and business of the area in the 1960s. Southside and Rolling Hills, according to one resident, "used to be where we lived... and we would run through neighbor's backyards to get to Hayti" but the highway divided the two areas. The highway, the end of textile and tobacco manufacturing, and the migration of many wealthy and middle class African American residents to suburbs contributed to the area's decline.

The neighborhood has been designed as a mixed-income neighborhood, celebrated by the government officials at the podium. They all mention the importance of affordable housing, and how this project helps solve those problems as well as helps usher in what is often referred to by city and university officials as Durham's renaissance. So the second characteristic that becomes a focal point at this event, highlighted by every speaker, is that this development includes affordable housing, which, as explained by the NC Housing Finance Agency, a non-profit policy advisory organization, run by Director Larry Jarvis:

The NC Housing Finance Agency is providing 0% second mortgages on these houses, on the ones to be sold to persons at 80% of the area median income (which would be about \$40,000). And that is essentially a free loan made up front to bring the first mortgage price down. That loan does not have to be paid back. It has the effect of lowering the first mortgage. And it assures the first lender the city of Durham is providing a 2% loan to all below 80% median income buyers, and that is at 2%, well below the market. That is a \$74/month payment.⁵⁵⁵

⁵⁵⁵ Discussion with Larry Jarvis at Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony, Emily LaDue, *Southside Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony*.

These are very clearly middle class homes for middle class buyers, yet the discourse presented is that of affordable housing. The requirements for receiving the loans are strict, including no history of default, excellent credit, a certain baseline of savings, and secure work. At this time, fewer than six people have qualified for these loans. This could be a product of the slow bureaucracy, or of the lack of qualified residents interested in buying. Over the past two years years, I have heard from five individuals who thought they would be approved, that they have been turned away. Mayor Bill Bell drew attention to the fact that these houses have been completed a year earlier than expected, pointing to the speed of the partnerships and of the engineers and builders. However, filling them with population that they are intended for seems to be a slower process. The conditions for this building have been partially based on the need for affordable housing, as HUD funding requires it. However, in reality, this population may not exist as envisioned.

Many recent studies have pointed to the efforts and mixed results of mixed income developments:

The decision to change the federal approach to public and assisted housing reflects the growing social science consensus that living in concentrated poverty neighborhoods increases the chances of such problems as teen parenthood, delinquency, drug and alcohol use, and weak labor force attachment (Ellen and Turner 1997; Wilson 1987). The intent of today's housing policy is to overcome the problems of concentrated poverty by exposing low-income public housing residents to working and middle-class role models and neighborhoods offering greater opportunity. (2010, 913).⁵⁵⁶

In studying the poorest and most vulnerable populations in Chicago, they conclude that mixed-income developments leave them stranded without support for employment and having to move around in work and home. Further, they conclude that it is not clear that low income residents will benefit at all from mixed income housing and that middle-income tenants will be attracted to it, calling for further research. Other studies in the past several years have corroborated these findings, all far from calling for support of mixed-income developments as a solution to urban poverty.⁵⁵⁷ Thus, the intention of the city becomes clear – despite the rhetoric of affordable

⁵⁵⁶ Susan J. Popkin, "A Glass Half Empty? New Evidence from the *HOPE VI Panel Study*," *Housing Policy Debate* 20, no. 1 (January 2010): 43–63, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10511481003599852>.

⁵⁵⁷ Susan J. Popkin, Diane K. Levy, and Larry Buron, "Has Hope Vi Transformed Residents' Lives? New Evidence From The Hope Vi Panel Study," *Housing Studies* 24, no. 4 (July 2009): 477–502, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673030902938371>;

housing, the city wants to develop the area surrounding downtown for an imagined middle class that it is working to build, not unlike the goals of urban renewal.

As I recounted in Chapter 1, Southside celebrated the first of these homes to be sold with a morning-long ribbon-cutting ceremony. The celebration focused on the closing of the first of these newly built homes, sold to David Steinbrenner, a program coordinator at Duke University. His down payment was subsidized by the University in a much-publicized program implemented by Duke to demonstrate their commitment to first-time homebuyer employees, while populating the neighborhood with young professional employees. Marie Hunt, a lifelong resident of the neighborhood and president of the Southside Citizens Advisory Committee, spoke on behalf of the neighborhood and welcomed him: "I want to extend an official Welcome to the Neighborhood to our new neighbor.... For 20 years, I have seen these streets look dark. Now I see light."⁵⁵⁸ The energy that Mr. Steinbrenner exuded was pleasant and grateful, yet somewhat uneasy. Just after the ceremony and sound bites, he ran up his walkway and departed into his new home, shutting the door behind him as soon as the speeches ended and the crowd moved on to admire the construction details inside the houses next door. The speakers all come from public-private-non-profit partnerships: federal, state, and local government and associated public funding sources, including Durham City Council, Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the NC Department of Commerce and the State of NC, Self-Help Credit Union, the NC Housing Finance Agency, Duke University who is providing mortgage loans for employees, a Southside Citizens Advisory Committee, and private building and design contractors. As Duke's Vice President for Durham and Regional Affairs Phail Wynn stated: "This ceremony is the celebration of the power of community collective action involving many stakeholders. Many key stakeholders are working towards a common goal. And that common goal is the redevelopment of Southside."⁵⁵⁹

At this event, the various public officials who spoke mentioned the public-private relationships that allowed this project to occur, and pointed out its importance in revitalization and

Popkin, "A Glass Half Empty?"; Mark L. Joseph, "Is Mixed-income Development an Antidote to Urban Poverty?," *Housing Policy Debate* 17, no. 2 (January 2006): 209–34, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10511482.2006.9521567>; Erin M. Graves, "Mixed Outcome Developments: Comparing Policy Goals to Resident Outcomes in Mixed-Income Housing," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 77, no. 2 (April 15, 2011): 143–53, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944363.2011.567921>.

⁵⁵⁸ Emily LaDue, *Southside Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony*.

⁵⁵⁹ Emily LaDue.

rebirth of this historic neighborhood. They spoke of the neighborhood's representation of "the future" of the city, in terms of its economic revitalization, and various partnerships enabled by efforts of citizens and the state. The efforts of Self Help and Duke are not necessarily ill-intentioned: to see more people, and more people from lower income brackets, own homes, while also benefitting their expansion and development interests. For Duke, those interests include making the city more amenable and attractive to research, medical, and academic professionals they would like to entice to the institution. For Self-Help, the interests are more diverse, and include a multi-tiered development agenda aimed at their stated missions of more equitable access to capital for more people, a venture investment program, and providing a local credit union to keep capital flowing within the community. While each institution is not traditionally profit-seeking, in both cases, market-based strategies are employed to increase revenue to the institution and improve strategies at general capital growth for its competitive and overall success in the economy. Duke competes for the retention of top researchers in various fields, who in turn bring in various investments from private and federal grants.

The partnership points to is what happens when citizens - in the form of community leaders, look to a partner such as Duke University to help underwrite a neighborhood. The community members who are chairs of the neighborhood committee and active in it, are the homeowners in the area who have been able to survive the economy one way or another. The people who can never be spoken for, or speak, are the ones who have already left, who lost out in the deindustrialization of the city, and are no longer part of this "historic" community. Duke, Durham, and Self-Help officials and architects are conscious of gentrification and that it is not something that should be done. The property is seen as investment potential, and the promise of mixed and low income housing keeps the project afloat. The ribbon-cutting event itself is a justification for the project, and the project is celebrated as a success with only resident moving in to the new houses so far. It also acts as an advertisement for the new homes. After the ceremony, three open houses were available for tours, presented as models with information on purchasing and financing the homes. At the ribbon-cutting ceremony, Mayor Bill Bell stated:

It required a lot of thoughtful preparation that respected the residents of Southside because they were very much involved in this effort. It also involved detailed financing putting together the federal, state, and local and private financing for the project, and finally the selection of the design team and infrastructure and quality building team... A New Day in Southside is already here.

Southside is seen as the ideal for Durham moving forward – consideration of middle class families, individual homeownership, inventive partnerships, and discursively remembering Durham's history of a strong manufacturing economy and its base.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony and its counterpart, the groundbreaking ceremony, have become ubiquitous events in Durham over the past decade. These events act as useful moments for understanding Durham's perspective on itself and the image it would like to project to the public. This is a formal presentation of relationships and pride in efforts at community redevelopment. The speakers also discuss community, and the past and present of the Southside community as a historic site as well as an important future site. One of the last speakers at this event, homebuilder Brittany Wallace of B Wallace Designs, who has received several contracts from the city to build houses in areas where development is subsidized by federal HUD funds or property was bought en masse at low prices, points to the significance of this neighborhood as a symbol of Durham's revitalization. Other speakers point to this symbolic importance as well, referring to it as a representation of the city's growth and direction. She stated publicly:

The place, location, and character of the community is very much in line with what is happening in Durham.... the exciting renaissance around downtown. And just to be close to it.... I really believe in the approach to affordable home ownership that has been implemented here in Southside, and I think it is an exceptional way to address such a vital issue in our community. Knowing what this community means to the residents and community members... I am just very proud of being a part of building these homes in Southside and helping the community realize their vision for the community.

As a private contractor, she benefits directly from new growth in general, HUD subsidies, and being publicly witnessed as an advocate of affordable housing. She earned the contract for the majority of the few dozen homes in Southside, as well as several other housing projects she is building in newly redeveloping neighborhoods, with over three dozen properties currently in her company's possession (Durham Property Records, Interview). Federal Congressman David Price stated:

I think the meaning of this day for the people who brought us here to this day is that the Southside Community is back, and the City of Durham is serving notice to the sort of inclusive community, affordable community, we want to be, where all of our citizens can live and thrive. I also take the message to be that housing is a front burner issue. I want to make it a front burner issue, we need to make sure it is, at the federal and the state level, we know it is and has been for a long time for the city of Durham. There is nothing more basic than the kind of community we want to be, our ability to be inclusive, for people to be invested in the community. Nothing more basic than housing. And so when you look around here today, we know it is exciting and a lot of people are due credit for this. But we also know that this can't be the last of these kinds of announcements and celebrations. We need to remain committed to making sure our community is affordable and accessible to everybody and sometimes that has been slipping away from us. Just to be blunt about it. We've seen situations in Durham and communities around us where our teachers, our nurses, our students, our cooks, our first responders, sometimes cannot obtain affordable housing, close in the midst of community. And that is unacceptable. We need to work on that. We need to work on it as a community. And so that is why I take such encouragement in what we see here today. I am going to make sure the federal government is present and accounted for. I think I'd be remiss if I didn't note that the programs that have been drawn on at the federal level, and I am talking about the HOME program, and the Community Development Block Grant Program, these are programs that in the past have had robust bipartisan support, that's not so much true today. We are fighting for adequate funding levels for both CDBGs and for HOME and that battle is going on as I speak, as our Transportation Bill, HUD, is making its way through the House with inadequate funding for both of those programs. I hope we can fix that. I hope through the pressures of the Senate and the President that we can fix that. But what's at issue here is whether or not we have true partnerships of what the Mayor spoke about. Where all levels of government are engaged. The private sector, the non-profit sector, the state agencies, the kind of partnership that we've known for a long time is required in order to develop affordable housing. I think we know how to do it. This bears witness to that. The question is, do we have the political will to do it, and will we as a community insist that at all levels of government, and everyday as we think about the kind of community we want to be, we have housing as a front burner issue.

His statements leave room for questioning what allocating funding to these projects is doing for fighting poverty, and puts the responsibility on an imagined "we" that places agency at a political level. However, as demonstrated at several city council meetings, community members are not supportive of this type of plan for development and do not see their interests being met.

Duke, in searching for forty-six first-time homebuyers for its \$10,000 housing subsidies, were only able to find ten potential candidates, and two of whom actually worked out to receive the subsidy, including Mr. Steinbrenner.⁵⁶⁰ The remainder of the potential subsidy applicants are in a program that meets regularly called the Duke Homebuyers Club, trying to get themselves out of debt and save enough money to be able to qualify for even these subsidized homes. Wynn mentioned that they are trying in particular to offer these subsidies to those with a family history in

⁵⁶⁰ Phail Wynn, "Southside Housing Brochure" (Duke University, 2014).

Southside. The largest house, a four-bedroom, is priced at \$164,000, with the city buying down the land cost from \$189,000. For non-Duke employees, the homes range from \$162,000 to 198,000.⁵⁶¹ A recent article in Duke's student newspaper pointed to the discrepancy in Duke's strategy and the reality of the gentrifying neighborhood. Quoting Phail Wynn, the student writes:

"Southside is an affordable housing planned complex that is rapidly becoming unaffordable," he said. "But it showed the effectiveness and the power of a strong partnership between a private university, a city government and a community-based bank. This is something we can replicate with the lessons learned from this project."⁵⁶²

There are however, no neighborhoods left to gentrify surrounding Duke and Downtown Durham. Moreover, some longer term residents that managed to keep their homes, recently organized to demand that the city pay them subsidies on their taxes, which have risen sharply following the redevelopment, and the City Council approved a three to five-year subsidization program which will amount to a few hundred dollars for a couple dozen families a year.⁵⁶³

3.5.2 Downtown Durham: Not another Cabrini-Green

In an interview about the displacement effects of the new proposed light rail – after the city committed to ensure that at least 15% of housing within ½ mile of the proposed light rail transit stops is affordable – People's Alliance-backed City Councilwoman Jillian Johnson, by and large considered the most "progressive" and even in some circles "radical" city council person wrote:

I believe in a thriving city that grows through inclusion, where everyone is involved in and benefits from the city's revitalization...This was a missed opportunity to get some affordable units in the downtown area. If we are going to meet that goal, the city will have to push harder when developers seek easements or significant zoning changes in order to build, in addition to building affordable developments in cooperation with non-profit developers like Self-Help Credit Union.⁵⁶⁴

In this statement, Johnson posits Self-Help as 1) having a clear strategy that is different from other developers and 2) as a potential solution to the problem of affordable housing. In doing so,

⁵⁶¹ "Durham Housing Authority," n.d., durhamhousingauthority.org.

⁵⁶² Andrew Tan-Delli Cicchi et al., "'Gentrification Is Not a Myth, It's Really Happening,'" *Duke Chronicle*, October 11, 2017, <http://www.dukechronicle.com/article/2017/10/gentrification-is-not-a-myth-its-really-happening>.

⁵⁶³ *Durham City Council Meeting*. April 2017. Reginald Johnson, "Memo to Thomas J. Bonfield: Southside Tax Abatements" (City of Durham, NC, April 4, 2017), http://cityordinances.durhamnc.gov/OnBaseAgendaOnline/Documents/ViewDocument/WS-Published%20Attachment%20-%2011821%20-%20MEMO%20-%20PROPERTY%20TAX%20PROGRAM%20-%205_1_2017.pdf?meetingId=194&documentType=Agenda&itemId=4383&publishId=16406&isSection=false.

⁵⁶⁴ Reed Benjamin, "Jillian Johnson: Durham City Council," *Indy Week*, September 16, 2015, <https://www.indyweek.com/indyweek/jillian-johnson/Content?oid=4756628>.

she lays out for us the limits of the progressive vision of development. For her, the options are “bad” pro-growth development, or “good” pro-growth development with Self-Help. Which, as we have seen, rather than stopping or slowing displacement, makes it possible. In other words, the progressive alternative never goes beyond what is increasingly clear is just more of the same.

As discussed in Chapter 1, in 2015, City Council was presented with a proposal for developing an affordable housing apartment complex on a government-owned site next to the main city bus station, Durham Station in the heart of downtown. Self-Help, Durham CAN (Congregations And Neighborhoods in Action),⁵⁶⁵ and Councilman Steve Schewel presented the idea for the proposal (the proposal itself was never written), which the city council rejected despite its ongoing pledge towards affordable housing downtown. The basis for this rejection was Mayor Bill Bell: “I don’t want another Cabrini Green. I don’t want to warehouse poor folks.”⁵⁶⁶ Instead, the city put out a Request for Proposals that required a mixed-use and mixed-income development.

At the end of 2016, City Council received the only application from their RFP for development of the site: a mixed-income, mixed-use development built by Self-Help and a building partner, DHIC, Inc. with the minimum required low-income housing units to receive Low Income Housing Tax Credits, and unanimously approved Self-Help’s work going forward. In October of 2017 the City Council approved the plan drafted by Self-Help and DHIC that will be submitted to receive Low Income Housing Tax Credits, urged along to meet the end of the year deadline for 2017 to receive \$10 million through the state’s allocation of 9% Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC).⁵⁶⁷ This granted Self-Help just under \$200,000 to continue researching and drafting the proposal. The financing would be structured primarily through LIHTCs, a city contribution that would be public debt-financed, or taxed to the population, and the rest would be secured through Self-Help through a private bank to fulfill the bank’s required community development contributions, or through the FHA or other federal mortgage institutions. The plan

⁵⁶⁵ Durham CAN is an Industrial Areas Foundation organization, which in Durham focuses most of their energy on affordable housing options. A Durham CAN leader was just elected to City Council in 2017.

⁵⁶⁶ *Durham City Council Work Session*. – get date

⁵⁶⁷ This information is from the Durham on October 5, 2017 and the City Council meeting on October 18, 2017. http://durham.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=5&clip_id=2097

also assumes that the 2-acre piece of city land that is valued at \$2.8 million, is sold to Self-Help for only one dollar. The approved development plan includes retail and office space and parking. Moreover, the office unit must be proven to subsidize the affordable housing. The plan approved by the city would require that the city give the project \$2.8 million by the project's closing, in late 2018, in addition to the land valued at \$2.8 million. The owner of the new development and the land will be a joint venture LLC between Self-Help and DHIC – while the city could remain an owner, the proposal would be weakened, according to the applicants, risking losing the tax credits. While the city funnels money to Self-Help's mixed income projects, the few actual projects to serve low-income people in the city go unfunded and uncommitted on.

The focus of the development is to fulfill Durham's current mission to provide more affordable housing to its residents, particularly households at "50% of Area Median Income" which for a 2-person household is \$35,220. The attention, funding, and focus on this project by City Council is substantially greater than other proposed LIHTC projects in the past, including one public housing project – Club Boulevard – that was looking to renovate, and to do so, would need whatever funding is available to make this happen. Currently, programs such as LIHTC and CHOICE affordable housing grants are the only funds made available to finance subsidized housing. These grants and tax credits either build new or transform public housing that directly subsidizes the renters in housing that directly subsidizes the developers, which in this example is Self-Help. The Club Boulevard development did not get approved for the LIHTC and passed by without any media attention. This kept the site in tact and kept the seventy-seven units from being changed from publicly subsidized and cared for to privatized with Section 8 vouchers. However, it has not received any funding for upgrades so its residents get to stay but in homes that need attention. It did not receive a team from City Council to push for the LIHTC as the Self-Help Jackson-Pettigrew development is receiving.

Meanwhile, the new Jackson-Pettigrew downtown development is receiving regular news updates in local media, including the Herald-Sun and the *Indy Week*.⁵⁶⁸ With the incredible attention affordable housing is given locally as both City Council and long term residents

⁵⁶⁸ Arena.

anxiously watch luxury apartments and rents rise, this new development is soothing these anxieties. City Council is presenting these current plans as a desperate attempt to make some affordable housing possible by receiving \$10 million in tax credits. Like the Southside development, the city and nonprofit actors can use these sites as representative of their commitment to affordable housing, while receiving huge public subsidies to do so and increasing their property ownership. In this downtown development, twenty of the units would be affordable to 30% AMI or less, which for a two-person household is \$17,600, or for a four-person household, is \$24,600 or less. For a one-bedroom apartment for a family of two, rent would be \$440/month, and for a family of four in 2-bedroom apartments, the rent will be \$615, which is the cap of rent equaling 30% of total monthly income. The other sixty units would be available to people meeting AMI of 60% or less, which is \$35,220 for a family of two, or \$43,980 for a family of four, with rents ranging then from \$880 to \$1100 per month. If approved, the entire development will receive \$10,365,620 in LIHTC, \$920,000 in public housing vouchers, and \$2.8 million in city funding.

Notably, Self-Help recommended and the City ultimately approved a plan that includes 80 units of affordable housing and no market rate housing. This decision was made despite protests from outgoing Mayor Bill Bell because it turns out that is more affordable to build due to the low-income housing tax credits available for the site. The twenty market rate housing units, if included, would be unappealing as compared to the nearly 1,300 higher end luxury apartments nearby, and Self-Help is concerned that they would not be able to rent them at the rates needed to cover the costs of development. For those struggling to hold a job and pay the cost of living, meeting rent in these units will also remain a challenge. If the tax credits are approved, this development will provide rental limits on eighty units for at least thirty years. Meanwhile, 49,310 people live in poverty in the county (17.1%), with roughly 47,000 (over 19%) of them in the city of Durham;⁵⁶⁹ poverty levels are defined federally as \$15,060 for a family of one, \$20,290 for a family of two, \$25,520 for a family of three, and \$30,750 for a family of four. Twenty apartments would serve this population. In other words, massive public funds go towards projects whose

⁵⁶⁹ NC Justice, Durham Economic Snapshot.

main focus is luxury production, because it includes low-income housing that does not even begin to scratch the surface of the affordable housing issue.

Moreover, as the City project manager stated: “The anxiety it produces is that tax credit investors such as the NCHFA [Housing Finance Agency]... don’t like market-rate units, they consider them to be a risk to the project, because if there is a market downturn, those units are more likely to go vacant than other projects that have swimming pools and other amenities.” Moreover, if market-rate housing units are included, “city funds cannot be used to subsidize the gap on market-rate housing.”⁵⁷⁰ In other words, the development either needs subsidized low-income units through the federal mechanisms put in place that replace public housing, or be a high-end luxury apartment, which also receive tax credits and economic incentives. The project will also allow for twenty-six units to accept Durham Housing Authority vouchers to pay rent, which makes the project more appealing financially to the city, having to close a smaller gap because these vouchers go directly to the developer, and not to the renters. This housing development points out the growing gap between the rich and the poor, and these various levels of income and survival.

The focus is also on managing perception and image, and not building a public housing structure that actually houses poor people. The presence of “affordable housing” is necessary to access public funding, but cannot be presented as “too affordable” in order to avoid a historical, arguably racist, stigma. Mayor Bell had to be convinced of the plan that would not include market-rate housing because of his concerns about housing only low-income people together in one unit. This was provided as rationale for including the market rate housing. A follow up memo states:

The rationale for pursuing a mixed-income project may include: Perception that the inclusion of a market-rate component can reduce the potential stigma too often associated with affordable housing. The theory is that if people know that anyone can live in the building, they are less likely to think about the residents as ‘those people;’ Perception that a mixed-income project generates a healthier internal dynamic, as market renters provide a different example – and perhaps access to other social networks – that might otherwise exist; perception that a mixed-income project is of higher quality as it must compete for market-rate tenants; and desire to have higher rent component to provide an internal subsidy for the affordable component. Many of the perceptions have their roots in the public housing experience, which has demonstrated again and again that concentrating extremely low income households (in

⁵⁷⁰ Karen Lado, City Council Work Session, Oct 15, 2017.

Durham, average public housing resident income below \$13,000) into large, unattractive structures is a model that we no longer wish to pursue. The experience of the LIHTC program offers different lessons. For the reasons noted previously, most LIHTC projects tend to be 100% affordable. However, the range of low-income households served in LIHTC developments is much broader than in public housing – from extremely low income up to 60% of AMI. The Jackson/Pettigrew Street project is projected to have 25% of units for households at or below 30% AMI, with the balance of units targeted to households at or below 60% AMI. As a result of this income-mixing, LIHTC projects do not generally suffer from the challenging internal dynamics seen in much public housing development. In Durham, for example, the 2017 60% AMI threshold translates into a household income of between \$30,000 and \$44,000 per year, depending on household size. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2015 American Community Survey, over half of Durham County renters have household incomes below this level. This group includes many households with stable employment in a variety of fields who are being priced out an increasingly expensive rental market.⁵⁷¹

Because “there is a demand for affordable units whether the market is strong or weak,”⁵⁷² the affordable units can be banked on more securely than market rate units.

The justificatory memo above ends with a justification based on the fact that what low-income means in Durham today is actually most of the population. Moreover, after fifteen years, a re-evaluation and re-capitalization of the project must happen which would keep the properties at low-income for another 15-30 years. DHIC and Self-Help claim that their properties will remain affordable because they are mission-driven nonprofit developer organizations. However, if income levels in the city continue to increase, the AMI will also increase, making low-income requirements a subsidy for populations with more and more money, a typical problem of affordable housing across the country.⁵⁷³ The project managers spent half of their presentation justifying to City Council that this development will not be filled with residents that will be stigmatized – it will include, for example, city employees and students. To do this, they discussed how the development of low income housing tax credit units are beyond this stigma already – the days of public housing are long “behind us.” What that also means is that the people in these units must continue to find a way to pay their rent or be forced out. Even though the plan does not

⁵⁷¹ Reginald Johnson, “Response to City Council Questions Concerning Porposed JACkson/Pettigrew Street Development,” City of Durham Ordinance (Durham, NC: City of Durham, October 10, 2017), <http://cityordinances.durhamnc.gov/OnBaseAgendaOnline/Documents/ViewDocument/Final-Published%20Attachment%20-%2012152%20-%20OTHER%20-%20RESPONSE%20TO%20COUNCIL%20REQUEST%20-%20201.pdf?meetingId=218&documentType=Agenda&itemId=5926&publishId=25237&isSection=false>.

⁵⁷² Karen Lado. answering questions

⁵⁷³ David J. Madden and Peter Marcuse, *In Defense of Housing: The Politics of Crisis* (London ; New York: Verso, 2016).

include market-rate housing, it is market-based housing, so that affordability is measured by the median income, which is on the rise.

Self-Help is acting as the developer that is bringing affordable housing to downtown Durham, but in fact the public is paying Self-Help, and in this case DHIC, to do this work through tax breaks and subsidies. Self-Help is built on and able to do their developments because of neoliberal structures – institutionalizing state-subsidized market solutions for people’s well-being⁵⁷⁴ – such as Low Income Housing Tax Credits. These are meant to *incentivize* developers to build affordable housing, and essentially, are the only way any attention or resources are put towards affordable housing. In this way, the tax credits are working as intended, which is supporting market-based solutions to plug small holes in growing problems of inequality. By the time the new development is built in 2019, if trends continue in this direction, there will be an even greater need for housing and jobs for those struggling, and likely, more people in poverty will have already forced out of the city. And, an even higher Area Median Income that will adjust the rental rates in the complex.

3.6 History

In this section, I examine the varied use of history as a value-producing tool, drawing on themes introduced in Chapter 2. Two major developments in Durham used Historic Tax Credits to renovate former industrial warehouses for use in ushering in more rent-intensifying development.

3.6.1. Historic Tax Credits: A Branding Strategy

Self-Help has received more tax credits in the state of North Carolina than any other institution,⁵⁷⁵ despite the fact that historic preservation is not part of their mission directly. Instead, history is one asset to be leveraged. Tucker Bartlett commented:

This is not central to our mission, but we like historic preservation, as well, and we think it is important to a community like Durham, if we think it is going to have any chance at competing with other cities, that the asset it had was these cool old historic buildings. And

⁵⁷⁴ Jason R. Hackworth, *The Neoliberal City: Governance, Ideology, and Development in American Urbanism*, Cornell Paperbacks (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007); Brenner and Theodore, “Preface”; Neil Brenner and Nikolas Theodore, eds., *Spaces of Neoliberalism: Urban Restructuring in North America and Western Europe* (Malden, Mass.; Oxford: Blackwell, 2002); Smith, *Uneven Development*.

⁵⁷⁵ Interview with Kordsmeier.

if we would have allowed history to continue on as it was going, it would have been torn down, and there would have been nothing unique to Durham. We couldn't sort of celebrate and preserve our industrial past and do something new and interesting with it... We would have done what they did in the 1980s as part of urban revitalization which was a big glass tower, they built on the other side of downtown on top of an enormous parking deck, that was their vision of economic development in the 1980s because that was built on the side of the highway and that is where everybody was moving. But why would you move to our glass tower in the middle of downtown and not the glass tower on the side of the highway? There was no competitive advantage that Durham had. But by reusing our existing assets with character, you are able to make it feel like you are in a different place when you are in Durham than when you are out in the suburbs in a suburban office park... We really saw historic development as a key economic development tool for Durham.⁵⁷⁶

Preserving history opens key funding that enables Self-Help to do this work. The history of tobacco and textiles, Duke University, Black Wall Street and Hayti, and nearby plantations has placed over fifteen neighborhoods and dozens of sites under historic designation. In 2006, North Carolina approved a new tax credit on historic mills and plants that were once used for the state's former tobacco, textile, and furniture plants. Preservation Durham, the member-based organization that identifies structures and areas for historic preservation, applies for the designations; and advises the city, businesses, architects, and residents on historic codes and designations. They then call on Self-Help and send clients to them as a educational resource for applying for historic tax credits because of their success.⁵⁷⁷ They also send developers who are looking to redevelop using historic tax credits to Self-Help so that they can partner to make the development happen. Self-Help has a successful track record in major projects of historic renovation. Rather than seeking to preserve the buildings per se, Self-Help leverages "history" as a strategy to create a niche market to attract customers. By commodifying history, they get a wealthier client base seeking something "different," who can also take advantage of massive tax rebates – state and federal deductions of between 40% and 60% sale or high-end renovation costs.

⁵⁷⁶ Bartlett, Author Interview.

⁵⁷⁷ Wendy Hillis, Interview with Preservation Durham, 2013.

3.6.2 American Tobacco

3.6.2.1 Bull Durham

The Durham Bulls Stadium, which developers and city officials refer to as the flagship project of Durham's recent redevelopment, was also the first project to be built in Durham using public debt, without a public referendum. Its owners, local media conglomerate founders Michael and Jim Goodmon, are praised for convincing the city to back the stadium despite public disapproval. Six years later in 2001, the Goodmons also purchased the 14.6 acres of former tobacco warehouses sitting between DPAC and the Stadium, now known as American Tobacco Campus, self-described as the "the epicenter of Durham's renaissance" and the city's "entertainment district."⁵⁷⁸ ATC houses the most expensive office space in the region, eight restaurants, an Aloft hotel, a theater, an NPR studio, an entrepreneurial hub, a private basketball court, a dedicated NGO office space called Mission Post, several Duke offices, two parking decks, and a manmade river. American Tobacco Campus contains over seventeen warehouse and factory buildings that were built through the first half of the twentieth century to accommodate over 3500 workers. In 1987, American Tobacco consolidated all of its operations to Virginia, and the warehouses sat in a disinvested downtown Durham.

The Goodmons, the owning family of Capitol Broadcasting Company, bought the Durham Bulls soon after the team generated a national buzz with the success of the Kevin Costner film *Bull Durham* in 1989. The film opened the eyes of the local media broadcast moguls who following their late patriarch's counsel of diversifying their family corporation to stay relevant and profitable,⁵⁷⁹ suddenly saw opportunity in the minor league baseball team. The Goodmons realized that the development of the Triangle area was about to explode as they watched Duke, UNC, and NC State expand, the professional research and development industries grow in Research Triangle Park with the internet boom, the building of the SAS campus in Cary,⁵⁸⁰ and

⁵⁷⁸ "Living: American Tobacco," *American Tobacco Campus* (blog), n.d., americantobaccocampus.com/district/23.

⁵⁷⁹ Tim Finkbiner and Dan Oliver, *Because No One Else Would*.

⁵⁸⁰ Tim Finkbiner and Dan Oliver.

the migration of Northerners to the more affordable South – both baby boomers and young families unable to afford living in the North.⁵⁸¹

When they first bought the Bulls, they planned to move the team out of the city and into the suburbs of the Triangle in a proposed new park between Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill. Its stadium, just outside downtown in the Old North Durham area, was in need of repairs and the team's fan base was outgrowing its size.⁵⁸² Stadiums were being built across the country as vessels for accumulating public funding for corporate ventures,⁵⁸³ and the suburbs of the three Triangle metros were growing. While the Goodmons foresaw the growth of the region, they could not yet foresee the growth of the inner city of Durham, until they noticed a series of revelations and events: Duke was placing attention beyond its walls, developers across the country were reinvesting in disinvested postindustrial downtowns as a new source of capital accumulation, nonprofits such as Self-Help were aiding development with nonprofit and community partner status; and there were new federal tax incentive programs to support all of this.

But City Council at the time, with the urging of leaders in what was to become Downtown Durham Inc, the publicly-funded private downtown revitalization nonprofit for the downtown Business Improvement District, wanted the stadium downtown. What ensued was a decisive moment in Durham's redevelopment that had lasting political, economic, and geographical impacts: the relocation and rebuilding of the Durham Bulls ballpark in the early 1990s from just outside of downtown to the center of downtown, beside the empty former American Tobacco warehouses, 14 acres that had not been used or managed since 1987. A local developer, J. Abram Abram of ABD Associates, bought property and there had been holding it with intention to sell for redevelopment. The Goodmons then began considering building at this site, and eventually drafted a proposal to do so, though still holding out the option of building in the suburbs. In March 1990, the Durham County commissioners voted down the \$11.28 million worth

⁵⁸¹ Demographics: DurhamNC.gov

⁵⁸² The old Durham ballpark is now part of the Old North Durham neighborhood, a nostalgic site bordering the new Central Park District of Durham, where the Farmer's Market is now held. It serves as a field for practice league for college teams and occasional community festivals, and is in what is being self-declared as the "DIY District" of Durham, a formerly, and still somewhat, Black and Latino neighborhood that now houses a music venue, a brewery, several bars and restaurants, pop-up shops, a coffeehouse, a Cross Fit, a yoga studio, a charter school serving students from outside the neighborhood also supported by Self-Help and local developers.

⁵⁸³ Delaney and Eckstein, *Public Dollars, Private Stadiums*.

of general public obligation bonds that were requested to build the new ballpark with public services and schools lacking resources in Durham, and the county not wanting to lose their tax dollars on what they saw as a decayed, poor, and black and brown inner city. The decision to build in Durham then went to a public referendum vote that brought out 24% of eligible voters. More was clearly at stake than just renaming the Durham Bulls the Triangle Bulls, which was seen as the reason anyone came out to vote at all. though this did bring some out to vote. The proposal to build the new stadium failed again, though it did gain a majority in Durham city, where local property owners were beginning to anticipate a lucrative turn in the city. However, by this time the long-term strategy of the city was set and local corporate leaders, developers, the Goodmons, and public officials were set on building the new Bulls ballpark as the catalyst for this redevelopment.

In May 1992, an influential team of local leaders including CEO of Downtown Durham Inc. Bill Kalkhof, CBC's Vice President and General Counsel Mike Hill, CBC CEO Jim Goodmon, Duke University officials, and representatives from Self-Help Credit Union convinced the City of Durham to pass a law allowing for the project to go ahead without public approval. Despite the failed referendum, City Council approved \$15 million in Certificate of Participation bonds to build the stadium, with the team to pay back the public bonds at a rate of \$150,000 plus a percentage of revenue over baseline. Bill Kalkhof, Jim Goodmon, and Mike Hill, convinced the city council to build the stadium. The city even managed to make money in the deal, with total repayment at \$19.25 million after interest. Harry Rodenhizer, (mayor from 1991-1993, also mayor from 1979-81 and instrumental in getting the Durham Freeway built amidst public refusal) along with councilmember Chuck Grubb were instrumental in getting the city to approve the measure.⁵⁸⁴ They lost their political seats in 1993 because of the decision, but all of these actors are now recognized repeatedly in local media for their wisdom in pushing forward the deal leading to Durham's construction and population boom.⁵⁸⁵

⁵⁸⁴ Arthur T. Johnson, *Minor League Baseball and Local Economic Development* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993).

⁵⁸⁵ Durham County Library, *Bullish on Durham: Self-Help Credit Union*, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AnGLO2-LAOI>.

As a resident of nearby Southside possibly facing eviction put it, “I always know when there is a Bulls game. I see a police officer drive past my house every 20 minutes.”⁵⁸⁶ This does raise another issue at stake: the privatization and surveillance of space, as American Tobacco is not a public space, it is owned by Capitol Broadcasting. The old ballpark is also fenced off and restricted to authorized use. Studies of private and public space in cities point to the correlation between privatization and surveillance.⁵⁸⁷ While federal funds are used to develop these areas, there is not a focus on public ownership or control but on private financial security in making these investments.

3.6.2.2 Branding the Bull City

The Durham Bulls Athletic Park opened in 1995 and expanded the Goodman's capital and contributed to generating local boosterism for Durham, a form of development media that has been important for Durham's speculative economy. This boosterism has also been a major factor in the denial of the realities of gentrification on the part of local progressives and activists. Armed with a sense of defending Durham, as it was depicted as a poor, black, crime-ridden city, people who lived in Durham in the 1990s and 2000s saw its redevelopment as the success of the local over the commercial, coinciding with the surge in globalization rhetoric, and the idea of supporting local (e.g. particular, historic, community – and state subsidized) development for global well-being as a counter to major multinational corporations.

Several successful businesses have used this idea to market their goods and services – Runaway Brands, the clothing line with a storefront on downtown Main Street, is an example of marketing poverty as coolness and blackness as coolness. But from where did this idea of Durham as a crime-ridden city, a black city, and a poor city come from? Just as Phail Wynn described Southside at the ribbon-cutting ceremony as “empty” prior to new development, most people described downtown the same way. Indeed, in 1995 most property in downtown Durham was fairly vacant and courthouse activities were the primary downtown activity. As mentioned

⁵⁸⁶ Interview with Leadbetter.

⁵⁸⁷ See for example, Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell, “Neoliberalizing Space,” *Antipode* 34, no. 3 (June 2002): 380–404, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8330.00247>; David J. Roberts and Minelle Mahtani, “Neoliberalizing Race, Racing Neoliberalism: Placing ‘Race’ in Neoliberal Discourses,” *Antipode* 42, no. 2 (March 2010): 248–57, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2009.00747.x>.

earlier, Duke had been concerned about the image of Durham and perhaps still has some lasting bias against the city. Notably, Vice President Tallman Trask remarked of Durham in the 90s, “You might see ten people and eight of them would scare you.”⁵⁸⁸ Former Senior Vice President of Public Affairs and Government Relations John Burness stated in describing his involvement with Downtown Durham Inc., “Folks said, the downtown is dead, it’s not going to come back” (Interview). Jim Goodmon, CEO of Capitol Broadcasting and owner of the Bulls, bought the old American Tobacco warehouse in 2002, and eventually turned to Self-Help, a 501c(3) Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), after being rejected for loans because the risk was too high.

Self-Help’s team, led by founder Martin Eakes, was part of the group of national policymakers arguing for the inclusion of non-profits in President Clinton’s New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) Program, enacted in 2000 as part of the Community Renewal Tax Relief Act. As discussed, New Markets Tax Credits offer a 39% tax credit over seven years to investors in low-income areas. Its allocation has increased since 2009 with the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.⁵⁸⁹ It has provided over \$15 billion in investments through federal tax relief since 2002. Self-Help officials draw a distinction between “people-based” investments, directly targeting low-income individuals, and “place-based” investments, redeveloping sites in low-income areas. Both are supported by NMTC, but place-based plans have received more funds in Durham and nationally.⁵⁹⁰ There is no return on investment with direct people-based investments, whereas real estate can provide the promise of a new population and growth based on this population.

3.6.2.3 The Warehouse

Various developers attempted to purchase and redevelop the American Tobacco property through the 1990s but it was not until 2001, with a commitment from Duke University to rent half of the available office space and Self-Help, securing federal public financing through

⁵⁸⁸ Interview with Trask, 2014

⁵⁸⁹ Wong and Wolff, “New Markets Tax Credit Impacts: A Case Study in Durham, North Carolina.”

⁵⁹⁰ Interview with Bartlett.

New Markets and Historic tax credits, that CBC was able to purchase the property in a \$43.2 million venture. Dan Levine of Self-Help stated of his tour of American Tobacco:

We made the large loan that allowed that project to go forward... At that point American Tobacco was about a million square feet of vacant, beautiful brick tobacco buildings. Actually, I had been through there and there was a tree growing through the roof in one of them. A lot of opportunity but downtown didn't have a whole lot going on. And so a lot of people thought that Capitol Broadcasting, who purchased the property, was kind of crazy in the idea of filling a million square feet with high end restaurant space and bars... was just out there. And so I think Self-Help played a role in being a lender that was actually willing to see that their vision made sense and take a risk on it. So we had a somewhere around \$40 million loan for that project, which involved the tax credit program we are a part of and our own financing. As I understand it, it was one of the key pieces that got them going, as a lender, not as a developer.... That was a very, very large loan for Self-Help [laughing], not our typical loan.... It was actually a program called New Market Tax Credits, that invests in low-income census tracts... bottom line is the developer needed a lot of private financing to make it possible to renovate such a large space that needed so much work and we were able to play that role... We've had a lot of success over the years, we made a large loan to Golden Belt... a tobacco-related textile business, over on East Main Street, I think that was about a \$12 million loan. And some of the early loans to folks who were doing the renovations of office buildings or residential use downtown.⁵⁹¹

As Levine states, Self-Help was a lender to CBC in this transaction, not the developer themselves. CBC needed a lending institution such as Self-Help because Self-Help had the ability to secure New Markets and Historic Tax Credits. In turn, these provided a massive income potential for CBC, a chance for Duke University to expand into downtown and transform the city, and a chance for Self-Help to innovate their own business model. It was named the "top development deal of the decade"⁵⁹² and CBC commissioned its own documentary about it, called *Because No One Else Would* (a film now available for sale at historic sites in Durham) framing the development deal as a benevolent public good. In truth, the purchase was made with so many arrangements and partnerships that no one else could have actually done it, without the various partners and funding situations involved to make it happen.⁵⁹³ CBC, the city, Duke, and Self-Help position themselves as self-sacrificial saviors in this deal, banking on a disinvested city to grow, when actually they were very clearly using this discursive stance to invest with huge returns.

⁵⁹¹ Interview with Levine, 2015.

⁵⁹² Triangle Business Journal, 2001.

⁵⁹³ *Because No One Else Would*.

American Tobacco is now entirely leased, and just two blocks closer to American Tobacco, three new complexes are being built on former car dealership lots, a mix of high end apartments being marketed to young professionals and more senior Duke students, and mixed commercial, residential, and office development in purchases of land totaling \$45.5 million. From his office in American Tobacco, Scott Selig discussed Duke's involvement with American Tobacco:

So we would work with developers to say, we'll bring 1000k sq feet to your project, but you have to bring another 1000 square feet of individuals. Downtown Durham should not be Downtown Duke. So we wanted them to bring as much private investment outside of Duke as we brought Duke investment as far as tenancy and credit and those kinds of things. Because Duke's credit is so good, they could go to the bank and say, ok I've got a long term lease from Duke, and I've got a long term lease from Glaxo Smith Kline or Compuware or something, so based on just those two I'm willing to risk another third that is just speculative, so that we can bring in new businesses. So that's how American Tobacco worked. We were the first ones to sign a letter of intent but we were the fourth ones to sign a lease. Because we wanted to make sure the other private leases were in position before we made our commitment. That then allowed that project, which was basically old, dead warehouse buildings to turn into a place. So it's really as much about placemaking as much as it is about leasing space or generating economic revival.⁵⁹⁴

Maintaining Duke's image as a benevolent force was held as a main priority throughout the process. These developments are clearly for-profit, but have used new market, historic, and low-income tax credits that serve to justify them as good for the poor and for the people - a requirement for Duke, Self-Help, and the city's public relations and thus, continued growth. They show how the renewal rhetoric is materialized in financing and built into high end developments as well. The two large warehouse redevelopments in Durham, American Tobacco and Golden Belt, were major redevelopment projects that pushed the redevelopment of their surrounding neighborhoods.

American Tobacco spurred a major transition in Durham's development. As Tucker Bartlett discussed, American Tobacco was:

...Going to triple the amount of Triple-A class office space, it was going to take this huge blighted thing right next to our ballpark, where most out of town visitors would come, and the experience would be parking next to this monstrosity with trees growing out of it, totally boarded up, dark, scary thing, and that was their image of Durham. So if we thought Durham was going to have a chance, and downtown was ever going to have a chance, we needed to fix that project and we needed a catalytic project to spur further interest in downtown, and that is exactly what has happened. And so if you look at other

⁵⁹⁴ Selig, Author Interview.

projects we have done, Golden Belt, when you look at Golden Belt, we could not have done Golden Belt had it not been for American Tobacco, and we could say, major things are possible in Durham, look at how successful that was.⁵⁹⁵

The careful development plan of American Tobacco, then, became the condition of possibility for other projects with direct effects on dispossession. Located in the center of the city and involving the most powerful actors in the city, it set the stage for other major developments.

I asked Tucker Bartlett if the redevelopment of American Tobacco Campus was good for the city and if he was concerned it was contributing to the gentrification of the city. He replied, that “Just for the property tax benefit alone... but there are multiple reasons why this place-based strategy, and most of what we do is people-based, but [we] complement with these place-based strategies, which again, are focused on a low-income neighborhood or a lower income downtown.” The people-based strategies are their loan programs, focusing on giving individuals and small businesses credit to build homes and businesses; their place-based strategies are focused on redesigning entire areas of cities to relocate one population – often the same discursive population they claim to serve in their people-based strategies – in order to bring in another higher income-generating population.

He went on to discuss that the concern comes from residential developments moving in that raise the rent, as well as place higher income residents in downtown that then have ownership over what is otherwise a race-neutral and class-neutral place to live. The American Tobacco Campus, with its apartments, offices, and restaurants, directly brings in residents to downtown. It did all of the things Bartlett hoped for, and could not have been without pushing forward the pro-growth agenda politically, using the discursive power of urban uplift, partnering with Duke, and appearing to assist the poor in Durham to improve the quality of their lives, while actually shepherding in a new population that could re-shape the economic landscape of the city.

3.6.3 Golden Belt: Commodifying Community, Art and History for the Pro-Growth Agenda

The deployment of art and history has been key to the strategic gentrification of Durham, and just East of downtown are the former warehouses of the Golden Belt Manufacturing

⁵⁹⁵ Bartlett Interview

Company where a commercial project and a residential project used both to redevelop the area into higher income-generating properties. In the middle of the century, the Golden Belt neighborhood was a mainly white poor and working class area called Edgemont, and later, a working class and poor black and Latino neighborhood. Since the redevelopment of the warehouses, new residents have moved in, bought and renovated homes, and began organizing themselves as a neighborhood association to maintain and raise their property values. The local politics of the Golden Belt area signify a shift occurring in Durham overall, away from the traditional black political class and towards a new class of neoliberal multicultural political representatives who support rent intensification and individual property wealth, and for that to happen, displacement of poor black and brown communities, using a language of anti-racism and community empowerment.

The Golden Belt Neighborhood Association has been led by DeDreana Freeman, who just defeated the longest serving city councilmember, Mayor Pro Tempore Cora Cole-McFadden. McFadden represents the Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People, the PAC that was formed in 1935 to protect the interests of the black middle and upper class. She and outgoing Mayor Bell were the last councilmembers who represented the Committee. This will mean that for the first time in Durham's history, City Council will not have any representatives from Durham's traditional black political class and upper middle class. The City will be represented almost entirely by councilmembers supported by the People's Alliance and other liberal organizations, all of whom support Self-Help and their efforts at development in the city. Freeman's election

As discussed in Chapter Two, the legacy of black capitalism and Durham's entrepreneurial past are used as a basis for much of the justification for the pro-growth development that is marked as progressive, but the politicians from this cohort are on their way out.⁵⁹⁶ What is left over is the legacy of this past, the idea of Durham's history of black community, with the actual representatives out of office. Instead City Council is composed of members who support a new activist class in Durham that supports pro-growth development that is done in the name of community uplift. This is notable not so much because it marks an actual

⁵⁹⁶ El Kilombo, "The Beginning of the End, Or the End of the Beginning?"

change in policies supporting pro-growth – the black political class did the same, rarely fighting for the well-being of the poor and dispossessed in the city, and Farad Ali is the most conservative and business-friendly candidate. However, it signifies a shift in how these policies are being enacted. In effect, candidates backed by the Committee and the People's Alliance all support pro-growth developments, but now, instead of coming from the black elite, policies are coming from the progressive, neoliberal multicultural elite in the city.⁵⁹⁷

Like Steve Schewel, Freeman operates as a candidate who is development media herself. Working with local police to increase their presence in the neighborhood, Freeman supported community policing and improving relations with the police in order to decrease crime rates. She organized a new neighborhood association in the district and campaigned on her dedication to local families. One of these new residents, Melissa Norton, the former planning director for the Business Improvement District, Downtown Durham Inc. who has become locally famous for doing presentations about gentrification, describes her residency in Golden Belt and work organizing the neighborhood association with Freeman as part of what informed her about the inequalities of gentrification and growth in the city. Norton and Freeman also both advocate for what is becoming a progressive right of passage for Durham residents, the Institute for Racial Equity's training on white privilege and racial injustice, which seeks to educate and empower citizens to take a stand against racism interpersonally, and follow the lead of black activists in making policy-based changes in the city. The training follows in line with much of the work in the direction of multiculturalism as described by Karen Ferguson in her study of the Ford Foundation's support of black arts for white audiences, "to elevate the ethnical and moral content of commercial culture."⁵⁹⁸

Norton has since been hired by Duke University's Public Policy Department to lead a study initiative called *Bull City 150* to study the history of inequalities in Durham, specifically focused on housing. Maps of redlined districts from the first half of the twentieth century are superimposed on current maps of racial and income inequalities in the city and neighborhood

⁵⁹⁷ Roberts and Mahtani, "Neoliberalizing Race, Racing Neoliberalism"; Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America*, Fourth edition (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2014).

⁵⁹⁸ Ferguson, 209

covenants with explicit racist policies accompany images and stories of Durham residents who have been recently displaced from their homes.⁵⁹⁹ This information is now part of an exhibit in Durham's Third Friday art series, called *Uneven Ground: The Foundations of Housing Inequality in Durham, NC*. As the Independent Weekly reported on the project: "At its core, Bull City 150, created ahead of Durham's sesquicentennial in 2019, seeks to expose how white privilege has influenced Durham's past and present."⁶⁰⁰ Organizing this history and putting it on view for the public is what many academics, activists, and historians have been working for in efforts at public education and social and racial justice. It offers a context to understand that wealth gaps and inequalities along racial lines exist because of a long history from indigenous dispossession to slavery, debt peonage, Jim Crow segregation, and racist housing, schooling, and employment laws throughout the twentieth century, leading to postwar "colorblind" policies that defunded inner cities. In the context of Durham's Third Friday Art walk, the exhibit falls in line with other forms of development media that, despite intentions to educate residents, now serve to support and legitimize the very mechanisms of gentrification – moving into gentrified neighborhoods, supporting historic designations, and promoting downtown. The context and intent of the exhibit are helpful for understanding the past, but, as a form of development media themselves in the setting of the Art Walk, held in the lobby of MDC (formerly, Manpower Development Corporation). MDC is a nonprofit with goals similar to Self-Help of increasing equity through promoting individual entrepreneurship and secondary education initiatives aimed at increasing opportunities and access to resources. There is now plenty of space within the pro-growth agenda to incubate critique and thoroughly discuss the history of inequality, leading to the development of solutions within the pro-growth agenda as well.

The idea of historic designation is used also in this manner of relying on creating value from the past in order to support a pro-growth future. In various media outlets throughout the city, in front of City Council and in her neighborhood association, Freeman advocated for the designation as an historic district so that "neighborhood improvements" could be enforced

⁵⁹⁹ Norton, 2015.

⁶⁰⁰ Sarah Willets, "A New Exhibit Lays Bare How White Privilege Has Influenced Durham's Past and Present," *Indy Week*, September 20, 2017, <https://www.indyweek.com/indyweek/a-new-exhibit-lays-bare-how-white-privilege-has-influenced-durhams-past-and-present/Content?oid=8170500>.

through the historic designation. The designation also prioritizes the housing stock and buildings over the current residents in these locations in order to protect potential future investments. As the planning document states:

The citizens of Durham recognize that significant historic and architectural properties are important to the city's identity and character. Protecting these cultural resources, then is a priority. Specifically, the Golden Belt neighborhood is Durham's most intact and representative example of the early twentieth-century mill village, with the industrial plant, residential village, and commercial district all retaining historic and architectural integrity. Durham was built on industry, and mill villages like Golden Belt constituted a substantial part of both the residential and industrial building stock of Durham in the early twentieth century. Preserving Golden Belt helps document this facet of Durham's history.⁶⁰¹

The planning document focuses only on the architecture and history of the area, requiring homeowners to keep their homes small and in line with certain stylistic traditions that cost additional money to fund. If homeowners pay for at least \$25,000 in renovations, they receive a 30% tax credit.⁶⁰² For commercial properties, the federal government and the state government each provide twenty percent in tax credits.⁶⁰³ Thus, designating an area a local historic district encourages investment from developers of residential and commercial properties. Designating the neighborhood as an Historic Preservation site also legalizes the exclusion of certain services in the area that are considered out of line with preserving an historic feel, including a Christian recovery house program that has rented in the area for several years.

Tucker Bartlett, Executive Vice President at Self-Help, managed the Golden Belt redevelopment for Scientific Properties before coming back to work for Self-Help. In 2008 he was promoted to Director of Development and Chief Operating Officer for Scientific Properties, in part due to his success in acquiring Golden Belt, a deal that, like American Tobacco, was made possible by Self-Help's ability to secure tax credits, in this case, historic tax credits. As presented in Chapter 1, in the late 1990s the city was losing money on a business entrepreneurship incubator that they started in Golden Belt after the last factory owners donated it to Durham in 1996. The Durham Housing Authority tried to make the seven acres into a site that would support entrepreneurial companies started by lower income individuals, but they failed to properly

⁶⁰¹ MddM Historical Consultants Durham, "Golden Belt Historic District Preservation Plan" (Historic District Plan, September 6, 2016), <https://durhamnc.gov/DocumentCenter/View/8744>.

⁶⁰² "Historic Tax Credits," *Preservation Durham* (blog), n.d., <http://preservationdurham.org/index.php/historic-tax-credits/>.

⁶⁰³ "Historic Tax Credits."

resource the center. A similar center existed near downtown, built by the CDC Unified Development Incorporated (UDI), outgoing Mayor Bill Bell's publicly-subsidized business venture.

Golden Belt was first developed as a mix of art studios and artist apartments with a couple of art galleries. Tucker Bartlett, who is on the Durham Arts Council Board, discussed Self-Help's support of the arts as part of the quality of life in Durham:

Self-Help made the loan to Golden Belt, and Scientific Properties was the developer. From an economic development strategy, we think, and Scientific Properties thinks, that the arts are integral to these creative class communities. And we just think, I'm a big believer of quality of life impacts economic development, and culture is a huge part of quality of life, so if we don't support the arts, including through providing affordable artist space, then we are going to lose the arts and that is going to hurt the community development that we are trying to support.

The studios at Golden Belt housed artists and continue to house some, for a short time, but with market rate rents that have been steadily increasing. Smaller ventures have been forced out of the complex, such as the Labour Love Gallery and more recently a small jazz venue called the Shed. Labour Love was a gallery owned by an artist couple showcasing local artists. After two years, the gallery could no longer afford the rent and was not getting enough foot traffic. In 2011 it partnered with what was then the seed of a jazz programming nonprofit, the Art of Cool Project, to hold jazz concerts and support local art. Labour Love closed its doors while the Art of Cool grew to become an international contemporary jazz, soul, and funk festival, partnering with the city, American Tobacco, Golden Belt, the Beyu Caffé, and other businesses in Durham. The Art of Cool views the major growth projects in Durham as important for the advancement of black arts and culture in the city, bringing in a wealthy clientele that can afford to purchase the \$250 festival ticket. The quality of life that they promote, like Bartlett's, supports the consumption of the arts by those who can afford it and fit into the city's elite social fabric. The Shed, a smaller jazz venue with unassuming décor, inexpensive entrance cover charges, and a welcoming environment, was not profitable enough to stay in business because it did not serve the population that this economic development serves.

When Golden Belt was first renovated, Durham's popular tattoo and piercing shop Dogstar Tattoo relocated into one of the units, where it still runs its business. It outgrew its location on Ninth Street, which was previously viewed as Durham's prime commercial real estate

for attracting walkers, students, and visitors. When Golden Belt opened, those in walking distance to its stores and offices were low-income renters in the entire neighborhood surrounding the warehouses, subsidized elderly housing next door, and HOPE VI homeowners from across the street. In 2015, Ponysaurus, a brewery and bar opened by the West End Cookery owner Nick Hawthorne-Johnson, opened across the street. There are several other planned developments along East Main Street, leading to higher rents. Like the other gentrifying neighborhoods in Durham, nearly every home has been renovated and flipped and prices are rising to over \$300,000 for bungalows and two-bedroom rents above \$1200/month.

3.7 The Future

This section examines the discursive strategy of a promise of a better future, in order to remove residents that do not fit into the city's schematic for a vibrant community.

3.7.1. East Durham: Creating the Possibility of the Future

All of the developments in Durham have been oriented towards a view of a prosperous future. However, Self-Help's work in East Durham and two of their developments in Greensboro have particularly leveraged the discursive promise of a better future through projects in areas that have experienced disinvestment and have high poverty and unemployment levels. In East Durham the promise of a better future is taking the form of charter schools, an afterschool uplift program, businesses serving the incoming young professional class, and current poor residents being slowly displaced, effectively reducing poverty rates in the area through dispossession. In Greensboro, Self-Help implemented the lessons that they learned on how to effectively make development projects work by partnering with banks and using public tax benefits, identifying community members that support their work, and building projects with nonprofits that are financially backed to rent their spaces. The future is oriented towards changing the populations in these areas, in order to keep the developments that are there afloat, while bringing more development that serves them. But as inequality also increases, and the poor residents find it

more difficult to pay rents and keep their communities intact, the nonprofits have a nearby population that they serve that keeps their work relevant and funded.

3.7.1.1 “I can’t think of a developer that would be better”

When Self-Help received \$700,000 from City Council in 2017 to finish renovations on three of their properties, including a charter school, they had already been a property owner in the East Durham neighborhood for four years. In October 2013, they re-opened the Maureen Joy Charter School, an K-8 school that already had an operating loan and standing relationship with Self-Help.⁶⁰⁴ Self-Help has been giving loans to charter schools across the United States since 1998, and considers this to be a major component of their work supporting communities, education, and social entrepreneurs who are looking to create business models for solutions to societal problems.⁶⁰⁵ As of 2017, Self-Help has financed over 120 charter schools in fifteen states and Washington DC, amounting to \$238 million in financing.⁶⁰⁶ They influence policy at the federal level through the Charter School Lenders Coalition⁶⁰⁷ and at the state level, by promoting legislation and working with lawmakers to bring additional funding to charter schools and support collaborations between public and charter schools.

Self-Help and the Charter School Lenders Coalition, promote the idea that the state is not serving the public education needs of low-income students, and charter schools are necessary to do that. Critics of charter schools argue that there is no public accountability for charter schools, only public funding. They are not operated by school boards or other elected officials, they are operated by for-profit companies, and are not required to serve the immediately surrounding neighborhood, provide free lunches, provide transportation, have transparent budgeting, or conform to curriculum requirements. In North Carolina, there is no cap on how many charter schools may open. Since the state allowed charters starting in 1996, the education budget has

⁶⁰⁴ Self-Help, *Maureen Joy Charter School | Self-Help Projects*, n.d., <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RGBQw0R8R0I>.

⁶⁰⁵ Interview with Tucker Bartlett.

⁶⁰⁶ David Beck, Shannon Ritchie, and Bryan Hassel, “NC Charter Schools Study: Focus on Quality and Diversity,” July 1, 2014, <http://reports.self-help.org/pr/Media%20Release%20-%20Charter%20Collaboration%20Report%20July%201,%202014.pdf>; “Charters and Schools,” *Self-Help* (blog), n.d., <https://www.self-help.org/what-we-do/we-lend/to-childcares-and-schools>.

⁶⁰⁷ “Charter Lenders,” n.d., <http://www.charterlenders.org/>.

been funding charters in higher and higher percentages to public schools.⁶⁰⁸ Charters actively recruit students, because with more students they receive more funding from the same fund as public schools, who they position themselves in competition with. Durham has fourteen charter schools that received \$23 million in 2017, addition to their private funding, and Durham Public Schools is operating entirely on a public budget of just under \$430 million for its fifty-three schools, and facing an \$8.5 million gap in funding – more than the cost it takes to operate an entire school. The already underfunded public schools are losing money to charters, as they are becoming more and more low-income, African-American and Latino, and are currently 18% white, as compared to the city's nearly 50% white population. A 2015 report studying NC charter schools by Duke University found:

- that they are “serving an increasingly white student population;
- that between 1999 and 2012, individual charter schools have become increasingly segregated “in the sense that some are serving primarily minority students and others are serving primarily white students;”
- that parents whose children are enrolled in predominantly white charter schools are happier with their schools than parents whose children are in predominantly minority charters; and
- that although charter students are likely to have higher test score gains than traditional public school students, it's most likely because of “trends in the types of students they are attracting” rather than the charters' programs or their program improvements.

Earlier studies indicated that most charter schools are racially segregated and serve lower proportions of low-income students. In January 2016, NCDPI reported that in addition to charters being whiter and less Hispanic than traditional public schools, by 2014-15, “the percentage of economically disadvantaged students in charter schools was approximately 19% lower than in traditional schools.”⁶⁰⁹

Self-Help advertises their work with Maureen Joy and KIPP as benefitting low-income students and bringing a positive institution into the East Durham neighborhood, but the overall trend is analogous to the overall trend in urban gentrification. There are fewer resources for those who need them most and more for those who have them.⁶¹⁰

On February 6, 2017, Dan Levine of Self-Help went before City Council to ask for \$700,000 to finish renovations on a former high school building and church that they purchased

⁶⁰⁸ “Scrutinizing Our Schools: How Does Durham's School Spending Compare to Other Districts?,” *Bull City Rising* (blog), January 20, 2016, <http://www.bulldcityrising.com/2016/01/scrutinizing-our-schools-how-does-durhams-school-spending-compare-to-other-districts.html>.

⁶⁰⁹ “The Facts on Charter Schools,” *Public Schools First NC* (blog), n.d., <http://www.publicschoolsfirstnc.org/resources/fact-sheets/the-facts-on-charter-schools/>.

⁶¹⁰ charter school citations

with New Market Tax Credits to rent to a national chain charter school and a nonprofit focusing on lifting “promising” students out of their neighborhood’s poverty. An African-American woman who was born and now lives in East Durham and has been participating in Self-Help’s “community task force” for this development expressed her “concern that our community will become like Geer Street” – the neighborhood where El Kilombo’s assembly lived and was displaced from, and a now-common symbol for rapid neighborhood gentrification in Durham.⁶¹¹ The charter school in the Geer Street area, Central Park School for Children, has also received loans from Self-Help. The resident continued, “I am sorry but I don’t want that to happen.”⁶¹² After she spoke, a City Councilman backed by local progressives, Charlie Reece, thanked her and another African American woman from the neighborhood for being community leaders and expressed his support of granting Self-Help the money because it will “Keep private developers from getting ahold of that property.”⁶¹³ City Councilman Steve Schewel – a former Duke Public Policy professor backed by Durham’s liberal and progressive voting constituency and running for mayor this year – approved the request, stating, “One thing we can do is influence who can develop this corridor... [I] can’t think of a developer that would be better for this corridor, it’s going to get developed otherwise anyway.”⁶¹⁴ Self-Help is seen as the developer who can hold off private development and gentrification, and City Council granted their request unanimously.

In a discussion with Micah Kordsmeier, he stated that East Durham represents a turning point in Durham’s reinvestment. The fact that it is flipping, given its distance from downtown and poverty, was a sign that “economic development doesn’t need Self-Help in Durham anymore.” He stated that this was likely Self-Help’s last major neighborhood revitalization, and that for Self-Help, “if you’re going to lead the change in East Durham,” you have to gentrify: “I’m pro-gentrification, but I’m also anti-racist.” He thought about how that could be a possibility, which is, in a way, the structure of disinformation unfolding in his mind, and that he is frustrated that there are currently only two options to development: failure, or supporting “hipster businesses.” This is something, he explained, that Greensboro doesn’t get yet, where he is now developing

⁶¹¹ Fieldnotes and *City Council Meeting*.

⁶¹² http://durham.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=1986&meta_id=226297

⁶¹³ Fieldnotes and recording

⁶¹⁴ Fieldnotes and recording from durhamnc.gov

Revolution Mill, which used to supply the country's denim and is now Self-Help's newest and largest development, as discussed in the next section.

3.7.1.2 Beer, Pies, and the Debt Dreams of Hipsters

In the fall of 2015, I asked Self-Help project managers Micah Kordsmeier and Dan Levine if they could meet me to catch up on what Self-Help had been working on in the past few months. They suggested we meet for a beer at Ponysaurus Brewing Co, a two-year old brewery located at the border of downtown and two lower class Latino and African American neighborhoods, East Durham and the Fayetteville Street/former Hayti neighborhood. One of the brewery's partners, Nick Hawthorne-Johnson, owner of the Cookery in the West End, walked up to chat with Micah and Dan, to say hello, introduced himself to me, and casually asked the two if they could answer some questions he had about his Self-Help small business loans. Before Ponysaurus opened, Hawthorne-Johnson and Ponysaurus brewer Keil Jansen were working out of the Cookery. Hawthorne-Johnson is also a part owner of a downtown restaurant called Dashi, a popular ramen restaurant downstairs and Japanese-style bar upstairs. After saying hello, he told Levine and Kordsmeier that he was still waiting on a loan disbursement for Dashi. He continued, "I am 37 and I want to be in \$10 million debt by the time I am 38." Later, Levine joked that he was surprised Self-Help did not give him all the money he wanted up front asking like that. Levine and Kordsmeier told him that he would have to speak to his loan officer, because their work in the real estate department of Self-Help does not cross over into loan disbursements.

Hawthorne-Johnson asked Kordsmeier how the Durham Co-op Market was doing, and Kordsmeier asked how the neighborhood was doing, as Hawthorne-Johnson lives in the West End behind the Market. He told us that two newly renovated houses just sold for around \$410,000, not Self-Help owned houses, and this means that more people who he would rather not live in his neighborhood are moving in. One of the new homeowners, "a ponytailed bearded man... is a douchebag who just moved down here from – insert-a-Northern-city-here," has been complaining about neighbors playing loud music. He was concerned that his neighborhood is going to become full of residents that want the West End to feel "suburban" and wealthy. While his businesses depend on new residents who have spending power, certain effects of this

development are unappealing to him. Levine laughed at Hawthorne-Johnson, who laughed at himself, as they all acknowledged that he too is a “hipster” that is playing a role in gentrifying this neighborhood. Kordsmeier remarked, “he owns a food truck commissary, a brewery called Ponysaurus, and a ramen noodle shop downtown,” and he is calling out this guy from the North for being a hipster? Ending our conversation about his businesses, Kordsmeier said, “All in good fun.” Hawthorne-Johnson’s critique of gentrification, active role in promoting gentrification, and reflexivity about his role reflect a common positionality of new business owners in gentrifying parts of the city. In locations such as East Durham where inequality is most visible, owners seek to make their spaces more community-oriented.

Ponysaurus’ opening at the edge of downtown acts as a flagship for the young, white, professional class to feel like a neighborhood is now theirs.⁶¹⁵ Geographically, it sits near a Durham Freeway entrance (the same entrance that caused the most displacement in the Hayti neighborhood) and sits at the center of four areas - at the edge of downtown, the Golden Belt warehouse, the historically African American Hayti neighborhood, and East Durham. Since Ponysaurus opened in 2015, two other craft manufactures have opened within a block of the brewery, rounding out the alcohol scene: a spirit-making company, The Brothers Vilgalys Spirits Company, and the Honeygirl Meadery, both owned by young white entrepreneurs and supported by small business loans from Self-Help. An article discussing these new businesses describes the purchases:

[Ponysaurus’] Brewmaster Keil Jansen is not a trailblazer, he admits readily. But when he and his partners stumbled on a deal to buy an old paint warehouse in downtown Durham’s gritty east side for the new home of Ponysaurus Brewing Co., there was little doubt a modern-day resurgence of a storied downtown was underway — again.⁶¹⁶

Meanwhile, inside Ponysaurus one of the owners of the East Durham Pie Company stood behind a table selling her pies, \$28 a pie or \$6 for a slice. A year later, the owner of the pie company is opening a storefront in East Durham at the intersection of Angier Street and Driver Street, where the streetscape improvement project discussed in the next section, took place. The company has

⁶¹⁵ Smith, *The New Urban Frontier*; Zukin, *Naked City*.

⁶¹⁶ “Durham’s 10 Largest, Game-Changing Projects,” *Triangle Business Journal*, June 10, 2016, sec. Commercial Real Estate, <https://www.bizjournals.com/triangle/print-edition/2016/06/10/durhams-10-largest-game-changing-projects.html>.

been extremely successful selling its pies in businesses around the city, connected to a target network of consumers who frequent the new bars and restaurants downtown.

3.7.1.3 The City Reinvests in Image-Making: A Streetscape Project

I am a deputy city manager for the City of Durham and it's been my great honor to have coordinated the efforts of several city government departments to bring this project to fruition. What it is fundamentally is a 4.8 million dollar investment that the city has used from local and federal resources to come into a community that was once very, very significant and thriving in our community that over the past several decades has had some level of disinvestment. We wanted to reinvigorate and restore the significance that it once had, to ride the success momentums that we are having throughout the city of Durham. And so with the streetscape, we wish to send a message to all the businesses that have sustained here despite all of that, that we are supporting them and seeking them to have an opportunity for great and future successes. We wish to send a message to future business owners that this is a great place to come and do business. But in addition to that business feature, we wanted to be an exercise in good community investment, community engagement as well. So we took on the effort to engage the community, residents, the folks at the Angier Avenue Baptist Church, to join with us at an early stage, so when this is designed, not only does it benefit the business, it benefits the community in ways that they would like to use it as well.

– Keith Chadwell, at the Angier-Driver Streetscape Ribbon Cutting Ceremony⁶¹⁷

At Angier-Driver, the city wanted to make it look like they had sparked the change.

– Micah Kordsmeier, Self-Help⁶¹⁸

In October of 2014, a ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrated the completion of the city's \$4.8 million streetscape improvement project that upgraded "historic-style streetlights, concrete sidewalks, curbs and crosswalks, street resurfacing, and decorative landscaping"⁶¹⁹ centered around the intersection of Angier and Driver streets. Until the late 1980s, this intersection acted as a "second downtown,"⁶²⁰ and the center of commercial and social activity for East Durham. Like the other neighborhoods centered around downtown, it was impacted when tobacco and textile manufacturing slowed down and ceased the city put its resources into building up the suburbs. At this East Durham ribbon cutting, the existing community is used as an afterthought, and the focus has been shifted to the future vision of the neighborhood. East Durham became one of the poorest census tracts in the city, and housed a majority poor and working class African

⁶¹⁷ Emily LaDue, *Angier-Driver Streetscape Ribbon-Cutting*.

⁶¹⁸ Dan Levine and Micah Kordsmeier, Interview at Ponsysaurus, January 8, 2015.

⁶¹⁹ Mary Alta Feddeman, "Angier-Driver Streetscape Project Culminates in Ribbon-Cutting Celebration," *Durham Voice*, 2014, <https://durhamvoice.org/angier-driver-streetscape-project-culminates-in-ribbon-cutting-celebration/>.

⁶²⁰ Emily LaDue, *Angier-Driver Streetscape Ribbon-Cutting*. Discussion with former pastor's wife of Angier Ave Baptist Church.

American and Latino community.⁶²¹ But by the time of the ribbon-cutting, Self-Help and small business catering to the white community had already begun gentrifying the neighborhood.

As Chadwell, the Deputy Mayor for Community Building stated, the community will benefit “as well,” but the business interest is first. In 2008, Durham re-organized its city management structure in order to primarily bring together the community building, neighborhood improvement services, and business incentive management under one department. This reorganization was meant to address increasing criticisms of City Council’s focus on downtown redevelopment to the detriment of other neighborhoods in the city, namely East Durham.⁶²² The reorganization by City Council created three deputy managers to oversee new clusters of urban development activity: Operations, including utility and general services; Administration and Support, including finances and human relations; and Chadwell’s charge – Community Building, which “unites the Office of Economic and Workforce Development, community development, Neighborhood Improvement Services, City/County Planning, and the Human Relations Commission.”⁶²³ Bringing all of the business and neighborhood departments together streamlined the work of the city so that all community work was also directed towards the future of more rent-intensifying development. With this change, the city also hired a new city manager, Tom Bonfield, who is appointed by and directly accountable to the Mayor. The Manager makes final decisions about the implementation of city programs and services, including the timing and budgetary details, and prepares the budget for review.

Before this, in the early 2000s, while Duke and Self-Help were focusing on the neighborhoods surrounding Duke’s campuses with the city’s political and financial support – in the neighborhoods of Walltown, the West End, and Southside – the city began strategizing to redevelop other areas of the city. Self-Help’s community reinvestment strategies were underway and provided a model to the city of how to flip neighborhoods with the appearance of wide neighborhood support, and with the actual support of certain homeowners, in Walltown, the West End, and behind-the-scenes, in Southside. In Southside, the city hired Self-Help directly. In other

⁶²¹ US Census, 2010.

⁶²² 4/17/18 5:33 PM

⁶²³ City Council Work Session, Nov 18 2008; and reported by “Bonfield Steers New Course for City Government,” November 21, 2008, <http://www.bulldcityrising.com/2008/11/bonfield-steers-new-course-for-city-government.html>.

parts of the city, the historically disinvested neighborhoods were dominated by longtime homeowners and landlords, poor and working class primarily African American and Latino migrant renters, vacant houses and lots, and small *tiendas* and corner stores – serving a population base that does not bring in further investment. Much of the land banking work in Southwest Central Durham began before the 2008 recession, and slowed down until 2010, so that the city and Self-Help did not finish projects requiring federal housing partnerships such as Southside until 2014, and Kent Corner in 2015. As that work was occurring, the city, Duke, and Self-help were pouring resources into downtown, providing business loans and economic incentives, funding Downtown Durham Inc.’s management of the Business Incentive District, and growing the American Tobacco and Golden Belt project.

Around 2007, after visible changes were rapidly underway in Downtown Durham, the stark line of inequality in the city began to be seen primarily between downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods of what the city called Northeast Central Durham, a former bustling working class area that today contains the poorest census tracts in Durham post-deindustrialization and post-disinvestment by the city. It encompasses about five square miles just northeast of downtown. A city and UNC Planning funded study of East Durham describes the area in 2007:

The fabric of Northeast Central Durham was historically anchored by a series of large industries: Golden Belt Manufacturing, Virginia-Carolina Chemical Company, Durham Cotton Manufacturing Company, Yarbrough Mills, the Durham Hosiery Mills, Duke Yarn Mill, and the Chatham and Durham Lumber Companies. These were located roughly along the eastern extension of the Southern-Seaboard and Durham-Southern rail lines. Around the factories grew the residential communities and the business districts serving them: Morning Glory, Edgemont, East End and East Durham (1924 Chamber of Commerce Map). Residents could easily live, obtain gainful employment, shop for food, household items, and other goods, and enjoy activities of social recreation in an area that included bustling hubs at the Old Five Points intersection, at Angier Avenue and Alston Avenue, at Angier and Driver Street, and along East Main Street near Golden Belt and the Hosiery Mill, all by traveling on foot.⁶²⁴

By the time that the city reorganized management of these areas, residential and commercial properties in downtown were growing rapidly and already reaching a peak, and the mortgage bubble was slowly bursting. These other neighborhoods surrounding downtown were just starting

⁶²⁴ Dr. Mai Nguyen, UNC, Mr. Earl Phillips, and Dr. John Cooper, MDC, “Six Northeast Central Durham Neighborhood Plans” (UNC Department of City and Regional Planning, Spring 2009), <https://durhamnc.gov/DocumentCenter/View/3690>.

to see rent intensification - the Geer Street neighborhood around El Kilombo, described above as Old Five Points, the Cleveland Holloway residential district, and the early stages in East Durham. The city and Duke were seeking to attract technology, research, educational, medical, and financial firms and their high-income to middle-income young to middle-aged professional workforce and build neighborhoods that would serve this demographic. To this end, in East Durham Self-Help bought and redeveloped a charter school, private developers starting flipping houses, and young predominantly white families began moving in. This was the income growth potential that the city needed to see in order to bring resources there.

Majority poor black and Latino, East Durham has been viewed locally as the so-called “bad part” of town. In the documentary *Welcome to Durham*, for example, many residents of East Durham were interviewed because of the neighborhood’s strong presence of street organizations. Holloway Street, which connects downtown to East Durham, is locally known as where to go to find drugs and sex at any time of day or night. Its designation as a location of high crime, has been enabling development to occur. East Durham is presented by the government as in need of change, that the people in the community are finally ready for redevelopment to occur. However, the actual reasons for redevelopment in the neighborhood - its cheap property due to disinvestment, its location just east of and close to downtown, the rent intensification happening in every other direction, and its many sturdy Victorian-style houses – have made the area highly desirable for rent-intensifying development.

The streetscape project was described in local media as an effort by the City of Durham to finally invest in other areas outside of downtown. In an article titled, “Business owners hope Durham project revitalizes notorious neighborhood,” Kevin Dick, Durham’s then Director of Economic and Workforce Development, told the *News and Observer* in an article entitled, “Business owners hope Durham project revitalizes notorious neighborhood.”

The project, which is similar to a streetscape project that helped make over downtown Durham, is meant to send a symbolic message to the larger business community and update infrastructure... “This is a place where the public sector is interested in attracting private investment,” Dick said, using carrots such as modern infrastructure to make vacant or underutilized lots “as conducive to opening a business as possible.” Anticipated projects near the area, such as the East End Connector, a nearly \$200 million, 4.5-year

highway project that will link the Durham Freeway (N.C. 147) and U.S. 70, and a light-rail station are also expected to bring more traffic to the area.⁶²⁵

As Dick and Chadwell indicate, there is now investment potential in East Durham, so the city is putting resources there in the hopes of attracting a revenue-generating population that is spilling over from downtown and other neighborhoods that are reaching capacity or becoming unaffordable to the middle class. The city's financial investment in the area is meant to communicate to potential investors that it understands the area does not yet appear up to a standard required for the "traffic" they seek: a consumer base of new homeowners and businesses with similar characteristics to the rest of the businesses that have been opening throughout Durham – bars, restaurants, boutiques, custom services, and exercise studios. The over two decades of disinvestment is an asset in providing cheap real estate, and the streetscape project now shows the city's new commitment to the area, that they will assist in flipping the neighborhood by putting the infrastructure in that businesses would need to attract a wealthier clientele.

By 2014, the idea of community was assumed to be part of the objective of this development, if also assumed to be a pretense by some. Chadwell further states that the neighborhood of East Durham was "once significant," when, until the early 1980s, there was a bank, gas station, school, restaurants, stores, and a population that supported these businesses. When the factories and warehouses closed, the tax base was scattered in the suburbs, and federal support of urban districts was low except for targeted enterprise zones. The drug, sex, and gambling economy took over the neighborhood as the main revenue sources. Without reinvestment potential, the city did not put resource into the community. The streetscape project will install sidewalks and lighting is to make the area more appealing to potential businesses. The most successful business on the block, a corner store, was notably not mentioned or present at the ribbon-cutting. While a necessary business for residents to purchase food staples, as well as tobacco, alcohol, and lottery tickets, it is seen as a business that serves the residents who the

⁶²⁵ Virginia Bridges, "Business Owners Hope Durham Project Revitalizes Notorious Neighborhood," *The News & Observer*, October 27, 2014, sec. Shop Talk, <http://www.newsobserver.com/news/business/small-business/article10108520.html>.

streetscape aims to move from the area. Two of the businesses that were there in 2014, both black-owned, have already left, a barbershop and a Diner, and the rents in the area are rising dramatically.

Currently, the city is drafting re-zoning ordinances for East Durham to make it easier for businesses to open. Some longtime residents of East Durham have asked “why now?”⁶²⁶ suspicious that rezoning changes set forth in 2017 are only being put in place to make way for new developments along the light rail line. For example, Joe Bushfan, the owner of Joe’s Diner, one of the businesses that closed (despite receiving a city grant of \$200,000) spoke at a city council meeting in June 2017 to question the motives of city council in this rezoning. He suggested that the city seeks to attract a new population to the area, and they therefore have not given the neighborhood enough resource to fully support the revitalization that they spoke of.⁶²⁷

While I have demonstrated that the motives of the city towards pro-growth development have been consistent throughout all of this development, these intentions, stated as efforts to support the community living there, have not always been clear to residents and businesses owners. The increasing reality is that in order to afford rent or property to make it in Durham, businesses must serve the populations that can afford to purchase goods and services.

Joe’s Diner was a relatively inexpensive restaurant in East Durham while the area was still poor. Despite receiving attention in the local media, without the infill of the higher income residents buying and renting in East Durham now, or, without the higher price point needed to survive the increasing rents and cost of living in the city, the business was forced to change its model to survive, and now serves as a commissary to food trucks. The choices are to price out the existing customer base and serve a higher income clientele, or fail. As the city moves to this general critique of gentrification as the inequalities sharpen, the smaller and sometimes failed business owners are now seeing that the “community support” is more of a rhetorical gesture than a reality. Self-Help, meanwhile, while losing trust among some residents, is seen as the institution that is looking after the residents left behind in these developments.

⁶²⁶ Sarah Willets, “Is Zoning Holding Old East Durham Back?,” *Indy Week*, July 5, 2017, sec. Durham / News, <https://www.indyweek.com/news/archives/2017/07/05/is-zoning-holding-old-east-durham-back>.

⁶²⁷ <https://www.indyweek.com/news/archives/2017/07/05/is-zoning-holding-old-east-durham-back>

As stated, by the 1990s, East Durham became one of the poorest census tracts in the county. In 2016 East Durham was the closest neighborhood to downtown where a renovated 3-bedroom house may still be for sale under \$300,000, and a foreclosure under \$150,000. The neighborhood started to flip when Self-Help became a landlord for the first time, buying a former public elementary school building that had been closed since 1967 to house a K-12 charter school. In 2014, Self-Help bought a closed former high school building and a church, which is now rented to a KIPP⁶²⁸ Charter School, the East Durham Children's Initiative, and other, as they require, "community-oriented" organizations. As one film instructor at Duke's Center for Documentary Studies observed in his department in 2015, "Everyone wants a piece of East Durham now." In other words, the neighborhood's poverty, cheap real estate, and increasing NGO presence translate to projects and grants to photograph, film, record, and play a part in appearing to uplift the neighborhood out of its poverty. In 2017, The City of Durham unanimously approved a \$700,000 grant to support Self-Help's renovation of the site. While there was some skepticism from residents in the neighborhood about Self-Help's long term intentions and goals for the neighborhood, City Council repeatedly referenced their faith in Self-Help in keeping the community's best interest in mind and contrasted their intentions (improving life for residents in the area) with those of private developers, (purely turning a profit.) They approved the grant, which was a mixture of federal Community Development Block Grant⁶²⁹ dollars and HOME funds from the federal government.

3.7.2 The Future Beyond Durham: Self-Help's Real Estate expands to Greensboro

An article in the *Triad Business Journal* about Self-Help's purchase of the Revolution Mill on August 1, 2014 reported: "Exclusive: \$75M Revolution Mill redevelopment to turn it into a live/work/play campus."⁶³⁰ The idea of living, working, and playing is held out as the desire of the

⁶²⁸ KIPP Charter Schools, the Knowledge Is Power Program, is a national college-prep charter school company that operates in high poverty neighborhoods in US cities.

⁶²⁹ Community Development Block Grants were started in 1974 to give cities access to capital for economic development programs, and have moved in the direction of making access to resources competitive and based on applications, rather than public funding for resources as part of municipal budgets. See: Timothy P. R. Weaver, *Blazing the Neoliberal Trail: Urban Political Development in the United States and the United Kingdom* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

⁶³⁰ Matt Evans, "Self-Help Says It Can Fix Revolution Mill's Woes," *Triad Business Journal*, September 21, 2012,

middle class – in Durham, the city adopted these words as part of its identity in the mid-2000s in order to brand itself as a place to fulfill the American Dream. Living, working, and playing in the city of Durham has been a reality transferred exclusively to a wealthy class, while the ability to do any of these things for poor and working classes in Durham, disproportionately Black and Latino residents but increasingly the white poor as well, is being taken away completely. Living in the literal sense is being threatened through deportation, incarceration, police violence, drug addiction, and drug-related violence. Living in a safe, comfortable dwelling with a stable community not under threat of displacement is not possible in most downtowns, and in neighborhoods surrounding downtown, is in constant threat and flux. Stable work is declining and unemployment, despite reports that present it otherwise, is at its highest in decades, as Durham desperately competes with cities across the country by throwing tax dollars at Amazon to open its new headquarters nearby. Commodified and consumer-based play is rising in the form of bars, shopping, theater, and sports, while parks are privatized and neighborhoods with parks are gentrified. Warehouses are turned into “campuses” – recalling perhaps the college years of those who live, work, and play in them, with all needs conveniently provided, at a cost. The bubble of college campuses is reproduced, with the same looming debt bubble behind it. Meanwhile, the communities and open spaces of neighborhoods of poor and working class communities have been closed – such as the mass closure of basketball parks and soccer fields in Durham – are policed, and neighborhoods are pushed out as houses flip. Not wanting to give up the new amenities, the progressive class seeks to extend their development for all. Unfortunately, the instability of the lives of the poor is directly related to the growth in cities, and Self-Help exists in this contradiction, or state of disinformation, that this growth is possible while ending inequality. As they continue their “back wheel strategy” of financial stability, they continue feeding the need for their claim of a “front wheel strategy” of mission and impact, which despite its intentions, actually continues feeding the back wheel strategy.

While discussing the flow of capital into Revolution Mill, Project Manager Micah Kordsmeier explained the front wheel and back wheel strategy. While he envisioned himself doing more of the front wheel work, the lessons and experience he gained from the Kent Corner development positioned him to take on another major development project meant to transform a neighborhood entirely.⁶³¹ The income-generating developments, such as Durham's American Tobacco and the 21C Hotel, are the back wheels, and the front wheels are the projects such as Walltown and the East Durham charter schools that fulfill Self-Help's social missions. Projects such as Kent Corner and Southside fall somewhere in between – perhaps the pedals on the bike, used to experiment; generate new lessons, relations and capital; and keep the real estate department running smoothly and above water.⁶³² In Greensboro, in addition to its Credit Union Branch, which took over the space of a former local community credit union, and small projects and business loans around the city, Self-Help has three major real estate holdings. One is the Self-Help Center, a 10-story office building downtown that is modeled after their downtown Durham office building, renting to over thirty nonprofits with included amenities such as conference space and on-site security, acting as both a front and back wheel strategy. It is a lucrative property investment that Self-Help bought in 1993 on downtown Elm Street in the center of the city, and it is a site reserved exclusively to nonprofits, who still pay market rate rent, and over time have ranged from the local NAACP to a center for the deaf, to a criminal justice resource center.⁶³³ In Self-Help's terms, it is generating income for both Self-Help and social impact. The two other projects are Revolution Mill and the Renaissance Community Food Co-op.

The site is a former textile mill that once employed hundreds of workers in flannel and denim production through the first half of the twentieth century, processing cotton, dyeing, spinning, and weaving. The Mill closed in 1982 after production began moving out of state. It is located north of downtown, not as close to the city center as Durham's American Tobacco. It is closer in size to Golden Belt, which is near downtown but borders new developments in East

⁶³¹ Much of this data comes from conversations with Micah Kordsmeier, 2016.

⁶³² Micah Kordsmeier, at Mad Hatter's, March 2016.

⁶³³ Jack Scism, "New Tenants Bank on Offices Restored in Old Building," *News and Record*, October 24, 1993, http://www.greensboro.com/new-tenants-bank-on-offices-being-restored-in-old-building/article_482e771c-4574-5a42-a406-89d27b7b7b83.html.

Durham. Self-Help intends for Revolutions Mill to be “transformative” and create a new district, a “Downtown North,” that connects to downtown and other major shopping areas. Revolution Mill is also supporting the redevelopment of the Greenway, a bike and walking trail preserve that runs through the city and connects with other state trails.

Revolution Mill has changed hands since its original builders, the Cone Brothers, who dominated North Carolina denim and flannel production and were the exclusive suppliers of denim to Levi Strauss, underwent mergers and sales and ultimately filed for bankruptcy for their textile holdings in the 1980s.⁶³⁴ The Nussbaum Center for Entrepreneurship opened in the Mill in 1987, a venture similar to Durham’s failed attempt at starting a business incubator in Golden Belt. With private backing from Greensboro’s major philanthropists and businesses, the Nussbaum Center outgrew its space in Revolution Mill and moved to a new site closer to downtown.⁶³⁵ The Revolution Mill project demonstrates two decades of Self-Help’s real estate redevelopment. With Durham’s new markets fully functioning for financial investors, the move to purchase the mill in Greensboro as the sole developer, and not just a lender, was a momentous step for Self-Help’s real estate team. Self-Help bought the site for \$8 million in 2012 from bankruptcy. The project doubled the commercial real estate portfolio of Self-Help and was their first venture of residential mixed use. The new downtown low-income development in Durham will be their second.

I spent two weeks shadowing Kordsmeier, the director of the project; Emma Haney, the project manager, and Nick Piornack, the business development manager. Haney is the project managers on the site, and like Kordsmeier, Levine, and Bartlett –major actors behind the 20-person real estate team at Self-Help (out of 600 employees) – she was brought in after her internship with Self-Help that she completed as part of her coursework with the Masters Program at UNC-Chapel Hill’s School of Planning. Haney described to me that the first work they did on the space was a financial evaluation for its different uses. It had been an office space that was only used from 9-5, and did not integrate the public or the arts. As they learned from Golden Belt, the arts and creative sectors did not have a very high return on investment, and they would have

⁶³⁴ Interview with Kordsmeier and “Cone Mills Corporation - Company Profile, Information, Business Description, History, Background Information on Cone Mills Corporation” (Reference for Business, n.d.), <http://www.referenceforbusiness.com/history2/39/Cone-Mills-Corporation.html>.

⁶³⁵ Emma Schropp and Nussbaum Center, Arts Revolution at Revolution Mill, April 2, 2017.

to bring in restaurants, retail, apartments, and a diverse mix of office space in different industries to stabilize the investment.. Using Durham's American Tobacco as a "rubric" in historic preservation and public entertainment, the process of development was to 1. Prepare 2. Re-activate the space and 3. Incorporate the public.

The development has 142 total one- and two-bedroom apartments at 750-900 square feet, priced at market value for that area of Greensboro, between \$750-950/month for now. Twenty-six of the one-bedroom apartments will be reserved for people who make under 80% of the AMI. This is part of the requirement of the New Market Tax Credits. Haney remarked that "a lot of this is not typical of what Self-Help does, but symbolically, it fits well."⁶³⁶ In other words, it is a market-rate commercial development, but because of the historic designation of the mill, and the image that this area was in need of something to support further growth in Greensboro, it appears to fit into Self-Help's mission-driven work. She continued that she could work for a private developer, but this work is more satisfying, because they "put together great community-serving projects," while being financially sound. Moreover, "Self-Help can self-finance, but also get federal money." They "come in and do it well, but see it through. We won't leave the community, we stay on and manage it."

The development of Revolution Mills in Greensboro has been bringing together all of the various lessons learned by Self-Help over the years, as well as the various sectors of new development. Based on the success of Kent Corner, the project manager from the Kent Corner development, Micah Kordsmeier, was promoted to manage this huge project that doubled the square footage Self-Help's properties in the state. According to Kordsmeier, the goal of the development is "to create a creative dynamic to promote economic development for Greensboro."⁶³⁷ Kordsmeier also unfurled the financing structure that enables Self-Help to do its development work. This explains how, as he stated, "Developers will just run out of money, but Self-Help can wait it out."⁶³⁸

⁶³⁶ Emma Schropp and Nussbaum Center.

⁶³⁷ Dan Levine and Micah Kordsmeier, Interview at Ponsysaurus.

⁶³⁸ Kordsmeier, presentation about Self-Help's real estate to UNC Planning class, 4-12-16

While every project is different, the financial structure of Revolution Mill shows how these projects are managed. In order to make this project happen, Self-Help formed an LLC called Historic Revolution, which is the master tenant and holds the master lease. It makes subleases to other tenants and operates the property as owner and manager. Micah described that, “In some ways, we are just another tax credit developer,” in New Market and Historic Tax Credits, and now with the new downtown development, Low-Income Tax Credits as well. Every year, Self-Help receives hundreds of thousands of dollars in New Markets Tax Credits from the work that it does in urban development. If they spend this allocation in a year, they receive it again the next year. They spend the allocation as a loan pool to small businesses, and sometimes on real estate. Usually, however, as in the case of Revolution Mill and as was the case for Kent Corner, they partner with a bank who is getting allocations and act as the necessary community development finance institution (CDFI). This is how they manage their New Market Tax Credits. For historic tax credits, they operate through their Ventures Fund, or another LLC that they create because historic tax credits cannot be allocated to nonprofits. The creation of smaller subsidiaries and LLCs is part of how they are able to be a bank, a developer, and a nonprofit.

The New Market Tax Credits are worth 39% of a total investment and Historic Tax Credits on Mills are worth 60% of a total investment – 20% from Federal and 40% from State Tax Credits. The budget for the renovation of Revolution Mill is \$83,971,226, and the total amount received in NMTC and HTC for the site is \$25,929,068, from the allocations from PNC Bank and US Bank – the two banks that are providing the investments in addition to Self-Help Ventures Fund. In the end, these banks receive two benefits: their Community Reinvestment Act requirement to invest in community development projects, and in addition to their entire loan repayment, interest on their investments.

For Revolution Mill, US Bank invested \$12,680,228 through a fund designated for Federal Historic Tax Credits, and after compliance and interest payments from Historic Revolution, will receive \$13,589,290 back after the five-year compliance period. They invested \$12,079,820 through NC Historic Tax Credits, and will receive \$17,789,320 back. And after their investment of \$5,869,500 through New Market Tax Credits, will receive \$6,825,000 back after the

seven-year compliance period. PNC Bank invested \$1,560,000 through New Market Tax Credits and will receive \$1,950,000 back. The community investment requirements for banks, while not yielding the type of returns on other investments, still bring in public funding for the borrowing of their funds for these projects. Self-Help's role as a CDFI is key; they are trusted to be engaging in development work that benefits the community, a marker based on the pro-growth logic of attracting high income development.

Revolution Mill is surrounded by a working class African American neighborhood that used to primarily house mill workers. In the mill's first year open, students at UNC Greensboro's Masters program in History and Museum Studies curated a permanent history exhibit inside the mill to present oral histories of "the experiences of people who worked in the mills and lived in the four Cone mill villages."⁶³⁹ When Self-Help purchased the property, Kordsmeier and others knocked on resident doors, identified leaders in the neighborhood to share information through, and worked to inform residents of the plans for the mill after purchasing the property. Kordsmeier emphasized that Self-Help does not intend for any displacement to occur in the surrounding neighborhood, and would like to work with residents to prevent that from happening, but sees this as a possible consequence that does not negate the value of the renovation. The area is roughly half rentals and half owner-occupied. For homeowners, their property values will likely increase, which may mean unaffordable taxes, or a high incentive to sell. For renters, their landlords may sell, or raise rents, displacing them. In this conversation, he cited the Renaissance Community Food Project as an example of a project that balances the Revolution Mill Project. Kordsmeier expressed that the surrounding neighborhood will either deteriorate, or gentrify. His view is accurate – without a coordinated effort on the part of the community and a highly organized strategy of maintaining their homes and livelihoods, these are the only options actually existing within the model of urban development. Almost desperately, Self-Help has its front wheel strategies that are supposed to counter the commercial and pro-growth development.

In Greensboro, the Renaissance Community Food Co-op serves as their front wheel strategy, the people-driven and social justice aspect that Self-Help seeks to promote. It took the

⁶³⁹ Emma Schropp and Nussbaum Center, Arts Revolution at Revolution Mill.

lessons from all of the other Self-Help projects, partnered with a different philanthropic charity, the Fund for Democratic Communities and the local neighborhood association, and is boosting Self-Help's reputation in Greensboro. Rooted even more squarely in rhetoric of community self-help and uplift taken from self-determination and struggle, and for many, an actual attempt for that, the co-op is beginning to bring higher end development to the area. Despite the intentions, and the actual need that the cooperative is serving, what is needed is the currently impossible with the institutions we have – development that is not linked to an organized project that can work outside of the limits of speculation, is necessary to actually support a community's well-being. This example shows how the points of history, community, and partnerships, when part of a project rooted in the pro-growth for all disinformation, are not enough to overcome the pro-growth obliteration agenda.

Chapter 4: Why does inequality still grow as Self-Help grows?

The figure of the poor is the visible marker of benefit while the underlying redirection of public revenue away from the poor goes unmarked.

-Randy Martin, 2015⁶⁴⁰

4.1 Development media is disinformation

On June 21, 2017, *The Independent Weekly* ran two distinct stories a page apart in their print and online editions that illustrate both development media and disinformation. The first story, not unlike this chapter, asked: “Mayor Bill Bell Has Overseen a Bull City Renaissance. So Why Has Durham’s Poverty Rate Gone Up on His Watch?” It was the cover story for this issue, coupled with a photo of outgoing Mayor Bill Bell, looking concerned, but dignified, and the title across the image. The second article, titled, “Chicken Bridge Bakery Feeds Bodies and Minds with Baked-In Messages of Resistance and Solidarity,” profiles a bakery that sells bread at the Durham Farmer’s Market imprinted with North Carolina-focused political imagery expressing sentiments of love and human solidarity with oppressed groups of people.

The first article about Durham’s poverty was written by local development and politics reporter Sarah Willets who uses her interview with outgoing Mayor Bell to present an overview of the dynamics of inequality in the city since he became mayor in 2001. She frames high-income development as success: “downtown Durham has gone from a place to be avoided to a place to be celebrated”⁶⁴¹ and the people who enjoy it as “new, better educated, wealthier residents who wanted to live within walking distance of it all.”⁶⁴² She then suggests that perhaps while resources were being put downtown, more attention should have been put in other areas as well, because while this downtown development was happening, poverty has increased between 2000 and 2015 – the rate has risen from 15% to 19.2% according to the US census.⁶⁴³ Then, she uses Bell to offer consolation for the rising poverty in Durham, that poverty is an ongoing problem, while the

⁶⁴⁰ Randy Martin, *Knowledge Ltd: Toward a Social Logic of the Derivative* (Philadelphia ; Rome ; Tokyo: Temple University Press, 2015).

⁶⁴¹ Sarah Willets, “Mayor Bill Bell Has Overseen a Bull City Renaissance. So Why Has Durham’s Poverty Rate Gone Up on His Watch?,” *Indy Week*, June 14, 2017, sec. News Feature, <https://www.indyweek.com/indyweek/mayor-bill-bell-has-overseen-a-bull-city-renaissance-so-why-has-durhams-poverty-rate-gone-up-on-his-watch/Content?oid=6711289>.

⁶⁴² Willets

⁶⁴³ Willets

revitalization was a particular goal to be accomplished, suggesting that the development is distinct from the rising poverty rate. She interviews a barber from East Durham who said that because capitalism demands that somebody to “be on the bottom,” the city could not “totally eradicate poverty.”⁶⁴⁴ Characteristic of development media, the piece establishes pro-growth development as a positive and necessary direction for the city and explains inequality as a problem that is not inherent to the growth itself, but rather a byproduct of the growth that was not quite managed correctly. Willets argues that Bell and City Council have made efforts to deal with these unintended consequences of development, but that behind the new buildings and restaurants: “improving the lives of Durham’s poor – is harder to see than the construction, crowds, and accolades that serve as proof of downtown’s transformation.”⁶⁴⁵

She goes on to cite the census data that shows the rise in inequality. For example, she describes a census tract⁶⁴⁶ just beyond the gentrification line of the Geer Street neighborhood, housing poor and working class residents, where, “51.5 percent of residents live below the poverty line – 3,050 people – up from 29.5 percent in 2000.”⁶⁴⁷ Between 2000 and 2015, the cost of real estate in downtown Durham has changed so dramatically that where in 2000 one could purchase an entire warehouse for a couple of thousand of dollars, by 2015 one-bedroom condominiums sold for half a million dollars and rents for studio apartments at \$1400.⁶⁴⁸ During this time, in the same census tract mentioned above, median household income rose only from \$25,819 to \$26,272 for a family of four, 24% of households still earn under \$10,000 a year, and unemployment actually rose from 9% to 11%.⁶⁴⁹ These increases in poverty are due to the overall decrease in jobs and the overall increase in the cost of living, and the displacement of residents from other parts of the city to concentrated areas outside of the city. While Bell stated elsewhere (see Chap 3.3.3) that he does not want to put a public housing development downtown because it

⁶⁴⁴ Willets

⁶⁴⁵ Willets

⁶⁴⁶ See Fig 1.

⁶⁴⁷ Willets.

⁶⁴⁸ Zillow.com, apartment searches.

⁶⁴⁹ Willets.

would concentrate poverty, the pro-growth policies he has supported do just that; exacerbating poverty and moving it from the center of the city, to be concentrated further in the outskirts.

This piece is also characteristic of development media in that Willets critiques gentrification while proposing the same processes that produce gentrification as the antidote to the problems it causes. In part, this is because she fails to recognize how processes produce gentrification. While deriding wealth discrepancies in the city, she argues that “the city is stunted in what it can do to address poverty on a large scale” and that therefore, the only mechanisms to address poverty are: “private partnerships and housing tax credits.”⁶⁵⁰ She, like other vocal critics of gentrification across the city, lets Durham’s local government and developers off the hook for the recent rise in inequality, citing historical facts, such as the city’s founding in 1869 as the start of inequality between business owners and workers, and redlining in the early 20th century. She also accurately critiques recent policy failures by the state, for not allowing the city to force developers to include affordable options, stabilize rent, or pay a living wage. But, she then uses this to defend Durham’s rise in inequality, as if its progressive identity is sufficient to gloss over the very policies she does not mention at all: tax incentives for businesses, infrastructure projects that only serve gentrifying communities, privatizing public housing, and concentrated of policing black and brown communities. Progressives and conservatives alike welcomed the “private partnerships” and “housing tax credits” that actually led to further gentrification. On this point, she interviews Duke Public Policy Professor Robert Korstad:

“We live in a political environment that is antithetical to this idea of government involving itself and trying to change those structures,” says Korstad, the Duke professor. “Public policy right now is focused on poverty creation, not poverty reduction. There is nothing our state government is doing, or our federal government, to address issues of poverty. It’s doing plenty of things to create poverty, and it’s intentional.”⁶⁵¹

However, the solutions she presents as viable are local policy-based ones, which in reality have no strategy or budget for addressing the problem and no possibility of becoming implemented or realized. To implement the policies would mean to stop the very projects that are the keys means through which the city accesses financial resources. Specifically the Mayor’s Poverty Initiative,

⁶⁵⁰ Willets.

⁶⁵¹ Willets.

which has no budget behind it, and though instituted in 2014, has only been given any attention in 2016 after city councilwoman Jillian Johnson asked the Mayor how he was going to do this work without having a budget or a plan.⁶⁵² Durham is still presented as an exception to gentrification and inequality, that it is the federal government and state government in the way of increasing equality in Durham.

The article represents the structure of disinformation that dominates our media landscape, not just a misjudgment or policy opinion, but the actual inability to think outside of the framework of pro-growth development despite the evidence that it is not working. So, Willets misses her own point: indeed there is both massive development and an inextricable massive increase in poverty in Durham, and there is no other option presented by local politics or economics. Her point, while never actually stated, is that while indeed, gentrification is to blame for increasing inequality, there does not seem to be any other choice but gentrification, or rent-intensifying, pro-growth development. However, she still situates herself into the framework that gentrification can actually resolve this contradiction if it is done better. The reality is that Durham has been “doing it better” all along, incorporating this critique efficiently into the development itself, to make it possible to begin with. The federal and state governments are also making any other option increasingly impossible. The missing piece in her analysis is also what makes development media so effective: it is based in disinformation, our structure of thinking about pro-growth development as actual growth, when it is only speculative growth, and part of the ongoing management of a long crisis of capitalism unraveling.⁶⁵³ It appears that more programs to attract more speculative growth are how to solve the problem of inequality exacerbated by speculative growth.

In Cheyfitz’ concept of Disinformation, the analysis of growth is also missing. The framework of Disinformation is useful for understanding how it is that that development media is critiquing pro-growth development, rent intensification, and gentrification, while it is also supporting these same processes. He writes:

⁶⁵² Conversation with Jillian Johnson, 2016

⁶⁵³ Wolfgang Streeck, *How Will Capitalism End?: Essays on a Failing System* (London: Verso, 2016); Chris Harman, *Zombie Capitalism: Global Crisis and the Relevance of Marx* (Chicago, Ill: Haymarket Books, 2010).

Disinformation references both the collapse of the two-party system and the failed state of critical thinking in the U.S. today, which effectively cordons the collapse off from public attention... Disinformation raises the question: what are the limits of our thinking in relation to crucial interrelated social, political, and economic issues? In other words, Disinformation is a term that inscribes the limits of capitalism's imagination, the limits where capitalist logic literally no longer makes sense if we are trying to create a world of socioeconomic justice. In this context, I understand critical thinking as a public process... in institutions like the schools, mass media, and political parties and is liberated, limited, or subverted by the epistemological parameters of these institutions...⁶⁵⁴

Indeed, the limits of capitalist logic do not make sense if we are trying to create a world of socioeconomic justice, but in addition to understanding why they never have, we must also incorporate the current reality of capitalism's limits of growth. The critique of the inequality resulting from capitalist development is now the new limit of capitalist logic, the new cutting edge of gentrification.

As discussed in Chapter 1, and as seen through the evidence laid out in Chapters 2 and 3, in Durham there is a public acknowledgement of the problem of inequality – the critique of gentrification and development for example, is what compelled Duke to seek out Self-Help to bring its development goals to fruition in 1994, and not to buy out the homeowners themselves. Yet, inequality continues to grow. What is necessary is a refined version of disinformation such as that put forth in lectures by Alvaro Reyes in conversation with Cheyfitz, taking into account not only the limits of capitalist logic, but the limits of capitalism overall, namely the end of capitalist growth in the realm of production and the beginning of an economy based solely on financial growth.⁶⁵⁵ The critique of gentrification is why Self-Help has community organizing meetings to bring residents along with its plans. This makes it easier for Self-Help to do the work of rent-intensifying development, both to convince other neighbors locally, to learn the relationships and intricacies of the area, and to publicly perform a commitment to democratic community-based planning, a process that is in contradiction with the pro-growth development it is doing. The critique of gentrification convinces progressive city council members to give Self-Help millions in public dollars to do development. The critique of gentrification stems the threat of community backlash and a social consciousness, from a population that actually wants to “create a world of

⁶⁵⁴ Cheyfitz, 16.

⁶⁵⁵ *Politics After Catastrophe, Part 1: Understanding the Catastrophe*. March 10

socioeconomic justice.”⁶⁵⁶ However, we are able to desire this socioeconomic justice and, as I will discuss below, bake it into our bread, because we operate with a logic of disinformation that more development will lead to more equality if only it is done better, which is actually not a threat. A real threat to gentrification, to capitalism, is giving up on its logic and the new limits of its logic entirely. The perceived threat is now in the form of development media such as art exhibits and journalism discussing inequality in Durham, while the communities being displaced and divided by gentrification are scrambling to keep their homes and their jobs, moved further out of sight, and with less sustained community resource. The logic of self help has enabled the promise of “socioeconomic justice” to be fall easily within the pro-growth development framework, so the critique is only a discursive critique.

Self-Help’s work rests on a logic of expanding credit to the poor, as a way to help them help themselves. They operationalize this through domestic microcredit, and their real estate department that relies on New Market, Historic, and Low-Income Tax Credits; city dollars and property price reductions; and partnerships with Duke, an institution looking to improve its public image. This has always been the liberal promise of capitalist development, but as we reach the ends of the ability to create value from the standard sources – labor, land, and natural resources – we also reach the ends of the ability of this logic to sustain itself. The promises of equality and justice, never actually fulfilled in the various attempts of the 20th century or before, are ever more urgent and visible in our understanding of urban development and politics. And thus, these promises themselves have too become sites of capital accumulation.

The process of the accumulation of capital on a small scale in urban development is demonstrated in the next article, titled, “Chicken Bridge Bakery Feeds Bodies and Minds with Baked-In Messages of Resistance and Solidarity.” Located in the food section of the paper, the story focuses on the owners of a bakery that literally stamp their progressive politics on their baked goods, and the authors’ own feelings of belonging that the bread evokes. The article works as development media for three reasons: it appears to be an article about radical politics because of the baked-in messages while not actually discussing politics; it advertises a local business that

⁶⁵⁶ Cheyfitz

caters to the population of the incoming progressive elite population; and it focuses on the personalities and intentions of the individual owners of the bakery and their connection to the Mexican migrant population. Writer Katherine Hysmith describes how she picked up a loaf of North Carolina-stenciled bread after just moving to the state, and the other bakery items for sale:

... a perfectly round loaf of bread, delicately stenciled with the shape of North Carolina, my new home... Another round, crusty miche was dusted with a flour relief in the shape of barbed wire and the words "un mundo sin fronteras." Three rectangular loaves were propped up to make an edible sign that read "bread not bombs." An entire rack of whole wheat bread was baked with flour outlines of safety pins to show solidarity with the oppressed.⁶⁵⁷

The article continues to describe the bakery owners, a couple who met in college and spent time traveling in Central America before settling in the Triangle region and opening their bakery. Rob, one of the bakers continues: "Baking is alienating, but the stencils help you feel less alienated."⁶⁵⁸ The article frames Rob and Monica and their family business as a social justice mission, battling their own alienation from the labor of baking, and serving as an outlet to express statements relevant to "what's going on in society."⁶⁵⁹

They state their alienation, not as workers alienated from their own labor in the traditional Marxist sense of the term, but from working alone in their bakery. They claim to break this alienation through political messages that make them feel more connected to patrons who support these messages. However, the political effect is non-existent. It only soothes a personal urge to be connected, though the acknowledgement that there is inequality and a need for substantial change is present, while the work of organizing and building institutions that are not based on alienation and a pro-growth agenda is absent. Work is indeed often isolating, including for the migrant workers who have moved across borders and away from their families and communities in order to be able to survive and send money back home.

Before, Rob worked as translator between the Latino migrant staff and the bakery owners. While the article refers to the Latino families he worked with as their "friends," in the end, the couple left their fellow workers to open a business that caters to the white, progressive class

⁶⁵⁷ Katherine Hysmith, "Chicken Bridge Bakery Feeds Bodies and Minds with Baked-In Messages of Resistance and Solidarity," *Indy Week*, June 14, 2017, <https://www.indyweek.com/indyweek/chicken-bridge-bakery-feeds-bodies-and-minds-with-baked-in-messages-of-resistance-and-solidarity/Content?oid=6696165>.

⁶⁵⁸ Hysmith

⁶⁵⁹ Monica, quoted in Hysmith

that has the resources to and the desire to shop in the wealthier markets where they sell their bread. The article has an underlying assumption of progressive politics, discussing that “Rob questioned his value as a white man... after struggling with the workers’ demoralizing reality to give back to the community in a more meaningful way”.⁶⁶⁰ Baking messages into bread is taken as a political act, though the structure that enables the couple to make a living in the area baking bread with political messages is dependent upon the labor and alienation of others, namely the migrant population that caused Rob’s questioning of his own value as a man in that space, because the workforce renovating and building the real estate that has made speculation possible is by far majority Latino migrant labor. The couple was able to secure enough resources and support from their neighbors and friends, to open and sustain the business, and decide to communicate messages on their products. While the inequality is expressed clearly between the couple and the workers, whose subjectivity is described only through their position as being “demoralized,” the couple is praised for their business. However, starting their own business that can only survive based on the patronage of a wealthier class, is directly linked to this inequality, as productivity increases but wages decrease, and consumption appears to grow, but only through credit and consumption of image: “The lion’s share of consumption expenditure today – and a rapidly growing one – is spent not on the use value of goods, but on their symbolic value, their aura or halo.”⁶⁶¹ The role and impact of development media is to do just this – promote the pro-growth development framework through local expressions of what appear to be efforts at making the perceived negative sides of the development more benign. Not only are they usually not more benign, but they also serve the pro-growth agenda that they critique, indirectly or directly.

In popular, journalistic sources of development media such as the *Indy Week*, practices like baking messages into bread are presented as viable and respectable options to deal with the underlying contradictions of urban development and capitalist growth. In this article, the resolution is presented as an individual effort, on the part of white middle class actors, to do something that

⁶⁶⁰ Hysmith.

⁶⁶¹ Streeck, 65.

appears political. In the first article on Mayor Bell and poverty, the solution offered to the contradiction of increasing investment in the city leading to increasing inequality, is to do more investment in development projects in the city. This is how, and why, the structure of disinformation works – the promises of stability and personal wealth through homeownership as the American Dream throughout the twentieth century have helped to keep working classes working, while today, the reality is that homeownership is inaccessible for most except through massive personal debt, and since 2008, homeownership is still potentially a site of wealth production, but only and most often at great risk that amounts to insurmountable debt for nearly everyone. Self-Help operates to extend this promise to people who have been historically left out of the equation, in both its individual lending and its major development projects, while the effect is that these borrowers end up with substantial debt. Self-Help and their institutional banking and nonprofit partners, however, fulfill their federally-mandated social justice requirements. For small business borrowers, they must cater to the only populations with the ability to consume.

In the city, disinformation is glaring, such that even the institutions that are critiquing gentrification are doing so through the very vehicles of gentrification. Development media works such that an article on the front cover of an independent publication that itself is awash in contradictions – a publication that was founded to support progressive politics, that fired its editor for being too critical of gentrification, and that is now owned by a national corporation that publishes local, “independent” news weeklies – can critique gentrification for leading to increased poverty while also calling for the continuation of these same policies.

4.2 Contemporary Capitalism is Crisis

4.2.1 Self-Help’s role as an institution of disinformation and development media

The unresolved dilemma for all capitalist states today is how to both stimulate the economy and regulate financial markets so as to limit increasingly dangerous volatility without undermining the ability of finance to play its essential role in global capitalism.

-Leo Panitch and Sam Gindin, *The Making of Global Capitalism*⁶⁶²

⁶⁶² Panitch and Gindin, 333.

Inequality stems in large part from a widespread cultural distortion that allows a trustee of resources – a bank, a corporation, a government, a university, a foundation, a nonprofit, an individual – to use or squander those resources at will for their own benefit.
 – Martin Eakes, UNC Lambeth Lecture 2015⁶⁶³

These two ideas expressed in the quotes above – how to improve finance to continue supporting the functioning of capitalism and how to improve philanthropy – are based in the false premise that a more widespread dispersion of financial resources can end inequality. These ideas are also the foundation of how Self-Help operates effectively as a credit union, small business lender, mortgage holder, and real estate developer in Durham. Eakes' concept of trusteeship assumes that there is actually a stable economic structure to stand on. Regardless of Eakes' intentions to be a trustee who moves towards ending inequality, his organization, Self-Help, "stimulates the economy and regulates financial markets so as to limit increasingly dangerous volatility without undermining the ability of finance to play its essential role in global capitalism,"⁶⁶⁴ thus maintaining belief in the merits of capitalism, its permanence, and the American Dream. Self-Help continues to seek out new lending markets, through loans and real estate, under the auspices of doing a public good. Its work is only possible because of state support at federal and municipal levels – through tax credits, direct funding, and real estate donations, and in Durham, through local political support. It serves the purposes of fulfilling a desire to act in a socially just way in the face of increasing inequality, maintaining a level of survivability and the appearance of stability for a diminishing middle class.

For Eakes, inequality stems from a cultural distortion and not from global capitalism and on that premise, the organization can use capitalism to be a benevolent equalizing force. Just like the idea that gentrification can save itself, Eakes' belief is grounded in the idea that the American Dream is a reality waiting to be realized by whatever hardworking person has the credit to buy a home or start a business, an idea that has been thoroughly discredited by a host of economic scholars grappling with the complex reality of "the new normal" marked by economic stagnation

⁶⁶³ <https://publicpolicy.unc.edu/files/2013/10/Lambeth-Lecture-8-Martin-Eakes-2015.pdf>

⁶⁶⁴ Panitch and Gindin 333

and inequality.⁶⁶⁵ Given this “new normal,” the concept of disinformation elucidates how discourse about gentrification works for Self-Help today in the current moment of crisis. Where there used to be a referent for the ideology that owning a home may lead to financial security and stability for some (white, male) sector of the population, the idea is now falling apart.⁶⁶⁶ Yet, Self-Help’s logic, as supported by local and federal funding mechanisms, continues to be premised on the idea that home ownership leads to equality and stability. This detachment is necessary for projects to continue, as the actual situation for most residents in Durham is becoming more unstable, a reality that is visible with rising incarceration rates, massive displacement, chronic unemployment, an unraveling public school system, and overbooked low-income health clinics; overall, a steadily growing rate of inequality. Where there appears to be “affordable housing,” there is insufficiency and instability; where the American Dream of home ownership in a safe neighborhood is invoked, it is papering over the reality of second mortgages and defaulted loans, overpopulated prisons, and the violent dispossession of neighborhoods from low income residents; when city departments refer to a lively and revitalized city, there is image-making and consumerism of a growing elite class with huge gaps between the rich and poor.

As Cheyfitz writes, “The US ideology of Self-Reliance (anyone can make it in America with hard work) is now Disinformation if we realize the way wealth is distributed in the US today... the compact, always violated more or less in the moment of its articulation, always, that is, ideological, has been totally erased.”⁶⁶⁷ Cheyfitz’ theories fall short, however, of adequately capturing the whole picture of the end of ideology. For him, Disinformation is the end of ideology because it is the end of American exceptionalism, but his work does not explain why that

⁶⁶⁵ Galbraith, Picketty, Wolff, Streeck, Anthony DiMaggio *The Politics of Persuasion* 2017, Ivan Ascher *Portfolio Society* 2016

⁶⁶⁶ David M. P Freund, *Colored Property: State Policy and White Racial Politics in Suburban America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010); Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*; Weaver, *Blazing the Neoliberal Trail*; Jackson, *Harlem World*; Robert O Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003); Arena, *Driven from New Orleans*; Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*, American Crossroads 21 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007); Beryl Satter, *Family Properties: Race, Real Estate, and the Exploitation of Black Urban America* (New York, N.Y.: Metropolitan Books, 2009); Edward G. Goetz, *New Deal Ruins: Race, Economic Justice, and Public Housing Policy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013); Carl Abbott, *The New Urban America: Growth and Politics in Sunbelt Cities* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981); Brenner and Theodore, *Spaces of Neoliberalism*.

⁶⁶⁷ Cheyfitz, 40.

exceptionality is collapsing.⁶⁶⁸ Our premise here is that the very existence of the American “dream” was based on economic growth that allowed for the possibility (if not necessarily the reality) that more and more people, or “anyone” could access a piece of that growing wealth. In the post-growth moment, the “new normal” is no longer a possibility and instead we see stagnation and only financialized wealth that is sporadic and accessible only to fewer and fewer people. So while the consistent reality of financialization born out by the facts in Durham is quite the opposite of the American Dream for everyone, financial organizations like Self-Help create the appearance of and perpetuate the myth that this is not the case, that is, that the American Dream is alive and well.

In the case of Self-Help’s neighborhood transformations, the idea is promoted and supported that even if it is not owning your own home, more people in your neighborhood owning a home will improve your quality of life. For young professionals facing a more precarious job market and future, the promise of stability through home ownership as reinforced over the long twentieth century project of building the institution/idea of self help, is attractive when offered as a tangible option by Self-Help. The discursive tools of history, community, a prosperous future, affordable housing, partnerships, and jobs, are presented as the rationale for policies, property sales, and developments that are actually not in residents’ best interests.

As this study has been showing, Self-Help is an institution that does this particularly well. Self-Help plays a role that is now a defining feature of urban development: acquiring and managing public funds, and mobilizing political support and public acquiescence for its and other development projects. Self-Help’s work is part of and supported by the development media produced by journalists, developers, the city, writers, artists, activists, politicians, and businesses that promote pro-growth development through the more palatable ideas of community, affordable housing, history, partnerships, a better future, and job growth. Development media, and the institution of Self-Help as a developer, actually and quite to the contrary are key producers of the reality where the promises of prosperity for all are not only unlikely, but impossible. The idea of

⁶⁶⁸ For a history of the centralization of the United States in global capitalism, and how the rise of American exceptionalism explains for how the development of finance and state-backed capitalism helped shape this growth over time, see Panitch and Gindin,

self-help and the American Dream have been developed from previous moments in capitalism, when productive labor was still driving economic growth, and when state support was still supporting productive labor. Now in the financialized economy, there is no real growth to fill the promise of a stable future through individual hard work and financial stability. Self-Help is a key institutional mechanism for keeping financial institutions, developers, and large corporations afloat by managing the loss of social services that result from this domestic structural adjustment. In order to do this, Self-Help is cashing in on two of the most lucrative and lasting businesses operating today – real estate and finance, both publicly-subsidized industries and both dependent on the existence and careful management of poverty and inequality to thrive.

But there is the contradiction: as Self-Help's loans and real estate holdings grow and they have a growing presence in both Durham and Greensboro, inequality is also increasing in the city. Self-Help is not the cause of this growing inequality, but it plays a role in holding it in place, as one of the major actors both holding disinformation in place, and facilitating the speculative development model emerging from the political development of the idea of self help over the course of the twentieth century. One of Self-Help's claims is that they bring more equity to populations systematically excluded from owning property and building capital, by giving these populations access to capital accumulation through credit.

4.2.2 Finance does not lead to growth

In this section, I discuss the limits and inadequacies of the strategy of building community wealth – as Self-Help often discusses their work – through individual property ownership and small business growth. The growth in finance as a mechanism for economic stabilization and wealth creation, while appearing to manage economic crises, is in fact deepening the capitalist crisis, so that what appear as natural cycles of recession and growth are actually signs of our economic system in the midst of a significant change and potentially crisis.

El Kilombo's theory of the end of growth rests on their theory of crisis discussed in Chapter 1. This is based on their experience struggling against displacement and dispossession, a lack of stable and dignified work, policing and incarceration, adequate healthcare and housing,

and the slow decline of public education. Their analysis is also based on over two decades of study of capitalism and resistance movements. In reading groups and seminars that I attended with El Kilombo between 2003 and 2017, I have been learning how to do analysis in struggle and from struggle, and how to continually ground analysis in understanding what is the current situation we are facing, and what are strategies that we can practice to build a new situation. The analyses of the end of growth that follow come from the years of study I have done with Kilombo. The end of growth manifests at a world scale as theorized by economists studying the global economy and world systems over centuries, and is seen in small scale in the statistical markers of rising inequality in cities such as Durham and geographies throughout the world. The ideas of El Kilombo, economists, and other scholars who have argued that capitalism is in crisis, that there has been no real growth since the financialization of the 1970s, and that attempts to keep capitalism running smoothly have become less and less effective, while recently unthinkable, are now becoming more mainstream.⁶⁶⁹ The idea that capitalism is ending and what is emerging in its wake is more devastating and unequal, is becoming more and more commonly understood as a reality.

Economist Wolfgang Streeck collects the current literature and data about a general crisis in capitalism in his *How Will Capitalism End?* and states three symptoms that are worsening: a decline in economic growth, a rise in overall indebtedness both personally and for capitalist states, and rapidly increasing economic inequality – and the three “may be mutually enforcing.”⁶⁷⁰ In Durham, growth is continuing to be seen due to the state-backed industries in the area that are showing signs of growth for the so-called one percent – research and development, real estate, and finance. We cannot predict whether these industries will continue, but what is clear in Durham is that as wealth increases for these upper classes, it is harder and harder for the

⁶⁶⁹ John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Culture of Contentment* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1992); John Kenneth Galbraith, *A Short History of Financial Euphoria*, Penguin Books (New York: Whittle in association with Penguin, 1994); John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society*, 40th anniversary ed (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998); Thomas Piketty and Arthur Goldhammer, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, 2017; Ascher, *Portfolio Society*; Richard Wolff, *Economic Update: Transition Beyond Capitalism*, n.d., https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_be35GaQU-o. Galbraith, Piketty, Wolff, Streeck, Anthony DiMaggio *The Politics of Persuasion* 2017, Ivan Ascher *Portfolio Society* 2016; Wallerstein, *Does Capitalism Have a Future?*; Wallerstein, *World-Systems Analysis*.

⁶⁷⁰ Streeck, *How Will Capitalism End?*. page 63

poor to survive, and as professional employment increases, unemployment remains steady.⁶⁷¹

Streeck writes:

Assuming that ever lower growth, ever higher inequality and ever rising debt are not indefinitely sustainable, and may together issue in a crisis that is systemic in nature – one whose character we have difficulty imagining – can we see signs of an impending reversal? Here the news is not good.... Growth remains anaemic, as do labour markets; unprecedented liquidity has failed to jump-start the economy; and inequality is reaching ever more astonishing heights, as what little growth there is has been appropriated by the top one percent of income earners – the lion's share by a small fraction of them.⁶⁷²

Meanwhile, debt in Durham continues to rise, projected to be \$452,062,607 over the next couple of years.⁶⁷³ The city's revenue, for fiscal year 2017-18, is at \$189,448,009 and projected for fiscal year 2022-23 at \$215,333,095. The total cost, or appropriations, for this time is \$189,448,009 and for 2022-23, at \$237,545,293. The projected future budgets operates at a loss in 2018-19, and continues to increase at a loss through 2023, with the amount of debt being over double this amount. This is debt that is general obligation, meaning the city is required to pay, which falls on the responsibility of its residents. However, this debt has been accrued to pay for services meant to bring in wealthier populations such as the Durham Ball Park, the Durham Performing Arts Center, street improvements that happen in neighborhoods undergoing rent intensification and the continued increasing of budget allocations for policing and the new police headquarters. Globally, cities operate on debt in order to survive, but combined with the global trend in debt expansion, and lack of actual growth, it is unclear how debt will be paid back. For twenty OECD countries combined, government debt is now over 100% of the GDP, steadily increasing since 1970 with steep jumps in the early 1980s, 1990s, and after 2006.⁶⁷⁴

As Streeck outlines, the raising rate of productivity combined with the decrease in wages was fomented in the 1960s, and was tempered first by inflation, then by increased unemployment under Reagan, followed by increased public debt to appease the population. Streeck:

⁶⁷¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Labor Force: Durham-Chapel Hill, NC Metropolitan Statistical Area" (United States Department of Labor, November 13, 2017), https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/LAUMT372050000000003?amp%253bdata_tool=XGtable&output_view=data&include_graphs=true.

⁶⁷² Streeck, 50

⁶⁷³ City of Durham, "Debt Management," Debt Report, Fiscal Year 2015-16 Projections (City of Durham, n.d.), <http://durhamnc.gov/documentcenter/view/2803>.

⁶⁷⁴ See Streeck, 2016, page 54.

Post-war democratic capitalism underwent its first crisis in the decade following the late 1960s, when inflation began to rise rapidly throughout the Western world as declining economic growth made it difficult to sustain the political-economic peace formula between capital and labour that had ended domestic strife after the devastations of the Second World War... The neoliberal era began with Anglo-American governments casting aside the received wisdom of post-war democratic capitalism, which held that unemployment would undermine political support, not just for the government of the day but also for capitalism itself.⁶⁷⁵

This came with increased financialization,⁶⁷⁶ so that what was produced during this time was an actual new form of disinformation that the population needed to buy into – that financial growth was actually growth. The use of debt to survive then moved from the state to individuals. Former President Bill Clinton's answer to the debt crisis was private debt, along with complete deregulation, which led to the 2008 crash:

With inflation no longer available for closing the gap between the demands of citizens and those of 'the markets,' the burden of securing social peace fell on the state... The Clinton strategy of social-conflict management drew heavily on the deregulation of the financial sector that had already started under Reagan and was now driven further than ever before.⁶⁷⁷

Clinton, like Self-Help, espoused the idea that self-help is a progressive notion connected to civil rights and equal opportunity for all. What Clinton presented was that the possibility of the American Dream of homeownership – mortgages (e.g. individualized debt) – needed to be expanded to the populations historically left out of the equation due to systemic racism.

Moreover, this strategy was enacted through programs and foundations throughout the world as micro-credit. Like Clinton's economic policies, Self-Help's roots are in Reagan-style supply-side economics which, through the development of self help as a radical idea connected to black self-determination and equal opportunity rights, have been sold to the public as what will end inequality:

For a time, home ownership offered the middle class and even some of the poor an attractive opportunity to participate in the speculative craze that was making the rich so much richer in the 1990s and 2000s... As house prices escalated under rising demand from people who would, in normal circumstances, never have been able to buy a home, it became common practice to use the new financial instruments to extract part or all of one's home equity to finance the rapidly rising – costs of the next generation's college education, or simply for personal consumption to offset stagnant or declining wages.⁶⁷⁸

⁶⁷⁵ Streeck, 77-81

⁶⁷⁶ Martin, Ascher, Wallerstein 2013.

⁶⁷⁷ Streeck, 82-83

⁶⁷⁸ Streeck 84

This led to the “crash of privatized Keynesianism in 2008” that then resulted in the re-expansion of public debt to epic proportions, supporting not the populations in need, but the banks that were doing the lending and profit expansions.⁶⁷⁹

4.2.3 The UN admits finance can no longer fix capitalism

In September 2017 at the United Nations Conference of Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Director of the Globalization and Development Strategies Division Richard Kozul-Wright explained the organization’s new publication, The Trade and Development Report. This first report, titled “Beyond austerity: Towards a global new deal,” is introduced in remarkably urgent terms on UNCTAD’s website by Mukhisa Kituyi, Secretary-General of UNCTAD:

In sharp contrast to the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the world economy remains unbalanced in ways that are not only exclusionary, but also destabilizing and dangerous for the political, social and environmental health of the planet. Even when economic growth has been possible, whether through a domestic consumption binge, a housing boom or exports, the gains have disproportionately accrued to the privileged few. At the same time, a combination of too much debt and too little demand at the global level has hampered sustained expansion of the world economy. Austerity measures adopted in the wake of the global financial crisis nearly a decade ago have compounded this state of affairs. Such measures have hit the world’s poorest communities the hardest, leading to further polarization and heightening people’s anxieties about what the future might hold. Some political elites have been adamant that there is no alternative, which has proved fertile economic ground for xenophobic rhetoric, inward-looking policies and a beggar-thy-neighbour stance. Others have identified technology or trade as the culprits behind exclusionary hyperglobalization, but this too distracts from an obvious point: without significant, sustainable and coordinated efforts to revive global demand by increasing wages and government spending, the global economy will be condemned to continued sluggish growth, or worse. The *Trade and Development Report 2017* argues that now is the ideal time to crowd in private investment with the help of a concerted fiscal push – a global new deal – to get the growth engines revving again, and at the same time help rebalance economies and societies that, after three decades of hyperglobalization, are seriously out of kilter. However, in today’s world of mobile finance and liberalized economic policies, no country can do this on its own without risking capital flight, a currency collapse and the threat of a deflationary spiral. What is needed, therefore, is a globally coordinated strategy of expansion led by increased public expenditures, with all countries being offered the opportunity of benefiting from a simultaneous boost to their domestic and external markets.⁶⁸⁰

The UN has recognized that not only is global inequality on the rise, but the way that we are able to handle global inequality has dramatically changed. There is no longer actual growth in the

⁶⁷⁹ Streeck, 84

⁶⁸⁰ UNCTAD, “Beyond Austerity: Towards a Global New Deal,” Trade and Development Report (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2017), http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/tdr2017overview_en.pdf.

economy, only financial growth, and the crisis of capitalism is too big to be remedied by plugging holes and giving massive sums of public money to banks to stabilize. The suggestions that the UN lays out are one strategy, but even these ideas of resource redistribution, recently popularized by economists such as Thomas Piketty in *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, need rethinking as we begin to better understand the crisis in value as well.

Financial growth, which is the growth that Self-Help is contributing to, has been on the rise as a fix to the longer crisis of capitalism. As Wallerstein theorizes in his world systems analyses, in order to continue making profit, producers turn to either creating niche markets of production, or eventually, to finance. He writes:

[Producers] transfer their search for capital from the production (and even the commercial) sphere, and concentrate on profits in the financial sector. Today we speak of such “financialization” as though it were an invention of the 1970s. But it is actually a very long-standing practice in all Kondratieff B-phases [long-term downturns in economic growth]. As Braudel has shown, the truly successful capitalists have always been those who reject “specialization” in industry, commerce, or finance, preferring to be generalists who move between these processes as opportunities dictate.⁶⁸¹

In preferring to be generalists, they are bankers, financiers, developers and traders or more simply, speculators. When, in the 1970s, finance came to dominate the global economy, both in terms of consumer finance, student debt, housing finance built off of an already growing mortgage system, speculative trading, and national debt in developing nations, it was because financial growth had otherwise stagnated. Wallerstein continues:

How does one make money in the financial sphere? The basic mechanism is to lend money, which has to be repaid with interest. The most rewarding debts to the lenders are those in which the debtor overborrows and therefore can only repay the interest but not the capital. This leads to a recurrent and ever-increasing income to the lender until the debtor is overwhelmed (bankrupt). Such a financial loan mechanism does not create new real value, not even new capital. It essentially reallocates existing capital. It also requires that there be ever new circles of debtors to replace those who are overwhelmed, in order thereby to maintain the flow of lending and indebtedness. These financial processes can be very profitable to those who are located on the lending side of the equation.⁶⁸²

That which emerged to fix the economic stagnation of the 1970s dramatically increased the gap between the rich and the poor while appearing to grow the middle class. The wealth of this middle class was built on debt, which shockingly stumbled in 2008. As Wallerstein writes, “in the present

⁶⁸¹ Wallerstein, “Structural crisis, or why capitalists may no longer find capitalism rewarding,” 2014.

⁶⁸² Wallerstein, “Structural crisis,” 2014

situations, using the old rules actually intensifies the structural crisis.”⁶⁸³ And micro-finance, and in Self-Help’s orientation, domestic micro-finance through small business loans, is a niche of finance, an attempt at making more profit off of a market that already exists.

The UNCTAD report demonstrates that there has been no growth in the economy and only the rise of speculation as financial growth increased. As economist Robert Kurz writes, “When Fordist accumulation encountered its limits in the 1970s, Keynesianism culminated in an inflationary policy based on public credit. The so-called neoliberal revolution, however, merely shifted the problem of public credit over to the financial markets. In terms of Self-Help, this means that their efforts, whatever their intentions, are only accumulating their own wealth, and increasing the divide between the wealthy and the poor.”⁶⁸⁴ As the author of the UNCTAD report, Richard Kozul-Wright states:

One of the arguments for financializing the world was this would be good for investors, good for investment. And of course it has been very good for paper investors, people who make their money out of rising asset prices. It has not been good for people who are investing long term in people and equipment and machinery which is essentially the yellow trend in the middle chart which has been declining systematically over the period of hyperglobalization. At the same time, the debt and particularly in this case household debt has been rising at a tremendous rate in the period of hyperglobalization. So it has not been good for investment and it has forced people into a level of indebtedness that we think is a source of serious instability. And finally it is a world that doesn’t really recover very successfully when problems occur.⁶⁸⁵

Pro-growth development today, (no matter whether for the wealthy or for the poor) is actually only the growth of speculation. Self-Help is a speculator that claims to be speculating in the name of equality; this analysis argues that this is actually not possible.

4.3 Two Measures of Inequality

4.3.1 Dispossession and Housing

Rents and property costs in Durham continue to rise. In downtown Durham, just between 2014 and 2016, housing prices increased 63% – the highest jump in the Triangle; in the Walltown

⁶⁸³ Wallerstein, 2014

⁶⁸⁴ Robert Kurz, “The Apotheosis of Money: The Structural Limits of Capital Valorization, Casino Capitalism and the Global Financial Crisis”; Robert Kurz, “Marx’s Theory, the Crisis and the Abolition of Capitalism,” *Libcom*, October 23, 2014, <https://libcom.org/library/marxs-theory-crisis-abolition-capitalism-robert-kurz>.

⁶⁸⁵ Richard Kozul Wright and Lynn Fries, “Finance Has Become the Dominant Force in Shaping the Global Economy,” *Real News Network*, October 24, 2017, <http://therealnews.com/t2/story:20290:Banks-and-Investors-Have-Driven-Global-Inequality>.

and area surrounding Duke, it has raised 22% percent, in east and southeast Durham, 7% percent, and in North to East Durham, 12% percent.⁶⁸⁶ In Durham, HUD's Fair Market Rent (FMR) is calculated at a range from roughly \$597 for an efficiency apartment to \$1320 for a four-bedroom.⁶⁸⁷ In Downtown, the average monthly rent in large building with over fifty units ranges from \$1,005/month for an efficiency apartment and \$2,466/month for a four bedroom.⁶⁸⁸ Citywide, the range is \$828 to \$2,466. In the Southside neighborhood where Self-Help land banked homes for Durham and Duke to subsidize their first-time homebuyer programs, taxes have increased so much that residents who lived in the neighborhood pre-renovations successfully petitioned Durham City Council to give them tax relief grants for the next three years amounting to a couple of hundred dollars a year for those households.⁶⁸⁹ Some of the same residents that were championing Self-Help, Duke, and the city's efforts, such as Marie Hunter who spoke at the ribbon cutting ceremony, fought for this relief as well. Even though it continues to get more difficult to live, afford a house, and pay taxes, the structure of disinformation makes it so that the institutions that are needed to do this unequal development, pulling in public funding, are the same institutions that are assumed to be doing public good.

Strikingly, the UNCTAD Report calls for a Global New Deal, referencing Roosevelt's new deal in the post-Depression world, where state-backed capitalism definitively stabilized the US' position as the global superpower, aided as well by the beginning of massive investment in the military. Roosevelt's New Deal was presented as a fix when the world appeared to be at a similar point of major crisis, what Wallerstein calls "the last great struggle for hegemony"⁶⁹⁰ at that time between the US and Germany, culminating with World War II after the stock market crash of 1929. The New Deal relied on state-subsidized capitalism, including the backing of banks in

⁶⁸⁶ David Hudnall, "Which Triangle Zip Codes Are Seeing Housing Prices Rise the Most?," *Indy Week*, July 6, 2016, <https://www.indyweek.com/indyweek/which-triangle-zip-codes-are-seeing-housing-prices-rise-the-most/Content?oid=5048808>.

⁶⁸⁷ Karen Lado, Vice President, "City of Durham, NC Housing Profile," Report to City Council (Enterprise Partners, December 10, 2015), http://www.durhamnc.gov/agendas_new/2015/cws20151221/10833_PRESENTATION_ENTERPRISE_PRESENTATION_381541_671480.PDF.

⁶⁸⁸ Karen Lado.

⁶⁸⁹ <https://www.indyweek.com/indyweek/the-durham-city-council-approves-property-tax-breaks-for-residents-of-revitalized-neighborhoods/Content?oid=9054801>

⁶⁹⁰ Wallerstein, Structural crisis.

providing mortgages to white homeowners. One of the central and lasting pieces of this strategy was the creation of state-backed mortgages. As historian David Freund writes:

The new federal presence in the mortgage market was designed by leaders of the public-private alliance that had promoted the zoning concept since the 1910s, and its agencies were in large part operated by them. Subdivision developers, housing economists, and institutional lenders began lobbying for federal intervention in the debt market after World War I. The urgency of the Great Depression drew the federal government to their ideas and initiated decades of experimentation, beginning with creation of the Federal Home Loan Bank system (FHLB) in 1932, creation of the Home Owners Loan Corporation in 1933, and the government's most decisive intervention, passage of the National Housing Act (NHA) in 1934. The NHA fundamentally altered the ways that housing credit was created and distributed in the United States, by putting the government's stamp of approval on the long-term, low-interest, self-amortizing mortgage and creating an administrative and regulatory body, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) to insure lenders experimenting with these loans. Eventually these programs worked in concert with the Federal National Mortgage Association (FNMA), created in 1938 to purchase and resell existing mortgage debt. FNMA operations provided a federally run "secondary" mortgage market that sustained FHA operations and eventually ensured the long-term expansion of the nation's home finance industry.⁶⁹¹

Roosevelt's switch to direct aid for the banks is an early seed for neoliberal policies relying on public backing of the market, and not people, for programs for public welfare.

The structure that snowballed to the subprime mortgage crisis and its resolution for financial institutions, started in the 1930s with the federal government's financial backing direct to banks, as well as supporting the racist allotment of mortgages rates and insurance only to white homeowners, so that by the early 2000s, the percentage of African American homeowners was still more than twenty percentage points lower than white homeowners, in fact reaching its peak of 26% in 2000, the same gap that existed in 1960.⁶⁹² Moreover, "the homeownership 'termination rate' (the percentage of individuals who transfer from owning to either renting, living with family, or some other living situation) for African Americans in 2000 was more than double the rate for whites (15.7 percent and 7.3 percent, respectively)."⁶⁹³ So, as the housing gap between white

⁶⁹¹ Freund, 100.

⁶⁹² Wilhelmina A. Leigh and Danielle Huff, "African Americans and Homeownership: Separate and Unequal, 1940 to 2006" (Washington DC: Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, November 2007), http://www.northstarnews.com/userimages/references/African%20Americans%20and%20Home%20Ownership.Brief_Joint%20Center%20for%20Political%20Studies.pdf, page 1

⁶⁹³ Leigh and Huff page 2

and black households continued to grow, so did the reliance on credit to buy not only homes, but education, cars, and household goods – reaching \$1 trillion in 2017.⁶⁹⁴

The 2008 collapse was a collapse of the speculative housing market, a growing bubble eventually burst by the few years of subprime mortgages. At the center of the crisis were mortgages, the only way anyone can afford to buy a home. Despite the clarity of this situation, journalism about the housing bubble tended to blame two populations: bankers depicted as greedy capitalists who took too much, and unrealistic low-income African-American homebuyers who should not have tried to buy homes – a particularly unapologetic example of development media, or disinformation. The presented fix to the situation was restoring faith in the banking and financial sector with the federal bailout and the now infamous slogan, “too big to fail.”

As discussed in Chapter 2, Self-Help invented the subprime to provide mortgages to low-income people at higher rates. These loans became mainstream, a direction aided by President George W. Bush’s promises of financial stability through an “ownership society,” another term for the society based on equity and trusteeship that Eakes and Self-Help envisions as the method to end to inequality.⁶⁹⁵ In this liberal view of politics and economy, with the right public policy checks in place, financial capitalism can flourish and provide what the capitalist classes need to make a profit and what the working and middle classes need to own a home. As one *New York Times* article from 2007 that interviews Martin Eakes states:

Both the Fed and the Bush administration placed a higher priority on promoting “financial innovation” and what President Bush has called the “ownership society.” Had officials bothered to look, frightening clues of the coming crisis were available. The Center for Responsible Lending, a nonprofit group based in North Carolina, analyzed records from across the country and found that default rates on subprime loans soared to 20 percent in cities where home prices stopped rising or started to fall. “The Federal Reserve could have stopped this problem dead in its tracks,” said Martin Eakes, chief executive of the center. “If the Fed had done its job, we would not have had the abusive lending and we would not have a foreclosure crisis in virtually every community across America.”⁶⁹⁶

The subprime started as a way to increase credit to the poor and was hyper-mobilized as a quick way to collect and trade securities and derivatives. When packages of risky and less risky

⁶⁹⁴ Ryan Kilpatrick, “US Credit Card Debt Tops \$1 Trillion for the First Time Since the Recession,” *Fortune*, April 10, 2017, <http://fortune.com/2017/04/10/credit-card-debt-trillion-dollars/>.

⁶⁹⁵ President George W. Bush, “Expanding Home Ownership” (The White House, December 16, 2003), <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/achievement/chap7.html>.

⁶⁹⁶ Edmund L. Andrews, “Fed Shrugged as Subprime Crisis Spread,” *New York Times*, Edmund L. Andrews, sec. Business Day, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/18/business/18subprime.html>.

subprime loans were bundled and traded, bankers were able to make money on home loans that were federally backed or backed by large investment firms because the risk was so high, and the long term debt and interest payments were so high. There was no other way for bankers and mortgage lenders to make the money they needed, and no other way for the aspiring middle classes to own a home. When it became clear that no one would actually be able to pay off their subprime loans, the banks fell until the public bailed them out.

As Durham continues to grow in unaffordable directions while discussing affordability more and more, nearby Wake County has implemented a twenty-year plan for affordable housing, but without any financial backing behind it, relying on private housing developments with higher density, relaxed zoning, and alternative home design as the primary drivers of the initiative.⁶⁹⁷ As mentioned in Chapter 3, the conscience of Durham's progressive class is holding on to the eighty units of downtown affordable housing led by Self-Help, as a sign of the city's commitment to the poor and working classes, while these units will likely house young professionals, who are also struggling but are able to float on credit, student loans, social capital, and family support. The poor of the city continue to move further out, with the lingering conversation of affordable housing in the development media of the city standing in for their loss.

Self-Help's Walltown project was based on the idea that owning a home is the path to stability and wealth. In their report, Self-Help uses the narrative of a single mother who called her new home a "castle" and was able to finally live in a stable place outside of her car with her son because of Self-Help working with her on the mortgage options. Two assumptions acting as disinformation emerge: the first is that owning a home for a family or individual is a definite way out of poverty, an official policy-supported government belief, as reinforced by the liberal self help ideology starting with FDR. However, individual home ownership is unsustainable without continuous support from the government. The myth has been that it is through hard work and frugality that middle class status has been achieved by mainly white Americans throughout the twentieth century. Moreover, employment opportunities are limited and the ability to finance

⁶⁹⁷ Thomas Goldsmith, "Wake County Approves a Twenty-Year Affordable Housing Plan, But Funding Questions Linger," *Indy Week*, October 18, 2017, sec. News / Triangulator, <https://www.indyweek.com/indyweek/wake-county-approves-a-twenty-year-affordable-housing-plan-but-funding-questions-linger/Content?oid=8839818>.

homes and have economic stability in a region has been largely due to bursts of real growth followed by long periods of false growth. Employment is becoming more precarious for those without professional training and degrees, particularly in Durham.⁶⁹⁸

The second point of disinformation is that this development is actually providing affordable housing. What “affordable” means and the ability to keep an area affordable have been seen to be more difficult to develop and maintain than Self-Help planned for. Regardless of their intentions, their methods have led to the intensification of property values in the Walltown neighborhood. In 2017, one 3-bedroom house sold for \$525,000, one is on the market as of September 2017 for \$675,000, and there are currently no houses available for under \$300,000.⁶⁹⁹ While some families were able to receive affordable mortgages when the project was first implemented, by now both the cost of maintenance for the homes and the property taxes, and the cost of the other homes in the neighborhood has increased such that the original goal of housing people at 80% AMI is already past. Self-Help worked with Duke Energy to lower energy costs and constructed the homes with affordability in mind. However, residents have said that these efforts were not effective, and have compromised some structural integrity on the homes. Self-Help lowered ceiling heights to reduce heating and cooling costs, but did not insulate the new ceiling, so that the difference is negligible and the aesthetics are less pleasing and to some, offensive, as high ceilings represented a certain level of status and wealth that has now been removed.⁷⁰⁰

Thus, through this case study in Durham, we can view the history of struggles in urban settings in the US as the appearance of successes with increased programming and efforts – the Crest Street struggle using Title IX for their redevelopment, the increase in CHOICE housing vouchers, the awareness of gentrification on the radar of Durham media and the activist community – and the actuality of a decrease in stability and security for the urban poor. In the local media, Durham’s current redevelopment continues to be discussed as positive revitalization

⁶⁹⁸ Cite Sassen, *The Global City*, and new book Saskia Sassen, *Expulsions: Brutality and Complexity in the Global Economy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014); Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*, 2nd ed (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001).

⁶⁹⁹ Trulia, ethnographic observation, and interviews with residents.

⁷⁰⁰ Interviews with Sheila and other Walltown residents.

with negative side effects, and Self-Help is positioned as the institution fixing the development. In a March 2016 article in *The Atlantic*, the author frames inequality as surprising side effect:

Organizations like Habitat for Humanity, the Durham Community Land Trust, and the Self-Help Credit Union are active all over Durham, fixing up properties and helping low-income residents become homeowners, but they can't completely slow the tide in the city's housing market, or scale up to meet every need. "When we were doing this work in the '90s and the 2000s there were no other investors coming in and trying to buy properties and flip them," says Tucker Bartlett, a vice president at Self-Help. "All of the gentrification pressures did not exist in those neighborhoods at that time."... "We're seeing displacement and there doesn't seem to be a point where this is going to stop unless we do something about it," says Jillian Johnson, a city councilwoman. "It seems like the natural market curve prices a huge number of people out of Durham very quickly, and I think the process is accelerating."⁷⁰¹

However, the investments in neighborhoods like Walltown could not have happened without the work of Self-Help and Duke, a seemingly benevolent gentrification. Johnson, discussing these changes as natural, could better ascribe the problem to the overall direction of investment in the city in real estate and not in actual housing and shelter. Claiming that there is a natural market curve makes the development seem inevitable, instead of the inequality resulting from the development as inevitable. Like the subprime, the origins may reside in efforts to equalize an unequal structure, but the structure of market-based homeownership is built on inequality.

4.3.2 Unemployment and Wealth Gaps

A 2015 study points to the rise in professional and high wage jobs, but there is relative stagnation in jobs and wages for low-wage jobs:

The Research Triangle region's middle class is being squeezed while inequality is on the rise. Since 1990, middle-wage jobs in the region have not kept pace with population growth, and grew less than half the rate of low- and high-wage jobs. Additionally, a disproportionate share of middle-class job gains have been concentrated in urban areas, with Durham County contributing 37 percent of the increase in middle-class jobs but only 10 percent of the increase in the region's population. And while wages for low-wage jobs have increased 17 percent over the past two decades, that is less than half the rate of increase for high- and middle-class jobs in the same time period.⁷⁰²

In 2013, in the Durham-Chapel Hill Metro area, the average income of the top 1% of households was \$901,143, while the average income of the bottom 99% was \$51,968, producing one of the

⁷⁰¹ Gillian B. White, "The Downside of Durham's Rebirth," *The Atlantic*, March 31, 2016, <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/03/the-downside-of-durhams-rebirth/476277/>.

⁷⁰² "Equitable Growth Profile of the Research Triangle Region" (Triangle J Council of Governments and Kerr-Tar Regional Council of Governments, March 31, 2015), http://www.tjcog.org/Data/Sites/1/media/regional-planning/di-partnership/final-triangle_j_profile_final_31march2015.pdf.

higher in the state “top-to-bottom ratios:” the wealthiest 1% earn 17.3 times more than the rest of the population. Durham is sixteenth out of forty-one in total growth of incomes for the top one percent.⁷⁰³ Staggering as this rate is, it is almost exactly the total ratio in the state of North Carolina at 17.7, and lower than the ratio in the US South – 22.8, and the United States overall – 25.3. Where the ratios are higher in the state, it is due to a lower average income of the bottom ninety-nine percent, mostly under \$30,000. For the lowest twenty percent in Durham, the median household income is \$10,802, and the top five percent is at \$333,154 and rising. Meanwhile, for the lowest 20% of households, income is decreasing 8.5% per year, and for the next twenty percent, decreasing 3.1%.⁷⁰⁴ The income disparities also fall along racial lines. Nearly 46,000 households in the city are low-income, and nearly 30,000 of them are cost-burdened, meaning they cannot afford their housing, food, and transportation costs.⁷⁰⁵ Out of the city’s 9,461 Latino households, 72% (6,812) have incomes under 80% AMI and out of 34,313 Black households, 54% have incomes under 80% AMI (18,530), as compared to 34% (18,756) of the city’s 55,164 white households.⁷⁰⁶

A recent report analyzed the racial wealth gap over the past thirty years in order to anticipate where this gap will be nationally:

If current trends continue, by 2020 median Black and Latino households stand to lose nearly 18% and 12% of the wealth they held in 2013, respectively, while median White household wealth increases 3%. At that point – just three years from now – White households are projected to own 85 times more wealth than Black households and 68 times more wealth than Latino households.⁷⁰⁷

Furthermore, from 1983 to 2013, with the formal institutionalization of supply-side economics as normal US policy, “the nation’s overall median wealth decreased nearly 20% [from] \$78,000 to

⁷⁰³ Estelle Sommeiller, Mark Price, and Ellis Wazeter, “Income Growth from 2010 to 2013 in NC Counties, Overall and for the Top 1% and Bottom 99%,” Income inequality in the US by state, metropolitan area, and county (Economic Analysis Research Network (EARN) Report, 2016), http://www.ncjustice.org/sites/default/files/Table%20_NC%20County%20Income%20Growth%20from%20Sommelier%20and%20Price.pdf.

⁷⁰⁴ NC Budget and Tax Center, “Growing an Economy that Works for All: A 21st Century Approach to Economic Development in North Carolina.” http://www.ncjustice.org/sites/default/files/BTC%20Reports%20-%20Economic%20Development_0.pdf

⁷⁰⁵ Enterprise Report, Community Housing Survey.

⁷⁰⁶ Enterprise Community Partners, “City of Durham, NC Housing Profile,” Karen Lado; Data from American Community Survey; http://www.durhamnc.gov/agendas_new/2015/cws20151221/10833_PRESENTATION_ENTERPRISE_PRESENTATION_381541_671480.PDF

⁷⁰⁷ Dedrick Asante-Muhammad et al., “The Road to Zero Wealth: How the Racial Wealth Divide Is Hollowing Out America’s Middle Class” (Institute for Policy Studies and Prosperity Now, September 11, 2017), https://inequality.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/The-Road-to-Zero-Wealth_FINAL.pdf.

\$64,000 – a period when Black and Latino median wealth went down and White wealth slowly went up.”⁷⁰⁸ Still, this report, which was featured in several news articles because it also predicted that “if the racial wealth divide is left unaddressed, median Black household wealth is on a path to hit zero by 2053 and median Latino household wealth is projected to hit zero twenty years later,” offered the same solutions as all development media – more equitable development through nonprofits and equity-increasing institutions such as Self-Help. The poverty rate in the city of Durham is currently at 19.2%, whereas in 2005 it was at 15%, and as of 2012, nearly a quarter of all census tracts in Durham County are designated as “high poverty,” roughly 47%.⁷⁰⁹ This does not include to this the number of Americans, and residents of Durham, who are in debt, and the that the debt continues to rise.⁷¹⁰

A presentation was made to the Durham People’s Alliance in January 2014 detailing that despite “growth” in the city, inequality was rising. The report, titled, “When Growth Fails: Inequality in Durham County and North Carolina,” details that the top 5% of income earners (~\$333,154) in Durham earned 9.8% more income between 2006-2012, the highest fifth (~\$183,541) earned 3.6% more, while the middle fifth (~\$51,510) saw a 3.4% decline in income and the lowest fifth an 8.5% decline in income.⁷¹¹ The report further outlines that between 2009-2012, goods-producing jobs, which earned workers an average of \$917 per week, (the state average for wages is \$806) decreased 4% while service-producing jobs increased 2%, which earn workers an average of \$784 per week, often with fewer benefits and inequality has increased since.⁷¹² As the NC Budget and Tax Center reports:

Within the service sector, we see even more disturbing trends—fast growth in ultra-low-wage industries like Leisure and Hospitality that require little in the way of skills, and in high-wage industries like Financial Services that require significant skill attainment, but very little in between. In this new world, low-skill workers may find themselves locked into low-wage occupations with little opportunity to climb the ladder to the middle class, unless they have access to additional educational and training opportunities.⁷¹³

⁷⁰⁸ Dedrick Asante-Muhammad et al.

⁷⁰⁹ Allan Freyer, Budget and Tax Center, “When Growth Fails: Inequality in Durham County and North Carolina” (Durham People’s Alliance membership meeting, Durham, NC, January 30, 2014), <https://www.slideshare.net/garrettdixon/durham-peoples-alliance-inequality-30-jan-2014-1>.

⁷¹⁰ David Graeber, *Debt: The First 5,000 Years*, First Melville House pbk (Brooklyn, NY: Melville House, 2012).

⁷¹¹ Allan Freyer, Budget and Tax Center, “When Growth Fails: Inequality in Durham County and North Carolina.”

⁷¹² Allan Freyer, “When Growth Fails.”

⁷¹³ Freyer.

In terms of productivity, there have been gains of 12% in the recovery from the 1991 recession, 2% in the recovery from the 2001 recession, and 2% in 2007 – however, the median wage rate has been steadily decreasing, from a rise in 3% in 1991, to 1% in 2001, to a decline in 4% in 2007.⁷¹⁴ Meanwhile during this time, real per capita gross state product has increased 2.6% while median household income has decreased 15%.⁷¹⁵ Overall, these data show the transfer of wealth to the wealthiest populations, and the overall crisis in growth. As described by economist Robert Kurz:

Today, in the third industrial revolution, capitalism is largely undermining its own substance of labor. In the balance sheets of the private corporations, labor no longer plays a decisive role as part of capital. Industrial production, and not just industrial production, is more influenced by the use of science and technology than by the use of direct productive human activity.⁷¹⁶

As discussed further by Wolfgang Streeck and others, the limits of capital's growth are being reached, as demonstrated by the rise in productivity and decrease in wages. Labor is no longer worth what it once was, and the only growth that is being seen is in the high income sectors of the economy – growing in Durham, and pushing out the lowest earning populations from work and housing.

In other words, the growth that has been happening in Durham, which Self-Help has been instrumental in promoting through their developments, does not improve the lives of the poor, working, or even middle class. As described in previous chapters, despite being presented with this information, the People's Alliance, and other progressive organizations, continue to back policies that support this growth. As Reyes has described:

There at a deep level we have understood the enormity of the task that lies before us (i.e. the creation of an affirmative alternative before the snowballing collapse created by the structural impasse of capitalism engulfs us all), while on a daily basis we seem mired in paralysis, involving ourselves again and again in practices that simply aren't up to what's required of us by the situation.⁷¹⁷

⁷¹⁴ Freyer

⁷¹⁵ Freyer.

⁷¹⁶ Kurz, 2009.

⁷¹⁷ Alvaro Reyes, "The Hodor Effect That Paralyzes the US," *CounterPunch*, September 12, 2017, <http://commonware.org/>, <https://www.counterpunch.org/2017/09/12/the-hodor-effect-that-paralyzes-the-us/>.

There is a lack of understanding, or belief, or ability, to look at the reality that we are facing, that the so-called equitable development is actually just a part of the pro-growth development, and all of this growth amounts to a growth in inequality.

4.4 Self-help, a functional myth

What actors and institutions are to secure the collective good of a livable environment in a world of competitive production and consumption?

– Wolfgang Streeck, 2016⁷¹⁸

Self-Help and similar institutions, which appear to the general public of progressive residents and their elected city councilmembers in Durham to be managing the crisis, are actually contributing to it. The mass of the population is left out of the plans for growth while being used to justify the plans, and most of the population does not vote in local institutions, disillusioned with the prospects. Gentrification is simply speculation on real estate in the city. That speculation, as this study has shown, rests on the promise of a wealthier consumer population moving in to a disinvested part of the city, and on the growth of the speculative real estate. Self-Help, while claiming to be an institution for equity, rests on these principles, with its growing real estate sector expanding dramatically in North Carolina. Whether their work has directly affected the gentrification of the entire city of Durham – and I argue it has – or if it is just able to grow from the gentrification of the city, its work is dependent on this speculative economy. People continue to have hope in the ability of the market to bring stable, individual wealth. Even their community efforts, such as the charter schools and East Durham Children's Initiative, are based on promoting the individual success of students. While certain individuals are handpicked up to higher income levels, the majority of the poor and working classes struggle and are shuffled around, a strategy used institutionally by many foundations and organizations.⁷¹⁹

In Durham County, there are 218,338 people registered to vote, the overwhelming majority as Democrats – 121,301 as compared to just 27,911 Republicans. In the last municipal primary, only 25,570, or under 12% voted, and in the final election, 35,596 voters came out, or 16.3% of registered County voters. Over 67% of the county voted in the presidential election of

⁷¹⁸ Streeck, *How Will Capitalism End?*. page 63.

⁷¹⁹ Ferguson, *Top down*.

2016, but only 10.8% voted in the 2015 election for mayor and city council. As disinformation dominates the structure of our thinking in terms of the growth of the economy still being possible still by throwing public resources behind financial institutions, studies are pointing more and more to the need for massive economic changes, but still these changes are imagined as the type of changes that actually helped to push forward the neoliberal policies to begin with. Self-Help in the city of Durham provides such a useful case study because it demonstrates that what are imagined to be reforms to the unequal growth structure of our economy are actually a key part of that structure. The boom in development in Durham did not start with the private investment of developers. In fact, the first of these student housing complexes to be built without public assistance, The Bell West End, with apartments ranging from \$979-\$2,952/month, was how Scott Selig triumphantly marked the end of the beginning of Durham's development. The partnership between Duke and Self-Help in 1994 in Walltown began the rent intensification of that neighborhood, leading the two institutions to partner on other developments in other neighborhoods. The purchase of the Durham Bulls by Capitol Broadcasting in 1995 did not change the development landscape of the city, but when the city backed the building of the new stadium in the name of economic revitalization through public debt, it did. Other avenues for economic development through public tax credits meant to improve the lives of the residents exploded, including the American Tobacco Campus, made possible only with Self-Help's ability to secure New Market Tax Credits. Thus, as we continue to realize that inequality is growing globally and locally, even as nonprofits and foundations grow, we must continue studying how the two are actually linked. Self-Help has been multiplying its property ownership in Durham since the mid-1980s in the name of economic benefit for those in need. Yet, in the past thirty years of Self-Help's "interventions," those in need can not afford to live in the city, have fewer job options, and inequality has increased rather than decreased in the city.

CONCLUSION: How will the Dream End?

Every week at Durham City Council, and nearly day in the local news and social media, another relevant piece of development media is produced that supports the idea that the anti-gentrification critique is leading the gentrification agenda in cities. In cafes and restaurants downtown, it is difficult to avoid hearing a conversation about real estate, rent, new businesses and restaurants, neighborhood changes, or poverty and gentrification. And as I finished the final pages of this dissertation in a café in Hillsborough, NC, I overheard a conversation at the table next to me – realtors were discussing the “transformation” of Greensboro that will come from Self-Help’s Revolution Mill project.

Since I began studying Self-Help in 2013, much has changed in Durham, Self-Help has expanded its work beyond the city to nearby Greensboro, and also to a neighborhood in Chapel Hill, a housing development in Charlotte, and a mill in Rocky Mount. In Chapel Hill, Self-Help is working as part of a neighborhood revitalization in the Northside community. For Self-Help, the strategy in Northside has come full circle from Walltown. Northside has already been undergoing a transition to UNC student housing, as the rest of Chapel Hill is unaffordable. Self-Help is claiming to stop the gentrification of the neighborhood, With its location beside UNC and the history of Self-Help’s work in Durham, it is difficult to not be cynical about their desires to stop the displacement of the remaining working class African American residents in the neighborhood, with Walltown, the West End, and Southside now becoming neighborhoods for young white professionals. The Northside Initiative sounds eerily similar to the Walltown project in the 1990s:

From 1980 to 2010, the black population of Northside decreased by about 40 percent. As longtime residents moved away or died, developers snapped up this prime real estate at bargain prices. They converted single-family homes into rental units or tore down the houses and built new units, rented mostly to college students. In the last decade, the town and Northside residents have tried several methods of stabilizing the community: establishment of a Neighborhood Conservation District; a development moratorium; a community plan shared with Pine Knolls; a housing market action plan; zoning regulations; and code enforcement.... Taking that next step, though, required greater town, gown and neighborhood collaboration and the resources to carry out the strategy.

The initiative brings together the key players, and the University's loan provides the funding to establish a "land bank" as properties become available....

Carolina is making a \$3 million, 10-year, no-interest loan to help stabilize the traditionally African-American neighborhood. About 100 residents, University and town staff, politicians and even some toddlers clapped and cheered their approval at the event, held in the heart of Northside at the Hargraves Center. The initiative is a partnership of the University, the town and two nonprofits, Self-Help and the Jackson Center. Self-Help, a Durham-based community developer, will manage the \$3 million loan to achieve these shared goals: helping longtime residents stay in their homes; attracting new residents from diverse backgrounds; and increasing the availability of housing and financing options for neighborhood properties.⁷²⁰

At this meeting, Self-Help compared the Initiative to the Duke-Durham Neighborhood Partnership – so that the direction of growth for Northside is towards "diversifying" the population to include those who can afford to buy homes, which is not a historically working class and low income African American population. In the 1990s and early 2000s, the discursive strategy was community engagement, but today, the strategy is a critique of the gentrification. What I hope this dissertation makes clear, is that it is not so much what they intend to do, but what is actually possible in an economy based on speculative finance.

On November 14, 2017, the Herald-Sun's morning news email featured a story about new legislation possibly eradicating historic tax credits: "This tax credit fueled downtown Durham's renaissance. Congress wants to kill it."⁷²¹ The reporter interviewed Ben Filippo of Preservation Durham, and Michael Goodman of CBC:

Ben Filippo, executive director of Preservation Durham, said that without the tax credit, there wouldn't have been a downtown Durham comeback.

"It wouldn't have been possible. You would have no American Tobacco Campus, Brightleaf Square or Golden Belt. You wouldn't have the Chesterfield or the Whitted School," he said. "It has had an enormous impact on our ability to utilize these old warehouses and historic structures from the tobacco era, and even other eras, that otherwise we wouldn't have been able to leverage for what is now in them. Durham is kind of a poster child for why the historic tax credit is crucial."...

"These historic places are prominent parts of our community fabric. Bringing them back to vibrancy benefits both urban and rural areas not just economically, but as a catalyst for the entire community – from business to arts, culture and civic engagement," Goodman said. "We encourage lawmakers at all levels to learn more about the substantial economic and cultural benefits of historic tax credits, and then to vigorously protect and

⁷²⁰ Susan Hudson, "Supporting the Northside Initiative," UNC News, *University Gazette* (blog), March 9, 2015, <https://www.unc.edu/spotlight/northside-neighborhood-initiative/>.

⁷²¹ Zachery Eanes, "This Tax Credit Fueled Downtown Durham's Renaissance. Congress Wants to Kill It," *The Herald-Sun*, November 14, 2017, sec. Business, http://www.heraldsun.com/news/business/article184422943.html#eml=Morning_Newsletter.

support them. They make sense, and they've earned a permanent place in our economic development toolbox."⁷²²

This issue positions the developers and their supporters – here, Goodmon and Fillipo,

Globally, journalism is attempting to cover urban rent intensification as more and more neighborhoods in “global cities” become the new sites of gentrification and smaller cities see speculative real estate turn their cities into localized versions of the same. The earliest cities to experience massive speculative investments and displacement – San Francisco, Brooklyn, Austin, and Portland have become the most expensive places to live in the country, and are the sites of repeated instances of local battles over public space.⁷²³ Steady police violence and growing incarceration plague black and brown communities across the country as the carceral state imposes its management of growing surplus populations, including in Durham, NC, where several inmates have died in prison and residents – including a teenager in police custody – have been shot by police in recent years.⁷²⁴ As inequality grows, communities work to organize themselves, amidst what is often a confusing and reactionary landscape of tactics, ranging from burning development sites⁷²⁵ to supporting institutions like Self-Help to develop with the language of support for the poor. Frequently, activists do both, and sometimes also run for elected office, to attempt to intervene in the growth machine.⁷²⁶

On October 19, 2017, the UK-based *Guardian* published a story about the neighborhood of Boyle Heights in Los Angeles, titled, “Are white hipsters hijacking an anti-gentrification fight in Los Angeles?”⁷²⁷ The premise of the story, that an anti-gentrification fight could be hijacked, is alone telling of this moment when being against gentrification is what now defines those involved in it. As journalist Rory Carroll writes:

⁷²² Zachery Eanes.

⁷²³ Julia Carrie Wong, “Dropbox, Airbnb, and the Fight over San Francisco’s Public Spaces,” *The New Yorker*, October 23, 2014, sec. Elements, <https://www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/dropbox-airbnb-fight-san-franciscos-public-spaces>.

⁷²⁴ Alvaro Reyes, “Note I: St. Louis, The Ferguson Riots, and Anti-Blackness,” *El Kilombo: Our Word* (blog), August 21, 2014, <http://www.elkilombo.org/note-i-st-louis-the-ferguson-riots-and-anti-blackness/>; Alvaro Reyes, “Note II: The Criminalization of Black and Brown Communities and the Latent Riot Against The Neoliberal Order,” *El Kilombo: Our Word* (blog), September 2, 2014, <http://www.elkilombo.org/note-ii-the-criminalization-of-black-and-brown-communities-and-the-latent-riot-against-the-neoliberal-order/>; Wacquant, “Deadly Symbiosis”; Wacquant, *Urban Outcasts*; Wacquant, “Three Steps to a Historical Anthropology of Actually Existing Neoliberalism.”

⁷²⁵ Rory Carroll, “Are White Hipsters Hijacking an Anti-Gentrification Fight in Los Angeles?”

⁷²⁶ Logan and Molotch, *Urban Fortunes*.

⁷²⁷ Rory Carroll, “Are White Hipsters Hijacking an Anti-Gentrification Fight in Los Angeles?”

The Los Angeles neighbourhood of Boyle Heights has become a landmark battleground in the movement against gentrification, a contest widely seen as pitting working-class Latino activists against an influx of white-owned galleries. The tactics – rallies, threats, boycotts, confrontations, smashed windows, graffiti saying “fuck white art” – are controversial and effective: one gallery has fled, others are nervous and have cancelled or moved events.... There is, however, an overlooked twist: some of the most radical members of the Boyle Heights resistance are white artists, most of whom do not appear to live in the neighborhood... Others have also targeted Latino artists and not-for-profit organisations from Boyle Heights, accusing them of being shills for invading capitalists.⁷²⁸

The article is questioning why white activists are targeting Latino-owned businesses, drawing attention to the assumed race-assigned roles that different actors are “supposed” to play. But what this dissertation brings attention to, is the question, why would anyone “hack a struggle?” Is this a race to gain the appearance of who is more radical or authentically on the side of an imagined Latino community in the US? The currency of anti-gentrification rhetoric has its own value, so that political power and social justice movements are engaging in destructive acts in the name of anti-gentrification without a clear community organization behind them building alternatives. And perhaps most importantly, because of the deep crisis we find ourselves in as experienced through this context of disinformation, we are losing our ability to think about gentrification at all. We are reminded of the middle of the century struggles to reclaim blackness and the divisions created between those supporting what became remembered as a more cultural turn, and those supporting political and economic justice. As Karen Ferguson’s work outlined, both of these strategies were co-opted and defused.⁷²⁹ As this study of Self-Help and development media in Durham show, without an actual strategy based in something other than speculation, the institutions that are contributing to this inequality will continue to grow off of the energy and work of those thinking they are fighting against inequality.

Where does this leave us? When all cards are on the table, it is clear that inequality is increasing and there are fewer options for survival in the city without putting every last skill and piece of property up for rent in the market. Virtually everyone is involved in a transaction that contributes to their own future loss – whether through interest on a loan, renting a home to incoming white professionals, or working for companies and institutions that are contributing to

⁷²⁸ Rory Carroll.

⁷²⁹ Ferguson, *Top down*.

one's future dispossession. As "America's twenty wealthiest people hold onto more wealth than the bottom half of country, and "the Forbes 400 now own about as much wealth as the nation's entire African-American population – plus more than a third of the Latino population – combined."

⁷³⁰ Still, people of all races participate, and try to participate, in the current speculative economy, and the ability of anyone to hold onto a neighborhood is becoming an impossibility. The idea of stopping it with graffiti and scare tactics, however, will not lead to any substantial alternative. This anti-gentrification activism is part of the same situation of disinformation as this dissertation argues puts Self-Help in a position of being seen as a "good developer." Self-Help is able to do the development work they do, because of the discourse that they use to support their projects, the history of the idea of self-help being tied to black self-determination struggles, their support of nonprofits and neighborhoods that appear to be working for the improvement of the lives of the poor, and the misunderstandings of how and why the city of Durham, and the world, is rapidly becoming more and more unequal. Quick solutions, of shutting down a gallery, or implementing a few dozen affordable housing units amidst hundreds of unaffordable units and hotels, will only lead to more of the same. And unfortunately, Self-Help's long-term idea of wealth creation through loans, extending credit, and neighborhood transformation that amounts to dispossession, is only pushing the problem further into a bleak future.

The importance of this study is not so much for the future of Durham as for the future of cities that are currently at risk for or undergoing major speculative razing. In this speculative economy, with inequalities glaring, cities will have to look to "do gentrification better:" to use nonprofit benefits, tax credits, and development media to appear to be working in the name of poverty alleviation. It is easy to mistake this work as actually beneficial, especially when it seems that there is no other option but to support pro-growth rent-intensifying development, just with a few amenities added for those who are struggling. Detroit, the entire US colony of Puerto Rico, Houston, Camden – cities that are currently being heavily policed and heavily invaded by what Naomi Klein has called "disaster capitalists" are also being developed by do-gooder capitalism. Disaster capitalism, or as Gotham and Greenberg termed it, "crisis capitalism," is the systematic

⁷³⁰ Chuck Collins and Josh Hoxie, "Billionaire Bonanza: The Forbes 400 and the Rest of Us."

profiteering of cities that are at vulnerable moments from either natural disasters or industrial decline followed by decades of disinvestment, with the collaboration of politicians, business leaders, and nonprofits.⁷³¹ John Arena's study of how low-income housing developers in New Orleans effectively dismantled an organized movement of housing activists is another informative history of how this is going to continue as budgets decline and financiers need to become more and more creative to make their projects work.

Those of us looking to build alternatives to this system will have to continue getting more creative as well. I end with a hopeful direction, from an organized movement of Indigenous communities in Mexico. As The Workshop for Intercommunal Study's Mara Kaufman writes to US-ers on *Counterpunch*:

As the failures of "progressive" electoralist forces pile up across the world—Syriza in Greece, Podemos in Spain, the PT in Brazil, renascent Peronism in Argentina, to name just a few—it becomes clear that we are not experiencing a battle between a reactionary right set on implementing xenophobic policies and protecting the class structure and a progressive left dedicated to inclusion and redistributive policies. Rather, where we are all going together is deeper into capitalist crisis and the disintegration of the system as a whole, with increasingly unstable global economic conditions, skyrocketing levels of inequality, scapegoating, and an alarming acceleration of environmental destruction. Under these conditions, the problem is not one of the political will of any individual politician or party; all kinds of cartels accompany systemic collapse and any political class under the imploding capitalist system merely becomes another. There are few places in the world where not only is the dissolution of the system clear, but an alternative already in formation with years (centuries!) of practice in collective decision-making and self-government. The insistence of the Indigenous Governing Council that the only alternative is not another political class but the elimination of the political class altogether is what makes this initiative not only the only viable organized possibility for the survival of indigenous communities in Mexico, but the path out of the disaster that is capitalism for all of us. We must convince ourselves, as the C/G (Indigenous Governing Council) has, that no one will save us from the ruins but ourselves.⁷³²

This, let's be clear, is not self-help through financing and continued belief in the dead ends of American Dream-based development strategies. Nor an attempt to hold onto the commodities of gentrification and spread them wide and far. That, is the logic of disinformation. Instead, we can fight for a different dream, of actual self-determination over our lives, and doing the slow and difficult work to actually face and struggle against the increasing inequalities and inhuman conditions we continually accept as a given in our world.

⁷³¹ Gotham, *Crisis Cities*. Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (New York: Picador, 2008). Arena, *Driven from New Orleans*.

⁷³² Mara Kaufman, "Mexico's Indigenous Governing Council: Actually Existing Anti-Capitalism for the 21st Century."

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