

Unapologetically Left: How Tenant Movements Shaped the Built Environment in 1970s Los Angeles

"We went to the Health Department and asked them to send somebody to inspect the houses. The inspector told me the Athletic Club didn't want the houses inspected. In fact, one of the houses they tore down was in better condition than my house. They don't care if people find a place or have money. They want to put them out."¹
-Chata Piña, United Neighbors Temple Beaudry spokesperson

Landlords forced Chata Piña and her family to move four times from different apartments in the Temple-Beaudry community blocks from Downtown L.A.'s developing skyline between 1960 and 1981. Her experiences inspired her to seek training in developing grassroots resistance to urban development. She organized the United Neighbors Temple-Beaudry (UNTB), a group primarily led by women demonstrating the intersectionality of urban planning, immigrant housing rights, and community activism. In 1974 the Los Angeles City Council and California Redevelopment Agency (CRA) approved the construction of a windowless nine-story Bank of America data center. The project would displace 500 working-class community members living in low-income housing at the intersection of the Hollywood and Harbor Freeways. The UNTB successfully organized and won relocation costs and support services for displaced tenants. The ranks of UNTB continued to grow over the following decades under the principle that corporate redevelopment posed an ongoing threat to tenants' rights. Speculative real estate investment targeting low-income communities such as Temple Beaudry between the 1970s and '80s reflects trends in the greater Los Angeles housing market. Aging housing stock at low rental rates was neglected by landlords and designated for redevelopment. Temple-Beaudry's low-income tenants faced an ongoing rental housing shortage upon eviction and sought legal recourse and a valuable political voice in the displacement debate. The housing shortage was most affected by affordable

¹ Sondra Lowell, "TENANTS WORRIED ABOUT CRA: TEMPLE-BEAUDRY FUTURE UNCERTAIN," *Los Angeles Times* (1923-1995) (Los Angeles, Calif.), 06/29/ 1980.

housing stock being eliminated from the market to make way for more profitable, often speculative land use. Starting in the 1970's tenants' rights groups played a significant role in shaping the built environment of Los Angeles, this paper will explore this process. Policymakers targeted low-income high-density housing for redevelopment as part of a nationwide effort to build model cities with a priority for corporate space since the mid-1960s. Concentrations of the urban poor in high-density housing were diagnosed by CRA studies as blighted slums. Lenders emboldened by deregulation and conservative fiscal and domestic policy in the 1970s and 1980s prioritized home equity as an inroad to economic prosperity. Elected officials tasked with representing their constituency's best interest were obligated to balance the prospect of lucrative corporate interests with the working poor's plight, often unsuccessfully. Property owners, tenants, and their respective advocates took to the media and ballot box to sway public opinion mostly through speeches and protest sensationalized by media outlets.

The academic study of low-income community displacement has focused primarily on homeowners' rights and benefits of urban development to society at large. My research on tenants, landlords, and their activism corrects this blind spot. Putting renters and landlords at the center of urban renewal history facilitating a broader demographic and geographical scope for study than strictly homeowners and their respective property rights. I draw on scholarship from urban planning, Chicano studies, and Los Angeles' social and cultural history. Urban planning scholarship has traditionally taken a top-down approach to explain the development of cities. Urban planner Dana Cuff argues that Los Angeles development is a "convulsive urban act," where urban spaces are demolished and rebuilt with new amenities for a different primary land user. Cuff contends that Los Angeles' growth is a function of real estate, property rights, and

policymaking.² However, in Cuff's framework, tenants play a minimal role in the preservation of housing. I utilize Edward Soja's idea of *thirding* to argue that UNTB developed a spatial knowledge both real and imagined outside of the traditional physical boundaries of the Temple-Beaudry itself.³ Through protest and media outreach, the tenants demonstrate that the apartments utility expands to encompass part of another cultural use than merely a slum.

Chicana/o historians have played a decisive role in our understanding of the unequal formation of urban Los Angeles. Rudy Acuña documented the greater east side's activism in response to urban renewal as covered by *The Eastside Sun* and *The Belvedere Citizen*.⁴ Acuña focuses on the impact of urban renewal and freeway construction as fundamentally destructive forces to the Eastside sense of community and security. This study moves beyond the limited scope of two barrio newspapers by incorporating national articles and archival research for more context. This research utilizes the lens of *infrapolitics* deployed by Eric Avila to locate cultural resistance to Freeway development.⁵ Originally an anthropological term coined by James Scott and advanced by Robin D. G. Kelley, I highlight UNTB's use of invisible protest to bolster numbers, train community members, and fight for spatial justice. Avila's focus on gendered resistance to highway construction and how activist women of color strategized their protests as protection of their domestic sphere informs my research, specifically my discussion of Chata Piña. While Avila focuses on women of color participating in activism through art, I highlight the organizational and outreach work used to engage tenants. The growth of transnational capital

² Dana Cuff, *The Provisional City : Los Angeles Stories of Architecture and Urbanism* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002).P.44

³ Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace : Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Malden, Mass. [u.a.]: Blackwell Publ., 2014).

⁴ Rodolfo Acuña, *A Community Under Siege : A Chronicle of Chicanos East of The Los Angeles River, 1945-1975* (Los Angeles: Chicano Studies Research Center, Publications, University of California at Los Angeles, 1984).

⁵ Avila Eric, *The Folklore of the Freeway: Race and Revolt in the Modernist City* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

and labor flows is essential to understand the impact of tenant movements on the built environment in globalizing Los Angeles. Political scientist Michael P. Smith utilized a transnational framework to present cities as social constructs and compare them by international finance participation, political efficacy, and social action linkages across geopolitical boundaries. Building on these various works, I center the role of tenants and their coalitional networking through the 1970s and 1980s as they worked to challenge the onslaught of globalizing capital in Los Angeles. This study evaluates the transnational participation of tenants, property owners, and developers. It identifies and disentangles hemispheric capital and labor flows and diasporic connections between Los Angeles, east Asian financial markets, Latin American immigration, and evolving community organization strategies. Central to this story is lifelong activist Rosalío Muñoz, who supported and trained tenants in often successful efforts to resist developers and displacement. Muñoz fits prominently into Chicano history, especially for his role in the 1970 Chicano Moratorium March; however, his work building housing advocacy coalitions has been largely overlooked.⁶ After first examining an overview of housing policy at different government levels, I discuss the Los Angeles redevelopment strategy. I explain how government policymakers enabled redevelopment through favorable legislation and advocacy. Finally, I conclude with a comparison of landlord and tenant activist networks and their efficacy.

Influences on Housing Demographics in 1970s Los Angeles

LA City Council and the CRA targeted low-income high-density housing for redevelopment with a corporate anchor and mixed-use surroundings as a component of Los Angeles' Master Plan of 1970. In a 1974 Center of Metropolitan Mission In-Service Training

⁶ Mario T. García and Mario T. García, *The Chicano Generation: Testimonios of The Movement*, ed. Ebrary (Oakland, California Berkeley, CA: Oakland, California : University of California Press, 2015).

(COMMIT functioned as UNTB's parent organization) quarterly report Muñoz explained that: "Recycling as conceived in the Master Plans of both the City and the County of Los Angeles was a long-term strategy to continue growth despite inflation or recession by redeveloping the inner-city barrios."⁷ Development such as the White Memorial Hospital complex built as an extension of Loma Linda University resulted in the rezoning of privately-owned residential property for hospital use in the area, seizing 100 acres of Boyle Heights land.⁸ The Little Tokyo Redevelopment plan eliminated historically Japanese and African American quarters in favor of the mostly uncooperative Grand O'tani Hotel.⁹ Bunker Hill redevelopment eliminated an aged white largely pensioner tenant population in favor of what would become the California Plaza and the starting point of the iconic Los Angeles skyline.¹⁰ After extensive interviewing, Muñoz described the Temple-Beaudry Community in a 1976 quarterly report as follows: "[i]ts residents at least 50% were 'undocumented' Latino immigrants (mostly from Mexico). Approximately 600 were renters with about 20% unemployed."¹¹ Temple-Beaudry tenuously existed as an affordable housing community because it was still more profitable to the city as speculative land, without the right corporate suitor.

Nationally the United States was reeling from the 1970's recession progressing into the 1980's stagflation and used homeowner. The Nixon administration sought to ameliorate a weak economy in recession through several economic stabilization measures as early as 1970. The

⁷ 1976 report to COMMIT funders, Box 35, Folder 6, Rosalío Muñoz Papers (Collection 2115). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

⁸ Acuña, *A Community Under Siege : A Chronicle of Chicanos East of The Los Angeles River, 1945-1975*. P. 101; Ernesto Chávez, *Mi Raza Primero! (My people first!): Nationalism, Identity, and Insurgency In The Chicano Movement in Los Angeles, 1966-1978* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).P. 28.

⁹ Memorandum to Mayor's Office, Box 2895, Folder 15, Mayor Tom Bradley Administration papers (Collection 293). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

¹⁰ Correspondence regarding Bunker Hill displacement from resident Phillip A. Starr. Folder 44, John Holland Papers, CSULA Special Collections, John F. Kennedy Memorial Library. California State University Los Angeles.

¹¹ 1976 report to COMMIT funders, Box 35, Folder 6, Rosalío Muñoz Papers (Collection 2115). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

Economic stabilization acts of 1970-73 Emergency Home Finance Act, and Uniform Relocation and Real Property Acquisition Act which all came into effect in 1970.¹² The Economic Stabilization act authorized the federal government to enact price wage and rent freezes to address inflationary pressure in the economy. By abating the price increases of inflation, the administration sought to increase domestic spending. The Emergency Home Finance act created a secondary market for mortgages, incentivizing the quick redistribution of wealth through home loans. Lenders were able to offset the immediate liquidity strain by selling off debt to a government-owned secondary market that was eventually publicly traded as mortgage-backed assets. Lenders prioritized single-family home building as an inroad to economic participation for the economically disenfranchised, instead of multifamily developments, which were less profitable.

Stagflation's grip on the United States economy continued throughout the 1980s, making it more difficult for tenants to participate in the rental market. The Stagflation Congressional hearings of 1979 discussed the ramifications of increasing high inflation and unemployment at the margins of society and the importance of responsive Federal reserve policy through interest rates.¹³ The Reagan administration practiced supply-side economics by cutting the top tax and corporate rates to increase economic growth. The Economic Recovery Act of 1981 enacted a widespread cut in federal income tax rates. The top marginal tax rate fell from 70% to 50%, and

¹² Pub. L. No. 91-379, 84 Stat. 799, enacted August 15, 1970, authorized the stabilization of prices, rents, wages, and salaries until February 28, 1971; The Act of Dec. 17, 1970, Pub. L. No. 91-558, § 201, 84 Stat. 1468, expired March 31, 1971; United States Congress House & Committee on Banking and Currency 1970. Emergency Home Finance Act of 1970.

¹³ United, States, Congress, & Joint Economic, Committee. 1979. Stagflation: hearings before the Special Study on Economic Change of the Joint Economic Committee, Congress of the United States, Ninety-sixth Congress, first session, April 30, and May 7 and 9, 1979. Washington: US Govt. Print. Off.

the bottom rate dropped from 14% to 11% indexed for inflation.¹⁴ The Tax Reform Act of 1986 lowered the top tax rate from 50% to 38.5% and consolidated tax brackets from fifteen income levels to four.¹⁵ Moreover, the act also mandated that home mortgage interest and interest on home equity loans were tax-deductible. The act eliminated rental housing investment incentives by extending the depreciation period of rental property to 27.5 years from 15-19 years and eliminating the deduction for passive losses. Policymakers hypothesized that trickle-down economic policies would alleviate the tax burden for the higher socioeconomic levels incentivizing investment in economic growth and job production. Low-income communities, however, were tasked with stretching stagnant wages to accommodate increasing prices and rents.

The sustained unemployment of stagflation and lack of social services threatened the sustainability of the urban immigrant poor. California became a destination for a massive influx of immigrants between 1970 and 1980; 1,868,000 immigrants made the state their home according to census data.¹⁶ During this period, California also faced deindustrialization of the heavy industry with Chrysler closing its plants in 1971, GM shuttering in 1982, and Firestone leaving the region in 1980; these plants featured Southern California union jobs, pensions, and representation for semi-skilled labor in the area.¹⁷ The closure of these plants left a vacuum in labor leadership that extended throughout the region, limiting traditional community organizational means. Job elimination also placed an influx of low skilled unemployed workers in direct competition with immigrants for limited positions in the Los Angeles economy.

¹⁴ Commerce Clearing, House & United, States. 1981. Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981: as signed by the President on August 13, 1981: law and explanation. Chicago, Ill.: Commerce Clearing House.

¹⁵United, States, Department of the, Treasury & Office of Chief, Counsel. Tax Reform Act of 1986. [Washington, DC]: Office of Chief Counsel, Department of the Treasury.

¹⁶ Thomas and Espenshade Muller, Thomas J., *The Fourth Wave: California's Newest Immigrants* (Washington, DC: Urban Inst. Pr., 1985).P. 38.

¹⁷ Edward W. Soja, *My Los Angeles : From Urban Restructuring to Regional Urbanization* (2014).P.45.

Politicians representing constituencies with large immigrant communities have publicly derided census figures to determine the number of immigrants in California as inaccurate. For instance, in 1974, California congressman Edward Roybal introduced H.J.Res.406 as a joint resolution relating to the publication of economic and social statistics for Spanish-speaking Americans, which he describes in a press release dated May 1974. Roybal's press release calls attention to a massive undercount of the Spanish-speaking population by the census resulting in an erroneous count of 9 million Spanish speakers nationwide instead of the actual 12 million counted by independent auditors.¹⁸ Unfortunately, Roybal's bill died on the floor, and the undercount remained effective. The bill was indicative of Roybal's insight that a proper count of the population was the first step to adequately addressing immigrant community needs.

The City Council prioritized profitable redevelopment that displaced tenants with very little resistance. Roybal started his political career in 1949 as a champion of those displaced by urban redevelopment serving as a city council representative for Ninth District. The Ninth district encompassed Boyle Heights, Bunker Hill, Civic Center, Chinatown, Little Tokyo, and the Central Avenue corridor. The young councilman was a staunch opponent to both the Bunker Hill and the Chavez Ravine redevelopment plans and voted against renewal until he left for Congress in 1962. His stance was unpopular among elected officials as redevelopment was a highly profitable channel of government funding to private builders, lenders, and their associated industries continuing through the '70s and '80s. A banking study conducted by the FDIC in 1997 found that a higher percentage of Southern California loans were engaged in real estate than the rest of California or the country through the '80s.¹⁹ Addressing the infrastructural needs of the

¹⁸ House Schedules Hearings on Roybal's Spanish Speaking Census Bill ,Box 2 Folder 10, Alicia Escalante Papers, CEMA 183. Department of Special Research Collections, UC Santa Barbara Library.

¹⁹ Corporation Federal Deposit Insurance, *History of The Eighties: Lessons For The Future, An Examination of The Banking Crises of The 1980s And Early 1990s* (Washington: Federal deposit insurance Corporation, 1997).

population boom by prioritizing corporate tenants and single family housing made an investment in the redevelopment industry immediately profitable. However, an emphasis on quick profits was fiscally impractical in the long run, bank closure and the savings and loan crisis threatened long term viability of both single and multifamily housing.

California policymakers made decisions throughout the 1960's and '70s that resulted in the disenfranchisement of many relying upon access to affordable housing. In 1963 the California legislature passed the Rumford Fair housing act, which prohibited race discrimination in housing rental and sales.²⁰ In 1964 the California Real Estate Association proposed proposition 14 amending the California State Constitution, nullifying the Rumford Fair Housing Act, allowing property owners to rent and sell as they pleased.²¹ Proposition 14 was ruled unconstitutional by the California Supreme Court in 1966 and was affirmed by the US Supreme Court in 1967's *Reitman v. Mulkey* case. However, policymakers did not fully repeal the amendment to the constitution until the November 1974 election when Proposition 7 passed by ballot measure amending the California constitution to end the state-protected discrimination and extend property rights to citizens and noncitizens alike.²² The backlash to federal fair housing provisions with the passage of Proposition 14 sought to reinforce the segregated nature of the Los Angeles housing market. Extensive redlining established de facto segregation throughout Los Angeles, where it became impossible to receive loans in geographic areas deemed high risk, which coincided with communities of color.²³ Los Angeles was also highly scrutinized for

²⁰ California, & State Fair Employment Practice, Commission. 1966. Statement concerning the Rumford Fair Housing Act. San Francisco: The Commission.

²¹ No on Proposition 14: California Fair Housing Initiative collection, GTU 94-7-01 . Graduate Theological Union Archives, Berkeley, CA.

²² UC Hastings. "DECLARATION OF RIGHTS California Proposition 7 (1974)." UC Hastings Scholarship Repository. http://repository.uchastings.edu/ca_ballot_props/790 (May 16, 2019).

²³ Josh Sides, *L.A. City Limits : African American Los Angeles From the Great Depression to The Present* (Berkeley, Calif.; London: University of California Press, 2004).P.210.

gerrymandering. In 1972 the California Supreme Court ordered that the City council redraw district lines to represent the population distribution more accurately as the largest district had 70% more people than any of the 13 other districts.²⁴ Court order determined that California Congressional districts must be redrawn by February 1974. In a letter to his constituency, Roybal outlines that he is losing parts of the traditionally working-class, Spanish-speaking Boyle Heights, Lincoln Heights, East Los Angeles, Belvedere, and Downtown LA territory in exchange for the more affluent Highland Park, Eagle Rock, and Glassel Park.²⁵ This court-ordered redistricting sought to consolidate the new 25th district's voting interests instead of fragmented components of more affluent voting blocs.

The mostly immigrant community of Temple-Beaudry had limited buying power and found themselves at a disadvantage when competing for low-income housing. The 1970 census reported that the Temple-Beaudry community had a 94% "Spanish" population, \$58.00 monthly median rent, 94% occupancy rate with only 3.5% of the units registered as owner-occupied and 12% lacking some or all plumbing features; 66% of occupants had moved into their unit within five years of the census and mean family income was \$3028.00 with 21% of families living below the poverty level.²⁶ Spanish speaking community members were even more vulnerable without access to social safety net features such as welfare and fair housing advocacy due to lack of translation services. Mayor Tom Bradley's Blue Ribbon Housing Commission in 1988 noted a severe city-wide low-income housing shortage, receiving national attention as mentioned in the

²⁴ Garza v. County of Los Angeles, Cal., 756 F. Supp. 1298 (C.D. Cal. 1991)

²⁵ Roybal's correspondence on redistricting, Box 2 Folder 10, Alicia Escalante papers, CEMA 183. Department of Special Research Collections, UC Santa Barbara Library

²⁶ United, States & Bureau of the, Census. 1976. 1970 census of population: population of urbanized areas established since the 1970 census, for the United States, 1970. Washington: Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census : For sale by the Supt. of Docs., US Govt. Print. Off..

Washington Post in the same year.²⁷ The Commission conveyed the severity of the housing shortage by reporting 40,000 families lived in garages, 25% of Los Angeles renters were paying more than half of their income for housing, and a continuous prioritization of demolition over rehabilitation.²⁸ Developers consistently threatened the Temple-Beaudry community with the demolition of low-income housing units throughout the period, a trend apparent throughout greater Los Angeles. A 1988 Los Angeles Times article refers to Temple-Beaudry as a ghost town citing 1939 housing units in 1970 and only 1581 by 1988.²⁹ Temple-Beaudry community members organized to save low-income rental housing stock with local community organizations' help in light of ongoing demolition, redevelopment efforts, and high tenant turnover.

The housing stock in Temple-Beaudry was characteristic of speculative investment; it was minimally maintained and profitable as vacant land since early in its redevelopment history. The landowners in Temple-Beaudry demonstrated rent-seeking behavior by holding out on reinvesting in properties in the hopes of large-scale buyouts by redevelopers. Elected officials demonstrated rent-seeking behaviors by enabling the CRA to grant loans and tax benefits solely to development corporations and not individual property owners by pricing them out as described in a 1963 interview of CRA official Joe Guarino.³⁰ The CRA scouted Temple Beaudry for redevelopment since early in its history; original CRA board of commissioners member William Senson appointed in 1958 owned about a quarter of the oil interests in the Temple-

²⁷ Mathews, Jay. "LOS ANGELES DISCOVERS A SEVERE HOUSING CRUNCH." Washington Post, December 8, 1988.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Tobar, Hector. "AN URBAN GHOST TOWN." Los Angeles Times, October 31, 1988.

³⁰ Asa, Oran W. "CRA ANSWERS QUERIES ON MONTEREY HILLS." El Sereno Star, July 16, 1964

Beaudry area.³¹ Bunker Hill Tenants accused Senson of manipulating property purchases for the Bunker Hill project to protect his oil interest while eliminating his competitor Burke-Bauman Oil company, who owned the other three quarters of oil interest in the area.³² The oil wells continued to pose a nuisance to the community through the 1980s as exposed in a May 1985 piece by LA Times staff writer Rich Connell responding to controversial advocacy of increased oil drilling in the area by councilman John Ferraro. Pushback from the city planning commission resulted in the discovery that most of the existing oil derricks were not operating in compliance with regulations.³³ Connell's article also mentions that owners in the area have experienced difficulty selling the property due to the concentration of oil derricks and precautions necessary to seal them safely.

Property management companies in the Temple-Beaudry community established a pattern of unscrupulous behavior disadvantaging tenants. In 1974 Temple-Beaudry residents continued to receive eviction notices from the Beaudry Plaza Co. and Becket Jorgensen property owners in preparation for the Bank of America data center construction.³⁴ Tenants were initially offered no compensation for their removal from the property and protested with legal aid and a coalition of community organizations to receive a uniform, fair payment for every displaced resident and relocation assistance. Mayor Tom Bradley assigned deputy mayor Manuel Aragon to oversee the process on his behalf, resulting in Bank of America paying the tenants severance and associated relocation costs. Once Bank of America completed the data center, evictions and

³¹ Press release June 23 1958 Frank Babcock suing William Senson for manipulation of CRA for oil interests. John Holland Papers Folder 10, CSULA Special Collections, John F. Kennedy Memorial Library. California State University Los Angeles.

³² Ibid.

³³ Connell, Rich. "CLUTTER OF ILLEGAL OIL WELLS OF LITTLE INTEREST IN BARRIO." Los Angeles Times, May 12, 1985.

³⁴ Series of 30 day notices and unlawful detainers from the area in response to data center. Box 35 folder 7, Rosalío Muñoz Papers (Collection 2115). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

demolitions continued throughout the 1970s. Chit Yong owned 64 apartment buildings in Temple Beaudry alone and property in Pico-Union in 1980.³⁵ Yong's properties were unimproved from their original state at purchase, a state criticized and documented by the CRA throughout the 1960s. In 1991 Yong faced litigation for impropriety in the eviction of tenants and intentional infliction of emotional distress.³⁶ When faced with litigation by evicted tenants in 1981, Yong opted to sell a large portion of his holdings in Temple Beaudry to the future Mayor of Los Angeles, Richard Riordan. This speculative land hoarding was characteristic of the area and demonstrated a willful disregard for community rights to fair housing.

Policy accommodations for city planning, access to credit, and tenants' rights have largely determined the characteristics of the Los Angeles affordable housing market. Easy access to credit for post-WWII white working-class males established a suburbanization trend, moving nuclear families of means away from the urban core to be replaced by low-income communities of color. Segregated spaces were enforced by lending practices and discriminatory landlords emboldened by California law protecting discrimination as an ironic component of their free-market values. The quality of rental units available varied drastically depending on the socioeconomic character of their surroundings. Landlords were contractually obligated to maintain habitability throughout tenancy; however, many repairs were overlooked by tenants due to under-reporting practices. Retaliation disincentivized tenants to report shortcomings in the property to authorities out of fear. Retaliation may be limited to charging the tenant repair costs or could be as drastic as a non-compliant landlord condemning the property entirely. The economically lucrative nature of investment property and tax protections for landlords ensured

³⁵ UNTB press release Box 35 Folder 7, Rosalío Muñoz Papers (Collection 2115). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

³⁶ Justia. "Unpublished Disposition, 940 F.2d 667 (9th Cir. 1991)." Justia US Law. <https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/appellate-courts/F2/940/667/191283/> (May 16, 2019).

that rental housing continued to be a viable economic tax shelter. Policy accommodations for city planning, access to credit, and tenants' rights have determined the rental market's characteristics and inconsistencies.

REDEVELOPMENT

Redevelopment focused on replacing slums with corporate land use was approved by elected officials. The Mayor's office held responsibility for appointing oversight boards and committees for CRA activity since the 1950s. The City council also had final approval by a vote on the undertaking of new redevelopment projects. Elected officials responded to the federal funding and corporate interest in redeveloping low-income communities by voting in favor of CRA plans and appointing pro-business oversight bureaucracies. Housing policy during the period reflected a conservative agenda of state and federal anti-poverty measures.

Following CRA community studies to determine advantages of redevelopment a community could be determined a slum, multifamily housing would be razed and replaced with commercial space. An example of the research for slum designation is a 1963 17-minute silent CRA redevelopment film, focusing on the deteriorating conditions and de-prioritization of maintenance in Temple-Beaudry.³⁷ The CRA utilized federal funds to study the Temple-Beaudry community for four years at the cost of half a million dollars before any formal conversations with City Council.³⁸ The result of these studies made their way into the 1970 Los Angeles Plan, which utilized Model Cities federal funding to eliminate "the poverty, poor housing and limited opportunities that perpetuate this ghetto condition."³⁹ The political power of redevelopment

³⁷ University of Southern California. "Temple urban renewal project, 1963." USC Digital Library. <http://digitallibrary.usc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p15799coll88/id/1429> (May 16, 2019).

³⁸ Mara A. Marks, "Shifting Ground: The Rise and Fall of the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency," *Southern California Quarterly* 86, no. 3 (2004), <https://doi.org/10.2307/41172224>.P.267.

³⁹ Los, Angeles & City Planning, Commission. 1974. Concept Los Angeles: the concept of the Los Angeles general plan. Los Angeles: The Commission. P.9.

agencies was a polarizing issue, especially in urban centers. Activists such as Dan Smoot sent community mailers as early as 1950 coast to coast admonishing redevelopment as a communist effort to seize personal property.⁴⁰ These conservative tracts prioritized the rights of small property owners as threatened by government overreach. Smoot disregards infrastructure needs and presents a populist argument that private property rights should not be sacrificed for corporate gains. Smoot's conservative assessment is not unwarranted, as evidence by the type of development pursued in Los Angeles by the CRA.

The CRA and City council courted wealthy corporate tenants to raise future tax revenues, property adjacent to downtown has been continuously targeted for redevelopment and minimally maintained. The Pico II redevelopment project in Pico Union at the intersection of Washington and Hoover sacrificed low-income rental property in a predominantly Latinx community in order to expand the Pep Boys west coast headquarters. The Montecito Heights redevelopment project established itself on the rolling hillsides of the working class El Sereno Community in order to erect condominiums. The Bunker Hill redevelopment project, arguably the most profitable and expensive of the period, demolished high-density white pensioner apartment buildings to construct a series of corporate skyscrapers. These projects demonstrate the CRA's strategy of razing low-income communities to replace them with more profitable occupants. A notable exception to this strategy was the establishment of Skid Row as a nonprofit district. The CRA opted to preserve the high-density housing stock in this area to establish homeless shelters and services concentrated in one locale. This action also allowed the CRA to count each of the homeless shelter beds as individual low-income housing units constructed and preserved, vastly

⁴⁰ Dallas (Tex.). Police Department. [The Dan Smoot Report, Volume 9, December 1963 #2], report, December 1963; (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapath339062/>: accessed November 2, 2020), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Dallas Municipal Archives.

inflating the actual number of units available to working families.⁴¹ Downtown and its periphery development were guided by the CRA and its efforts to establish a lucrative urban core.

Corporations were enticed by favorable tax benefits and prime real estate offered by City council and the CRA at below-market prices. The CRA pioneered Tax Increment Financing (TIF), which promised community stakeholders would continue to receive property taxes based on the assessed values of properties within their constituency the year before redevelopment.⁴² After redevelopment, debts are repaid, constituencies would receive a new reassessed property tax based on new development. TIF funds relied on funds raised via tax allocation bonds in which investors would earn their investment amount plus interest at maturation. The bond funds were matched by federal grants, which helped the CRA clear land and prepared it for sale at fair market value, minus the cost of demolition and improvement.

Federal housing policy reinforced the Model Cities goal of eliminating slums, a main component of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society and War on Poverty introduced in 1965. The federal urban development program relied on cities submitting applications detailing their redevelopment needs and how funding would counteract poverty symptoms when channeled through redevelopment agencies and citizens oversight boards. In Los Angeles the program was used to fund the demolishing of low-income communities to make way for large corporate anchors for tax revenue. The California Community Redevelopment Act was created in 1945 to empower state agencies to redevelop communities facing blight, degraded buildings, and a lack of affordable housing. The act also allowed these agencies to raise funds for federal matching grants, purchase land and contract redevelopers. The HUD Act 1965 expanded federal housing

⁴¹ Marks, Mara A. "Shifting Ground: The Rise and Fall of the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency." *Southern California Quarterly* 86, no. 3 (2004).P.276

⁴² Marks, Mara A. "Shifting Ground: The Rise and Fall of the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency." *Southern California Quarterly* 86, no. 3 (2004).P.273

programs, rent subsidies, and housing rehabilitation grants; in September of 1965, President Johnson announced the Department of Housing and Urban Development as a cabinet-level agency. By 1973, Nixon enacted a HUD moratorium to refocus its goals and means that lasted just under a year. Ford ended The HUD moratorium by signing the community development act of 1974, which formally established Section 8 housing, in which private landlords could receive a federal subsidy for low-income renters. The section 8 program placed low-income renters in direct competition with subsidy recipients for low-income units, virtually guaranteeing higher prices. The act also marked the start of the Community development Block grant program, allowing local governments to use funds as they best saw fit instead of pursuing the Model Cities funding stream requirements.

Housing policy focused primarily on creating new homeowners out of disenfranchised communities, very little legislation was directed at protecting tenants' rights. The community development act of 1977 sought to prioritize lending to low-income communities by eliminating the discriminatory housing practice known as redlining, where lenders would not approve loans in communities of color due to high risk of default. The housing and community redevelopment act amendments of 1978 demanded that HUD submit all housing and community development regulations to Congress, allowing either house 90 days to veto. Additionally, the 1978 amendments raised the insurance amount that HUD could guarantee on home loans. Federal policy's emphasis was to reward small property owners with easy access to home equity while deprioritizing high density federal low-income housing. The Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 amended title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, authorizing the Federal government to act on behalf of victims of housing discrimination, initiate investigations and impose civil penalties on those individuals found to be acting discriminatorily. The 1978 Los Angeles City

Rent Stabilization Ordinance froze rents for six months, established a commission to hear rent increase appeals, capping rent increases for properties at 13% if tenants had experienced a rent increase before the ordinance. The 1985 Ellis Act permitted landlords to evict tenants if they are going out of the rental business or pulling the unit from the market for five years however, there was no mechanism for enforcement. This act was ripe for abuse by landlords seeking to evict tenants and raise rents unchecked. Effective conservative lobbying led to legislation dismantling the social safety net for many of society's most vulnerable. For instance, the divestment in federal public housing starts coupled with the inception of voucher programs created a subsidy for landowners instead of the tenants. Proposition thirteen left local government underfunded to perform social services. The prioritization of subsidy to landowners and corporations did not assist low-income tenants as much as new low-income housing could and pushed many out of the market or to homelessness.

Numerous court decisions ultimately determined the extent of CRA power and how city hall engaged developers. The CRA limited the sale of tax allocation bonds throughout the first half of the 1960s, while the Bunker Hill project relocations' legality was argued in court.⁴³ The Bunker Hill community, similar to the Temple-Beaudry community, was replete with high-density low-income housing eliminated to develop a downtown corporate plaza. The Bunker Hill project backed by the CRA, allocated program funding to individual projects proximate to Bunker Hill to counteract the number of low-income housing stock eliminated from the market. A significant issue with the new developments is that there were significantly less low-income family units in the same geographical space occupied by the destroyed units. The development of elderly and assisted living communities made up most of the new housing units developed by the

⁴³Memorandum to Mayor's Office, Box 2893, Folder 3, Mayor Tom Bradley Administration papers (Collection 293). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

Bunker Hill Housing trust overlooking community needs.⁴⁴ The California Supreme Court approved the expansion of CRA's ability to acquire property and use eminent domain to complete the demolition of Bunker hill by 1964. Once the court found in favor of the CRA's authority, the sale of tax bonds resumed. In 1963 when the CRA presented a proposal for Temple-Beaudry redevelopment to the City Council, it was rejected for the preponderance of low-income housing and lack of accommodations for corporate anchors.⁴⁵ The City Council felt that the housing would be too expensive to facilitate without a significant increase in the tax base to justify the development. In light of evidence to the contrary, the City Council voted that there was sufficient low-income housing in Los Angeles, and a plan to redevelop the area with an emphasis on low-income housing would not be in the city's best interest. The dismissal of the 1963 Temple-Beaudry plan told of the City Council's prioritization of large-scale mixed-use development and its dependence upon large corporate real estate developments to guarantee a project's financial sustainability.

An egregious example of the partiality for corporate welfare was exposed as part of an ethics probe by the city attorney's office of Mayor Tom Bradley in 1989. The probe confirmed reports that Bradley was employed by Far East National Bank as a paid advisor, while the city treasurer made two million-dollar deposits, without any competitive bids. Following two years of federal grand jury investigation, neither Bradley nor Far East Bank officials was charged with any crimes. However, the Mayor did return \$18,000 in consulting fees from Far East.⁴⁶ Far East and other new international banks to the region concentrated their lending in high value

⁴⁴ Quarter reviews of Bunker Trust Fund appropriation 6/25/85 Box 1800, Folder 4, Mayor Tom Bradley Administration papers (Collection 293). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

⁴⁵ Marks, "Shifting Ground: The Rise and Fall of the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency." P. 241.

⁴⁶ Woo, Elaine, "Henry Y. Hwang, 77; Bank Executive, Benefactor, Father of Noted Playwright." Los Angeles Times, October 11, 2005.

corporate real estate, the same real estate that Bradley and the CRA were clearing the way for with redevelopment goals.

Elected Officials

Elected officials in power at both the state and national levels contributed to an anti-poor agenda as part of a more conservative policy shift. For example, Nixon's federal housing moratorium and shift in subsidy programs to section eight disempowered free-market renters placed in direct competition with the federal government rent subsidy program. Additionally, rewarding small property and homeowners with guaranteed rents and a federal quasi-property management agency benefited a group already heavily subsidized. In 1972 then-Governor Ronald Reagan reached out to President Nixon by letter to advocate for pressuring Fed Chair Arthur Burns to set more stable interest rates, since current rates limited the availability of home building funds in California from savings and loans.⁴⁷ Inflation had skyrocketed in the wake of eliminating the gold standard, which devalued the dollar as a fiat currency in an attempt to curb cheap imports. Burns vehemently denied manipulating the Fed rates in favor of Nixon's reelection; however, in documents declassified in 1986, it is apparent that Nixon and the Fed chair worked closely to grow the nation's money supply, leading up to the election of 1972.

Voters tasked Los Angeles politicians with governing an economically and socioeconomically segregated city with competing interests over finite housing resources. Demographic shifts in constituencies and their votes have led to the rise and fall of local political careers as community power brokers. Each city council member is responsible for a specific district within the city limits, while the Mayor, deputy mayors, and subcommittees are beholden to the city at large. As the number of voters of color in the county has increased, so have the

⁴⁷ Associated Press. "Nixon's Influence on Fed Revealed : Critical Letter From Reagan Shunted Aside, Memos Show." Los Angeles Times, March 23, 1988.

number of minorities in local politics. For example, in 1960, ethnic minorities held 5% of the local electoral positions, but that number rose to 54% by 1986 county-wide.⁴⁸ Looking solely at the City Council seats by population in 1994, African Americans with 13% of the city population held three seats, Jewish Americans at 14% of the population held seven seats, and Latinos with 40% of the population held three seats.⁴⁹ Latinx community members have been consistently undermined by gerrymandering as a dilution of similarly interested voting blocs. The districts have historically radiated from downtown in large tranches fragmenting South Los Angeles, East Los Angeles, and downtown and forming a conglomerate of voters with conflicting interests within each district. Attempts to rectify gerrymandering at the state level were highly contentious; in 1971, then-governor Reagan vetoed democrat reapportionment legislation citing Chicanos' exclusion, a decision ultimately upheld by the California supreme court.⁵⁰ As the number of Latinx community members rose, strategies to integrate Chicano politicians into the democratic machine developed.

The Chicano politicians that emerged during the 1970s and '80s were mostly unfamiliar to the Latinx population as the Democratic Party opted to handpick candidates like Richard Alatorre and Art Torres from special interest groups such as The East Los Angeles Community Union.⁵¹ The Democratic party previously disregarded the Latino vote as negligible due to low voter turnout and no formal development of grass roots community leaders. By 1980 the census recorded an 87% increase in the Latino population of California.⁵² This unmistakable shift in demographics was representative of a national uptick in the Latinx population. As discussed, the number of local representatives of color increased; however, the tenor of that representation was

⁴⁸ Rodolfo Acuña, *Anything But Mexican: Chicanos in Contemporary Los Angeles* (2018).P.47.

⁴⁹ Acuña, *Anything But Mexican: Chicanos in Contemporary Los Angeles*.P.49.

⁵⁰ Acuña, *Anything But Mexican: Chicanos in Contemporary Los Angeles*.P.50.

⁵¹ Acuña, *Anything But Mexican: Chicanos in Contemporary Los Angeles*.P.52.

⁵² Acuña, *Anything But Mexican: Chicanos in Contemporary Los Angeles*.P.53.

primarily beholden to donors. City council members tasked with voting on development plans and serving on committees consistently opted to court developers and prospective corporate tenants' interests over the protests of their low-income constituents. Politicians have erred on the side of jobs and future tax revenue as the most valuable factors in decision making. This reasoning is sound if the types of jobs created were accessible to low-income constituents as a means of social mobility; however, the jobs created were mostly white-collar corporate positions. Ethnic minorities have enjoyed more representation in local politics by people who look and sound like them; however, low-income tenants have been consistently disbursed and disempowered local government who do not vote in their interest.

Demolition of affordable housing units throughout Mayor Tom Bradley's tenure worsened the rental housing crisis. Voters elected Bradley as Mayor in 1973; he held office as Los Angeles' first African American Mayor until 1991.⁵³ The first wave of demolitions in Temple Beaudry began with the Bank of America computer center development in 1974.⁵⁴ Besides the ongoing Temple-Beaudry demolition, the California Redevelopment razed Bunker Hill and sections of Pico-Union.⁵⁵ The ongoing demolition was particularly devastating to renters because low-income multifamily units were eliminated with no comparable replacement. Tenants organizations advocated for the building of replacement housing and creating trust funds for their eventual construction however, the lag time between demolition and unit completion left tenants with an immediate loss of housing. Bradley responded warmly to grassroots citizens' movements, especially regarding housing concerns. Bradley, a slave's grandson, born to a

⁵³Merl, Jean, and Bill Boyarski. "Mayor Who Reshaped L.A. Dies." Los Angeles Times , 30 Sept. 1998.

⁵⁴COMMIT purpose statement, Box 35, Folder 7, Rosalío Muñoz Papers (Collection 2115). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

⁵⁵Chief Legislative CRA Analyst report, Box 1560, Folder 1, Mayor Tom Bradley Administration papers (Collection 293). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

sharecropper in Calvert, Texas, recalled picking cotton as a child.⁵⁶ Bradley was no stranger to poverty's devastating effects, moving to the Temple and Alvarado neighborhood in 1924 directly adjacent to the Temple Beaudry Community.⁵⁷ Before his first election as Mayor, Bradley corresponded with the Chicano Movement leadership. He even served as a keynote speaker at Lincoln High School in 1973 as the community met to halt the Model City redevelopment while first running for Mayor.⁵⁸ Bradley's most lasting contribution to addressing housing concerns was the Commission of his Blue Ribbon Committee For Affordable housing and subsequent 1988 report entitled *Housing Los Angeles Affordable Housing for the Future*.⁵⁹ The Commission incorporated lawyers, city council members, and activists who historically defended the tenants of Temple Beaudry and greater LA to serve alongside developers and urban planners.⁶⁰ Los Angeles City council, Mayor, and commissions are responsible for representing their constituency. Councilmember John Ferraro, Gilbert Lindsay, and Mayor Bradley were well aware of the public response to redevelopment and had a duty to elected office to reflect those concerns in their voting and advocacy. These politicians attended community meetings, city council meetings, and protests that spoke to the low-income housing crisis in their jurisdiction. Though aware of the crisis conditions, these politicians held themselves most accountable to the bank's interest and the promise of jobs and tax revenue. The measures taken to ameliorate the housing crisis, such as the Los Angeles RSO and the Temple-Beaudry resident settlement with

⁵⁶Merl, Jean, and Bill Boyarski. "Mayor Who Reshaped L.A. Dies." *Los Angeles Times*, 30 Sept. 1998.

⁵⁷Merl, Jean, and Bill Boyarski. "Mayor Who Reshaped L.A. Dies." *Los Angeles Times*, 30 Sept. 1998.

⁵⁸García and García, *The Chicano Generation: Testimonios of The Movement*.

⁵⁹Report re Blue Ribbon Citizen's Committee on City Revenues and Expenditures, Box 2069, Folder 3, Mayor Tom Bradley Administration papers (Collection 293). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

⁶⁰Report re Blue Ribbon Citizen's Committee on City Revenues and Expenditures, Box 2069, Folder 3, Mayor Tom Bradley Administration papers (Collection 293). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

Bank of America, were not enough to combat the devastating effects of urban redevelopment on the existing housing stock.

Elected officials responded favorably corporate interests through plan approval, limited tenant advocacy, and ongoing investments of taxpayer money. Elected officials invested in the developmental infrastructure destroyed existing high-density housing and replaced them with lower-density suburbs and corporatized centers. The realty, financial, and construction firms associated with home building benefited tremendously from the windfall of projects and cheap credit to build them. Nationally, policymakers discussed homeownership as an accessible inroad to the international economy, promoted by HUD, the Model Cities program, and numerous housing bills of the 1970s. Locally the City council worked closely with the CRA to foster a pro-business organization since inception. The CRA Board of Commissioners appointed by Mayor Fletcher Bowron in 1948 demonstrated which industries were most heavily favored: "William Senson, an heir to an oil and real estate fortune; Edward Carter, president of the Broadway-Hale department stores; Milton Brock, president of the Home Builder Association; and Philip Rea, president of the Los Angeles Realty Board." enjoyed complete oversight over the scope and direction of the CRA since it had no director for its first decade.⁶¹ The public outcry both for and against redevelopment efforts in Chavez Ravine, Bunker Hill, and eventually Temple-Beaudry was ongoing. Critics on the right argued against overzealous government use of eminent domain for socialist purposes. Social justice-oriented groups fixated on the displacement and lack of available alternatives for low-income housing. The City council's approval of rezoning segments of Temple Beaudry to build the Bank of America data center demonstrated complicity with the pro-business agenda of the CRA. Council members expressed very little interest in challenging the power of the CRA.

⁶¹ Marks, "Shifting Ground: The Rise and Fall of the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency."

Displacement activism by property owners and tenants sought to personalize the narrative and necessity of public support. The conservative trajectory of national politics and the anti-poor agenda inspired local activists to take action. Activist tenants faced ongoing redevelopment efforts targeting the dwindling low-income housing stock threatening their access to affordable housing. Similarly, property owners realized that they could employ the small-government, free-market rhetoric dominating the national debate to garner support for favorable tax benefits and discriminatory housing laws. Ironically, both groups appealed to the idea that voters needed to intercede on behalf of threatened "American" values. The landlords felt that their free-market property rights were threatened by overzealous taxation and overreach in housing anti-discrimination laws. The tenants felt that the city disregarded their rights to fair housing as guaranteed by federal law and an implicit contract of habitability. Both groups developed organizations to pool outreach efforts, mobilization, and funds.

Landlords, Property Owners & Developers

Displacement became a prominent issue for Los Angeles in the 1970s and '80s, especially for tenants, property owners, and developers. Redevelopment in Los Angeles grabbed headlines as the Freeway systems leveled the first two, then often, six-lane swaths of Low-income neighborhoods. Chavez Ravine famously polarized voters through extensive red-baiting as early as the 1950s. The Skyline development over Bunker Hill pit small property owners against the powerful CRA and City Hall. The CRA rebuked small property owners in favor of prospective, more profitable corporate interests throughout the 1960s. Landlords, especially in low-income communities, were threatened with the prospect of eminent domain limiting their property rights and forcing them into below-market settlements upon redevelopment. In this climate, Howard

Jarvis, president of the Apartment Association of Greater Los Angeles, became a notorious proponent of Prop 13 in 1978. Prop 13 sought to reward property owners with limited property tax frozen at 1976 level until sold, as well as a provision that required all future tax increases to be approved by referendum. The property tax freezes most curiously applied to commercial property, allowed, for instance, a limited liability corporation to change hands without the individually held properties being reassessed, as the ownership technically did not change.

Landlords spurned their responsibility for slums and refused to maintain the property to a standard of habitability. Corporate organizations and shell companies laid claim to large swaths of investment properties as panicked sellers sought to dump holdings. Shell companies would obfuscate ownership and take loans on the property to increase the value and evade tax responsibility.⁶² The nature of a limited liability corporation allowed the proprietor to separate their personal liability from that of the corporate entity. LLC holdings' convoluted nature allowed landlords to avoid personal responsibility for the conditions on their property and avoid costly lawsuits and asset seizure. Though humorous, a Labrador retriever was listed as the president of one Los Angeles Property holdings corporation, under review leaving tenants at a loss for whom to hold accountable for slum conditions.⁶³ Property hoarders looked to control as much of the market as possible to profit from appreciating land value and myriad tax shelters available through asset depreciation schedules, running the corporation at a loss, and trading property tax onus between counties.⁶⁴ Chit Yong, the Los Angeles Athletic Club, and future mayor Richard Riordan's holdings in Temple-Beaudry fell into the property hoarder category.

⁶²Lowe, Albert, Gilda Haas, and eds. 2007. *Shame of the City: Slum Housing and the Critical Threat to the Health of L.A. Children and Families*. Los Angeles: Strategic Actions for a Just Economy, April.

⁶³Becklund, Laurie. "Highland Savings, Bankroller of Slumlords, Faces Racketeering Suit." *Los Angeles Times*, July 31, 1989.

⁶⁴Lowe, Albert, Gilda Haas, and eds. 2007. *Shame of the City: Slum Housing and the Critical Threat to the Health of L.A. Children and Families*. Los Angeles: Strategic Actions for a Just Economy, April.

Chit Yong sold off poorly maintained apartment buildings in Temple Beaudry to Richard Riordan when faced with a 1980 deposition for his poor property management in a lawsuit filed by wrongly evicted UNTB members.⁶⁵ Ultimately Yong sought to profit from the properties for as long as possible with as little maintenance necessary. If a property was deemed too costly, Yong maintained the right to demolish the property and maintain it as vacant land. If a property owner demolished a unit, the owner could legally evict tenants with no compensation or warning. Once Yong sold to Riordan, UNTB continued to pressure the two politically picketing Riordan's Pantry restaurant and resisting the strong-arm tactics of Dolan & Knight, Riordan's Property Management. Both Yong and Riordan's property management companies would turn off utility services, request a stop delivery on US Mail, and send armed guards to the property to threaten tenants to move.⁶⁶ The tenants rallied around their rights to habitability and code enforcement's necessity to bring slum landlords properties to justice.

Local politicians promoted the Model Cities program as a benefit to taxpayers.⁶⁷ Politicians discussed large corporate tenants as a net benefit to the community, especially compared to the slum communities. Model Cities dollars required applicants to develop educational, health, housing, and employment goals.⁶⁸ The goals demonstrated mindfulness of the community's deficiencies, such as low matriculation, inadequate health care, and housing, but were mostly ineffective in countering poverty's disenfranchising effects.⁶⁹ Many of the most vulnerable tenants in the city were priced out of downtown and adjacent communities due to

⁶⁵ CES press release July 22, 1980 protesting Yong's evictions, Box 37, Folder 5. Rosalío Muñoz Papers (Collection 2115). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

⁶⁶ CES press release July 22, 1980 protesting Yong's evictions, Box 37, Folder 5. Rosalío Muñoz Papers (Collection 2115). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

⁶⁷ Los Angeles & City Planning, Commission. 1974. Concept Los Angeles : the concept of the Los Angeles general plan. Los Angeles: The Commission.

⁶⁸ Model Cities, Program, Los Angeles & City Demonstration, Agency. 1970. Mid-term planning statement. Los Angeles, Calif.: [City Demonstration Agency].p.17.

⁶⁹ Oran W. Arsa. "Interview with Nancy Oppenheim". Highland Park News-Herald & Journal. Los Angeles, Calif.: November 24, 1968.

rising rents and increased tax responsibility. The Model City plan focused on continuing the trend of low-density housing that pushed urban workers to the city's peripheries as outlined by the low-density concept aptly described by Nancy Oppenheim interviewed by the Highland Park News-Herald and journal in 1968.⁷⁰ Oppenheim worked to collect data for the city planning department's Goals Program and had a preview of what the 1970 plan would entail.

Tax allocation bonds maintained a steady revenue for communities and redevelopers, provided there was a wealthy tenant to purchase the redeveloped property upon completion. The Los Angeles Plan and plans for model cities facilitated the transformation of low-income neighborhoods into more corporate-oriented mixed-use spaces. The process for challenging the plan was daunting for individual property owners and often very costly and unproductive. The better-funded city, corporations, and redevelopment agency dwarfed the individual's spending power and left them comparatively disempowered. The trade-off for this disempowerment was corporate job growth, which translated to a growth in the service sector and middle class, nonindustrial jobs.

Tenants organizations spoke to the necessity of low-income housing advocacy. Fair housing rights were a prominent issue for the social justice movements of the 1960s and '70s and found their way into the 10 point plans of both the Brown Berets and Black Panthers.⁷¹ In early 1973 the Coalition for Economic Survival was organized on the higher rent west side of Los Angeles to advocate for poverty and tenants' rights under Lucy Fried and Larry Gross. The west side was successful in negotiating rent control, for instance, in Beverly Hills (May 1978) and Santa Monica (April 1979) before the Los Angeles RSO in May 1979 in response to critically

⁷⁰ Oran W. Arsa. "Interview with Nancy Oppenheim". Highland Park News-Herald & Journal. Los Angeles, Calif.: November 24, 1968.

⁷¹ Chávez, *Mi Raza Primero! (My people first!): Nationalism, Identity, and Insurgency In The Chicano Movement in Los Angeles, 1966-1978*. P.49; Cleaver, Eldridge, "10 Point Plan" Black Panther newspaper, distributed and posted in New Haven, Connecticut in April 1970. Black Panther, Party & Ministry of, Information. 1967.

low vacancy rates and a lack of affordable housing.⁷² Housing projects were also grouping themselves into tenant led organizations. One example was the black-brown coalition assembled by COMMIT in the William Meade public housing units, or the Ramona Gardens coalition led by Alicia Escalante that eventually became the Welfare Rights Organization.⁷³ Rosalío Muñoz established the Committee to Stop Home Destruction, before he began work with COMMIT. The Committee to Stop Home Destruction activities were headquartered in Lincoln Heights and succeeded in populating the redevelopment planning board with actual tenants and neighborhood residents instead of handpicked appointments by the CRA.⁷⁴

UNTB demonstrated a single-issue model of Latinx community organizations more engaging in the transnational low-income community. Temple-Beaudry exhibited a new approach to the grassroots organization of low-income communities against displacement that did not rely solely on the activist homeowners. Community organizers such as Rosalío Muñoz hosted instructional workshops around fair housing, leaving the bulk of the fieldwork to actual community members most familiar with essential stakeholders. Rosalío worked for a nonprofit community organization called COMMIT, which provided social justice organizational training to combat urban renewal. Six Los Angeles denominations of the Protestant church funded COMMIT, beginning in 1970.⁷⁵ Muñoz explains that the objectives of COMMIT were to support communities' self-determined position. Muñoz cites Temple-Beaudry as an example of successful advocacy in which Tenants organized into UNTB and received compensation and

⁷² Los Angeles Municipal code Chapter XV SEC. 151.01. DECLARATION OF PURPOSE.

⁷³ Annual report on outreach in community In response to a funders question "how are the poor who are being helped by the project involved in planning and implementing of it?" Grant No 74-124 January 1975. Box 35, Folder 7. Rosalío Muñoz Papers (Collection 2115). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles; Page 2 Resume of Alicia Escalante 1976 Significant Actions point 1, box 1 folder 1, Alicia Escalante Papers, CEMA 183. Department of Special Research Collections, UC Santa Barbara Library.

⁷⁴ Page 7 of unpublished manuscript on urban recycling Box. 35 folder 3. Rosalío Muñoz Papers (Collection 2115). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

⁷⁵ COMMIT Correspondence Box 35, Folder 7. Rosalío Muñoz Papers (Collection 2115). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

legal assistance upon displacement. COMMIT's efforts successfully enabled the community members to rally around their existing networks for maximum efficacy. This type of advocacy was seen as controversial and compelled many Protestant denominations to express concern in correspondence over the scope of COMMIT's direct involvement leading to an eventual suspension of funding by critical donors for the organization's persistence in battling home destruction.⁷⁶ COMMIT effectively organized citizens groups to demand inclusion in response to the 1970 General plan for Los Angeles utilizing Model Cities federal funding, which guaranteed that a citizens representative board must be maintained and consulted.⁷⁷ The COMMIT model was readily reproducible and adaptable to specific communities' needs, especially with the support of free Legal aid administered by the Western Center on Law and Poverty, El Centro Chicano of USC, and the Community Information Project.⁷⁸ The group utilized legal help to file suit in response to unlawful detainers and draft letters to stakeholders. COMMIT was successful in organizing community issues until its unceremonious defunding in 1978.⁷⁹

Chata Piña emerged as an outspoken community member who received the COMMIT organizational training.⁸⁰ Chata Piña was a spokesperson and founding member of the United Neighbors of Temple-Beaudry, which gathered community members experiencing poor housing

⁷⁶ June 26 1978, Letter from Protestant Bishop's assistant Oliver B. Garner to Maurice Flora advocating the defunding COMMIT, Box 35, Folder 7. Rosalío Muñoz Papers (Collection 2115). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles; A Declaration of conscience written by Evan R Williams To the diocesan council to defund COMMIT Box 35, Folder 7. Rosalío Muñoz Papers (Collection 2115). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

⁷⁷ Summary of investigation of Housing Development Corporations representative board Box 35 Folder 4. Rosalío Muñoz Papers (Collection 2115). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

⁷⁸ COMMIT quarterly report #1 June 1974 Box 35 Folder 4. Rosalío Muñoz Papers (Collection 2115). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

⁷⁹ COMMIT correspondence detailing the termination of COMMIT board Box 35 Folder 6. Rosalío Muñoz Papers (Collection 2115). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

⁸⁰ United Neighbors Temple Beaudry press release Box 35, Folder 7. Rosalío Muñoz Papers (Collection 2115). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

conditions and eviction.⁸¹ The organization's picket line outside landlord Chit Yong's Chinatown offices gained media attention in the Los Angeles Herald as mostly women tenants and their children paced the block with hand-painted signs. Mostly first-generation immigrant and low-income native-born residents comprised the UNTB. Tenants expressed maintenance safety and security concerns, which ultimately led to the group pursuing legal action against developers and landlords. The group received support from both the COMMIT staff and lawyers associated with the burgeoning Coalition for Economic Survival, a tenants rights organization made up of mostly Westside residents.⁸² Muñoz also hosted workshops and training for CES throughout the 1970s and 80's around tenants' fair housing rights. With the help of lawyers, the United Neighbors Temple Beaudry secured payment for replacement housing and assistance in rental housing location. The UNTB benefited from the coalitional organizational efforts in motion by tenant's rights organizations and the Chicano movement outreach strategy.

UNTB introduced immigrant tenant coalitional advocacy to the displacement discussion as a voice separate from property owners. Community outreach and training required widespread efforts and support from non-community members. An example of outside advocacy was COMMIT board president Maurice Flora's September 1977 letter to councilman John Ferraro which advocated for UNTB recognition in redevelopment efforts.⁸³ UNTB successfully assisted in advocating for the timely completion of restitution payments of \$2,500.00 per family displaced by the Bank of America development and rehousing assistance by 1975.⁸⁴ Protests

⁸¹ Los Angeles Herald Examiner Photo Collection. Protesting the paving of paradise :: Los Angeles Public Library Photo Collection. Los Angeles: <https://tessa.lapl.org/cdm/ref/collection/photos/id/28203>

⁸² CES press release July 22, 1980 protesting Yong's evictions, Box 37, Folder 5. Rosalío Muñoz Papers (Collection 2115). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

⁸³ COMMIT correspondence dated 9/14/77, Box 35, Folder 4. Rosalío Muñoz Papers (Collection 2115). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

⁸⁴ FRANK del OLMO. "Computer Center Plan Spurs Fight Over Downtown Area: DOWNTOWN PLAN". Los Angeles Times (1923-1995); Los Angeles, Calif. [Los Angeles, Calif]15 Sep 1974: b.

and press releases were viable outlets for community activists who advocated for coalition causes within their network. For instance, Rosalío Muñoz' work with COMMIT training often overlapped with UNTB and CES goals and causes and featured heavily in his activism. Without the organizational efforts working in coalition, community voices would not be elevated to the city's attention. Women and children performed the protests and humanized the housing conditions otherwise discussed as inanimate property. The evictions reached 500 families, but the poor housing conditions were even more widespread. Landlords opting to sell at high speculative real estate prices ignored tenants' plight and created untenable living conditions. UNTB protested against absentee property owners and demanded that officials direct themselves to the group instead of individuals. The tenants interacted with representatives for the Mayor's office in community meetings and city council meetings. A 1978 COMMIT meeting minutes documents Chata Piña's effective outreach in coordinating a meeting with United States Senator Alan Cranston at the Temple-Beaudry site to explain conditions.⁸⁵ The UNTB's autonomy from COMMIT allowed them to vote and act independently most attune to their community's specific needs while still utilizing their network and expertise.

The UNTB's experience with urban redevelopment was not unlike the bulldozing throughout Los Angeles; however, their connection to coalition movements and legal aid facilitated their resistance and restitution. The urban redevelopment plans of the 1950s to the present have sought to eliminate low-income housing in favor of lucrative corporate space. The community could have benefitted from efforts to maintain the property by landlords. However, redevelopment funding ignored this necessity in favor of demolition. Property hoarders such as those in the Temple-Beaudry community acted in cooperation with the real estate market and

⁸⁵COMMIT meeting minutes September 6 1978, Box 25, folder 7. Rosalío Muñoz Papers (Collection 2115). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

profitability demands. Designating communities as slums and targets for redevelopment was a crucial first step in understanding poverty symptoms. However, further study needs to follow up on mechanisms to assist the poor where they are instead of moving them from region to region away from expensive real estate. Elected officials' concern for future tax revenue cannot be the only deciding factor in redevelopment. Analysis of voting records and the composition of oversight boards offers inroads to networking corporate influence in housing policy. The study of tenant organization and resistance to political forces is integral to understanding the experience of those on the margins of society and gaining more insight as to how economic practices translate to lived experience

Acuña, Rodolfo. *A Community under Siege : A Chronicle of Chicanos East of the Los Angeles River, 1945-1975*. Los Angeles: Chicano Studies Research Center, Publications, University of California at Los Angeles, 1984.

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