



JENNIFER TILTON

# DANGEROUS or ENDANGERED?

Race and the Politics of Youth in Urban America

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# Dangerous or Endang

*Race and the Politics  
in Urban America*

Jennifer Tilton



NEW YORK UNIVERSITY  
*New York and London*

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I could never have written this book without my wonderful husband, Jim, and my son, Zack, who supported me every day and weekends writing. Being a mother is a joy and imagine the fear and anger of mothers whose children have to face barriers our son will never face. The realities of black parents whose children are being taken by security guards now makes me livid in my heart. I feel if I had to prepare my son for that day, I would feel if Zack were afraid every day. I become more committed to fighting for a world where we don't have to live in fear. Being a mother makes me aware of the aggressive possibility of a politics of children. It is not easy it is to narrowly defend the privilege of the few.

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by my family and all those who have  
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hurdles they've had to overcome.

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eges of your own child.

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## Introduction: Who's Responsible for

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In June 1999, recently elected Mayor Ron Brown addressed the Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) at a community center auditorium at the eastern edge of Oakland. Speaking to approximately fifty, mostly African American homeowners, Mayor Brown detailed his philosophy: "I talk to people everywhere in Oakland, from the streets to the schools." Crime rates were declining, but the council and Oakland's citizens disagreed on how to proceed. Some favored "an overtly hard line on crime" while others favored punishment, improving schools, or building more facilities. Mayor Brown opened the meeting for questions. A woman in her mid-thirties asked if the city had a plan for the future. Mayor Brown mentioned new funding to open new facilities. She added, "Facilities are full. Even to be open, they need to be a test. So it is hard to discipline youth. We need to be thinking more in terms of prevention, not just punishment." Mayor Brown agreed: "That's our philosophy, but building facilities doesn't work. So we need to be thinking more in terms of prevention, not just punishment."

Talk about Oakland's present and future was the focus of the discussion about youth, who seemed to be the cause of the city's crises and its hopes for change. In response to the related question, Mayor Brown returned to the topic. "I've answered this woman's question," he said.

Prevention is an environment where you have to be as disciplined. It is very hard for them to think about prevention. First you need the facilities, then the neighborhood. If we have to go to

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## or Kids?

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Mayor Jerry Brown visited a Neighbor-PC) meeting in an elementary school Oakland, California's sprawling flatlands. Mostly African American, middle-class is plans for revitalizing the city, "When d, they are concerned about crime and but "not fast enough." He knew that to respond; some at the meeting took others focused on economic develop- after-school programs. When Mayor ions, an African American woman in plan to reduce juvenile crime. Mayor en recreation centers longer, and then arrested and held, youth have to pass a." The woman explained that she was remarking, "Locking them up doesn't ur paradox. We've got to do something, what do we do?"

future almost invariably turned into a to simultaneously embody both the After briefly responding to an unre- l to this topic: "I don't believe that I've id.

e young people are respected as well e state and the city to take the lead mily, then relatives, and then maybe to institutions, it's not going to work

so well. First of all, those institutions want to pay for funding those kinds to prevent crime, only to build prisons important, as are after-school programs responsible. Basically you are on your own for a number of reasons. One requires there to be a bottom 5 to 10 that generates failure as the flip side block by block. There is no pie in the I would have discovered it as government city government can solve all that.

Mayor Jerry Brown and the African this meeting struggled with a basic supported kids coming of age were of Oakland's children seemed in doubt debates over how the city should to "break down"? Were young people lies or by racial exclusions and a dead Oakland's children endangered or had Could the city and state help? Or own, forced to solve the urgent crises block"? This book explores the politics the twenty-first century, drawing on residents who struggled to shape the endangered youth. It investigates how needs of young people have fundamentally temporary United States.

Youth is a concept that is "good to talk and between childhood and adulthood think about social change, about the past narrated complex historical changes from hood to childhood today. But young people of the city's and the nation's future. The children living mere blocks from despair both the ideal of equal opportunity and College graduates overburdened with stable work confounded assumptions hood. Teenage boys dealing drugs or g



ideals of childhood innocence and high hopes for a bright and secure future for all our children.

Youth today call to mind a troubling image of children falling behind, “babies having babies.” These images don’t begin to capture the reality of the young people in America. Instead, they “obscure the real problem in itself.”<sup>2</sup> Moral panics about youth have distorted our images of youth at the beginning of the turn of the twenty-first century. We are afraid of “other people’s children.” This fear has produced dangerous maps of complex racial, class, and geographic realities in U.S. cities. Understanding the politics of youth requires tracing these intricate connections. We must question the images we use, and the impact of these images on the policies of our political community.

We usually think of children and youth as belonging to the private sphere and most are excluded from the public sphere. The idea that children belong in the private sphere is a product of the public realm where citizens struggle for a better government.<sup>3</sup> But feminist scholars have shown the overlap between private and public, between the domestic and like the daily struggles of parents or youth with issues of economics and politics.<sup>4</sup> Childhood as a space between public and private spheres that is constantly in flux is characteristic of modern states. Our shifting definitions of the form of the welfare state through the twentieth century also transformed city and suburban space. The idea that the idea of “dangerous streets” and “unsafe neighborhoods” aside the idea of fragile, innocent children in their own private homes in the late nineteenth century. The struggles of youth have repeatedly restructured the boundaries between public and private responsibility, public and private as the proper realm of politics.

Considering youth and politics together in the context of urban America and the broad political history of the nation at the end of the twentieth century. Understanding these changes requires a critical analysis of all the messy work that must be done to create a nation of workers. Children have certain

ghlighted our failures to ensure a safe  
ng set of images: kids failing school or  
gang members, and school shooters.  
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, and gender divides in contemporary  
of youth requires careful attention to  
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th century and into the twenty-first.  
s that we explore *social reproduction*:  
to raise and educate the next genera-  
ly been affected by growing economic

insecurity and a retreating and increasing. Children also serve as powerful symbols. As such, they have helped to shape cultural transformations.<sup>5</sup>

The question “Who is responsible for this cultural question. Young people need many things: they need to be safe, fed, and dressed; love and care; and they need to be able to make the transition to adulthood. We need to equip them with the skills and capacities to do this work of social reproduction? The default answer in many contemporary contexts is that we do not do their vital work in a vacuum. Many institutions shape children’s lives and futures and enable or hinder them. Schools, parks, playgrounds, and community centers are important spaces for children’s development. Children walk and play, form friendships, and learn. They develop their own social networks. Government shapes all these spaces for children. State funding, policies, and security practices have reshaped schools, classrooms and hallways. Federal housing and development practices have produced wealth and poverty. State governments also establish taxation policies, discrimination laws, and social services. Even the time, families and children have to spend. The parent for children in foster care are often not the parent where children will live, with whom, and how. In many diverse ways, the state plays a significant role in shaping the paths to adulthood, and the very categories of childhood.

America has become a nation of racial inequality. We have the highest child poverty rates of any major nation. We are the wealthiest nation in the world. In the last three decades, concentrating wealth in the top class, and condemning many families to poverty. Kids born poor are likely to be poor. It is a mockery of our national commitment to equality. Schools more often reflect existing racial inequality than a secure path to the middle class. We need to change that. The Children’s Defense Fund has been



singly punitive welfare state. But children (and sometimes actors) in politics. contemporary political and economic

or children?" is fundamentally a political question about the kinds of care: physical care to keep children safe; emotional support; guidance to help them learn; education and training to provide them with skills to thrive as workers and citizens. So who is responsible? Parents (often mothers) are the easy target in political debates. But parents don't do it all. Schools, institutions, spaces, and policies shape children's lives or constrain parental investments in their children. Parks, and recreation centers are important. So are neighborhoods, where children learn, get guidance from other adults, and where government actions (or inactions) affect their lives. Funding for schools, zero tolerance policies, and police practices have shaped children's daily lives in Oakland's most vulnerable neighborhoods. Housing policies and local urban redevelopment have shaped mostly white neighborhoods and mostly Black neighborhoods. State and federal government actions, like the minimum wage, parental leave policies, and social safety nets that shape the resources, opportunities, and challenges children have together. The state literally acts as a parent through the juvenile justice system, deciding when children are in trouble and how they will be punished. In these ways, government has a central role in shaping children's lives, their opportunities, and their stories of child and youth.<sup>7</sup>

radically unequal childhoods.<sup>8</sup> We tolerate more inequality in any industrialized country, though we are not alone. Economic inequalities have grown in the United States. Wealth at the top, eroding the middle class, and moving to the growing ranks of the working poor—many become poor adults—a fact that makes the current situation far from the ideal of equal opportunity.<sup>9</sup> Racial and class inequalities that provide the context for how we now incarcerate so many poor children have led us to begin to fight against what it calls the

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“cradle-to-prison pipeline.” These policies have become a degree racial causes, despite widespread awareness. Black and Latino children are more likely to be incarcerated than white and most other groups. This has raised fundamental questions about the future of the post-civil rights era, an era that has seen the resurgence of inequalities, and new barriers for black children.

This book chronicles race and the politics of education debates among parents, community activists, and youth activists about how to respond to the challenges of young people’s lives. The pervasive image of black boys in the spotlight of Oakland politics is a reflection of fears of and fears for black children. It is the experience of black parents and activists as they work to create a better world for black children. But it also explores the complexities of race, class, and gender that characterize the lives and struggles of activists in this one city. It asks the questions that face the nation: Why does the United States have so many children’s lives? And what kind of political and social conditions create opportunity childhoods?

### *Children in a War on Dependence*

Mayor Jerry Brown’s speech embodied a new vision of neoliberal governance. He encouraged families to govern themselves and defined government as a response to deep crises facing Oakland’s children. He argued that “government can’t raise children” and that families and neighborhoods had to take responsibility for care for children “on their own”—although he also acknowledged the state’s responsibility for protecting children. Brown’s limited vision of government and the challenges he faces in his struggles to govern Oakland in the context of a rapidly changing and significant changes in our ideas about the role of government of the state.

Many scholars have explored how the role of government has been reconfigured in a rapidly globalizing world. This book explores representative political bodies and bureaucratic structures that have

cies have racial effects, and to some had claims that race no longer matters. More likely to grow up poor and more likely to be Asian kids.<sup>10</sup> These inequalities have changed the meaning of race and class in the face of even expanding opportunities, lingering for black kids coming of age.<sup>11</sup>

The politics of youth in Oakland and the activism of activists, politicians, policy makers, and parents to these deep racial and class divides in the face of black youth crime placed black politics at the center. This book does likewise, concentrating on boys and tracing the urgent dilemmas they worked to secure safe passage to adulthood. It explores the more complex intersections of racialized politics in Oakland. The stories in this book help us address two broad questions: How can the United States tolerate such inequalities in the face of black politics? What would be required to create equal-

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He applied many principles of what scholars have argued individuals and communities to do in the face of a government as almost powerless to solve the problem. His speech echoed the commonsense notion of “children,” as he characterized the state in the face of “institutions.” Ultimately he asserted that the state had to reconstruct spaces and networks of support, though he momentarily embraced the notion of protecting citizens from “dangerous youth.” Jerry Brown’s responsibility stemmed from his own recognition of massive economic inequalities in the face of government and in the structure of the state.

the state and state power have been a global world.<sup>12</sup> “The state” includes the responsibilities of local, state, and national gov-

ernments that make and implement law as “a disembodied or reified object” or justice that “somehow sits above the fray of everyday life and relationships” that are “enacted through the actions of individuals” (teachers, police officers, social workers) in their work, at home, and in neighborhoods. This is the untested *idea*: What is the role of government?

Since the late 1970s, conservative “nanny state” have radically challenged the welfare state that was built up during the New Deal in the sixties.<sup>15</sup> Democratic and Republican administrations have promoted free market ideologies and borrowed neoliberal institutions. State and federal governments have reduced and curtailed spending for many health care programs and reformed many federal entitlement programs (such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children) into block grants. Neoliberalism has created a devolved and decentralized state in which for-profit agencies provide most social services. Neoliberalism argued that a “war on dependence” helped drive the welfare state. This policy and practice. “Reliance for support on government as “failure.” Neoliberal policies encouraged individuals and communities to act like entrepreneurs, relying on their own “dependent” on government.<sup>16</sup> Welfare reform for single mothers are no longer supposed to be a safety net. They are expected to embrace the “independence” of the market. The war on dependence has extended deep into the lives of individuals to invest in their own retirement savings, employee pensions and calling for cost-cutting measures once provided by government.

Neoliberal governance has not reduced the size of government. The rise of law-and-order politics has increased the “power to punish.”<sup>18</sup> As anthropologist David Graeber notes, violence is the “real cultural logic” of neoliberalism. Crime has skyrocketed in the last twenty years. In 1990, when one out of every one hundred Americans were in prison, they have not been immune to the rise of police power. The increasingly defined youth—especially young men—are seen as dangerous thugs and gang members. In 1990, only eighteen to be tried as adults, and the

aws and policies. But the state is not just a set of policy-making institutions in everyday life.” Rather, the state is “a set of practices of social agents” (judges, politicians, community activists) at work.<sup>13</sup> The state is also a powerful and contentious agent.<sup>14</sup>

Recent attacks on “big government” and the welfare state have led and transformed the welfare state. Republican administrations in the 1930s and Great Society in the 1960s and 1970s alike embraced neoliberal market models to reconfigure state power. Republican administrations cut taxes, reduced regulations, and cut health and welfare services. They transferred social programs (like Aid to Families with Dependent Children) administered by the states, creating a new social order in which private for-profit and non-profit organizations provide services. Historian Michael Katz argues that the idea of “dependence on someone” has been redefined to encourage individual citizens and communities to be self-reliant on themselves and not “dependent on the state but instead dependent on the job market offers.”<sup>17</sup> This new social order has woven into the social fabric, encouraging self-reliance instead of depending on the state. Citizen volunteers to provide services

have increased state power, despite calls for smaller government. Under politics has expanded the state’s power. Roger Lancaster has argued, punitive-neoliberalism.<sup>19</sup> The U.S. prison population has tripled in 20 years, tripling between 1987 and 2007, with 2.3 million Americans was behind bars.<sup>20</sup> Children in the United States are under penal governance. A fearful public has targeted poor black and Latino young men—especially in the inner cities. All states now allow children under 18 to be in the United States is the only industrial-

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ized nation that sentences children to California now spends roughly as much on education. These punitive public policies reduce children's life chances.<sup>21</sup> But the punishment extended deeply into neighborhoods and changed our ideas of both childhood and the state, so that an emerging "penal common sense" redefined citizenship as the right to sufficient police protection.

These neoliberal policies have created deep inequalities in childhood.<sup>24</sup> Children are being pushed into the marketplace, but by definition they need adults for care. So what happens to children when the human costs of neoliberal governance are felt in Oakland's schools and neighborhoods, where many middle-class families lose their economic status, children attend schools in a drug war destroyed families and locked up young black men. As Michael Katz has argued, "the state could not displace misery onto other people; the burden of responsibility ended in their streets."

Many innovations of neoliberal governance emerged in cities like Oakland, which struggled to provide for children and families with a limited tax base and funds. Jerry Brown's call for neighborhood schools was one of the central characteristics of neoliberal governance: reliance on volunteers and community organizations to provide government services.<sup>26</sup> Oakland's community schools invited city's residents to become partners with the police in orderly neighborhoods. The city's schools were a major source of funding and a vital part of the city's economy, an unstable combination of government services and a growing portion of city services for children.

Each of these partnerships opened up new spaces for parents to shape the policies and practices of local government. Working-class activists gained some power to shape the city's policies to transform the historically tense relationship between parents and the police department. Parents worked with the city and an expanded nonprofit sector to improve early development and after-school programs. A

life without the possibility of parole. Much on the prison system as on higher education, the war on drugs has decimated families and many communities. The punitive logic of criminal justice has also reshaped neighborhoods and schools, where they have reshaped the social landscape.<sup>22</sup> Sociologist Loic Wacquant argues that “the war on crime” is redefining the central right of citizenship: the right to police protection.<sup>23</sup>

The war on drugs has created new crises of care for children and youth. Children are not autonomous agents acting in their own best interests; children are dependents reliant on adults. How do we care for children during a “war on dependence”? The challenges were particularly evident in Oakland, where poor families struggled to maintain their households, and middle-class families only clung precariously to the edge of the middle class. Schools without textbooks, and the lack of resources led up a shocking number of the city’s schools to be closed. As argued, cities in the 1980s and 1990s were forced to reexamine levels of government; the devolution of power to local governments<sup>25</sup>

Local urban governance were forged in the crucible of the war on drugs to respond to the escalating needs of the urban poor. A tax base and declining state and federal support forced cities to work block by block highlights one model of local urban governance: an increased reliance on community partnerships to provide basic governance. Community policing initiatives called for the increased involvement of the police in order to create safe and stable neighborhoods. Schools relied on parent volunteers as a critical part of their daily operations. Nonprofits, funded by state and foundation grants, provided a critical support system for children and youth.

The war on drugs created opportunities for Oakland’s activists to challenge local government.<sup>27</sup> Community policing challenged police priorities and some leverage was gained through the relationship between black communities and the police. Community groups worked with children’s advocacy groups to demand an increase in public funding for youth development programs. And, contrary to Jerry Brown’s claims,

they created a “lobby to prevent crime” also reshaped the way neighborhood and interests.<sup>28</sup> Public-private partners what youth needed and created urgency. How could the police make neighborhoods themselves were usually the target of police public investments in children at a moment decimated progressive taxation policies childhoods? How could they win support from a fearful public that defined youth but also as dangerous and unworthy?

### *Race and the Politics of Youth*

Children and youth serve as important reconstruct the state in the current global both forging and contesting neoliberalism. This book responds to recent call for a new ideology imposed from the top down, especially at the local level. We need to explore processes, the multiple agents and interests in urban governance.<sup>29</sup> *Fears of youth* and activists in Oakland. The ways they frame people shaped the visions of the state and the action they tried to secure.

“Youth” has long been a “slippery concept” also seen as potentially and unpredictability that can only be defined in relation to “adult.” The meaning and referential, cultural, and political contexts.<sup>31</sup> Child, adolescent, woman, and adult are not neutral dense cultural meanings that have varied history. From the midnineteenth century from being defined as useful workers “mentally priceless” focus of middle-class industrialized societies began to emphasize vulnerability, and capacity for change based on cultural knowledge or moral responsibility. The “teenager” in the 19



” But these different new partnerships activists framed their political identities. Partnerships sometimes redefined ideas about the dilemmas for community activists. Neighborhoods safe for black kids who themselves sweeps? How could activists expand their movement when free-market ideologies had been ideas that might fund equal-opportunity support for state investments in children with not only as endangered innocents

important symbols in conflicts over how to shape the global economic order. Yet their role in global governance has been underappreciated. It is time to look at neoliberalism not as uniform but as a process shaped significantly by the complex social and political interests, that drive changing regimes of state. *Child fears for youth* motivated many activists to address the needs and problems of young people they promoted and the kinds of state

concept” invested with adult hopes but also probably dangerous.<sup>30</sup> It is a flexible identification to the opposing categories “child” and “youth” change in different historical contexts: child, boy, girl, teen, youth, young man, and natural categories. They are laden with meaning and varied globally and throughout U.S. history. Up to the midtwentieth, children went from being the “useless” but “sentimental” of middle-class family life. Most modern industrial societies value not only children’s innate innocence, but also their incompetence and lack of responsibility.<sup>32</sup> “Adolescent” in the early twentieth century evoked other complex meanings:

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idealism, exuberance, and rebellion, but the surge of sex hormones, and susceptibility to peer pressure that becomes an adolescent or an adult has not disappeared. What do children need in order to thrive. Do they need structure? Do they need full-time care from parents or from day care and after-school programs outside of the home? Do they need work or to be removed entirely from the home? Do they need discipline or affection, care or control? Do they play in more structured and supervised environments in “troubled homes” or removed from the home? Americans don’t all give the same answers. Different cultures suggested different responses over the course of the century.

These mobile categories compel urban and rural communities, community activists and policy makers to choose. Mica Pollock explains, talk is “an everyday activity that describes it.”<sup>34</sup> Debates over the nature of youth have taken on natural weight and political consequence in the United States, a political field.<sup>35</sup> If we describe young people as “children,” we frame them as not fully responsible and in need. However, if we describe them as “thugs,” we frame them as adults and the possibilities and protections of adulthood. We can reward, well treat, and punish, them as adults.

Youth have often served as fertile ground for the development of liberal ideologies of self-help and private responsibility across the United States. The idea that the family could easily reify a narrow notion of the good that the government cannot (and should not) do. Dangerous youth often justified efforts to control them. People from Oakland’s schools and streets were seen as in need of discipline, not care or education. The state acted as a disciplinary father with expansive power to regulate people’s behavior in urban spaces.

But children and youth also remain central to many political projects that aimed to reform urban spaces. Community advocates and youth activists in Oakland and elsewhere framed images of children as vulnerable and in need of care as a way to argue against the privatization of social responsibility. They sought new sources of funding for youth development programs and used the state’s role as parent to challenge the

ut also irrationality, delinquency, rag-  
eer pressure.<sup>33</sup> When and how a child  
shifted over time, as has what we think  
kids need free play or 24-hour educa-  
m stay-at-home mothers or preschool  
the home? Do they need meaningful  
the workforce? Do they need physical  
? Can they play in the street or should  
rvised spaces? Do they need to be kept  
the influence of problematic parents?  
vers today, and our public policies sug-  
urse of the twentieth century.

s to pay close attention to the ways  
rs talk about youth. As anthropologist  
yday action that shapes the world as it  
and needs of young people carry cul-  
es; they are “acts and interventions” in  
people in the juvenile justice system as  
responsible and inherently reformable.  
gs,” their future is already determined  
f childhood are foreclosed. We may as

ground for the proliferation of neo-  
vativized family values in Oakland and  
t children belong in the private realm  
w idea of family responsibility and the  
(and should not) help. Images of dan-  
e control, contain, and exclude young  
reets. They reified the idea that youth  
on, and promoted an idea of the state  
e powers to police and regulate young

ned particularly powerful symbols for  
nstruct a social safety net. Children’s  
and used commonsense understand-  
in need of adult protection to fight  
responsibility for children and to secure  
development. Youth activists similarly  
allenge the incarceration of children.

On a national level, the Children's Defense Fund's book *It Takes a Village to Raise a Child* has used the dependence and innocence of children to argue for state investments in social reproduction, choice, accountability, and self-governance. Childhood may offer the most viable space for social programs and to bring questions of race into the political vocabulary.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, children have become dependent on the state as neoliberalism has redefined the failure of citizenship.

Race intersects with the politics of childhood in first-century America. Not all children have had the symbolic power of childhood innocence. In particular, black boys and girls, have long been associated with criminality or sexuality, and have had to make claims on the state. As historian Henry Louis Gates Jr. wrote, "white southerners in the Jim Crow era often depicted black children as innocents or extended family members." "Childhood to blacks."<sup>37</sup> Black parents had to navigate a racially structured world in which the state was often hostile to a white mob lynching, as it did with the case of Emmett Till at a national level, while Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, in 1938, the Fair Labor Standards Act, which prohibited domestic service from the new regulations, which protected children who worked in those industries, and the lack of a system of protection.

The post-civil rights era certainly led to a decline in the chances of many black children. But as the racialization of youth crime created new opportunities, in the late 1960s, black youth crime has become a central theme. Hill Collins calls "a controlling image of blackness" in politics more broadly.<sup>39</sup> It focused blackness on the image of black boys, often marginalizing other images, and had much broader political effects as well. The "tough on crime" rhetoric have produced support for punitive policies, such as the "zero tolerance" like criminals in the nation's schools, and the "tough on crime" built support for shrinking state spending on education, while spending on police and prisons seem a

defense Fund, as well as Hillary Clinton's *Let's Move!*, tried to reclaim the progressive spirit of children and youth to argue for reform. Because neoliberal ideologies of performance falter when applied to kids, there is space for citizens to call for large-scale investments of care and the social back into our lives. Children and youth may be the only legitimized group that has defined dependency as the ulti-

mate of youth in important ways in twenty-first-century America. Youth today have equal access to the symbols of success and dependency. Youth of color, particularly Black youth, have long been linked with other symbolic markers of failure—that have undermined their ability to succeed. In her 2008 memoir, Jennifer Ritterhouse documents how she, a Black woman, rarely saw any but the very young-est children in the ideal of the sheltered child. She writes that she had to train their children to survive in a world where a “wrong” look or comment could lead to violence, as in the case of fourteen-year-old Emmett Till. On the other hand, F. D. Roosevelt declared an “end to child labor” in 1938, but it pointedly excluded agriculture and domestic work. The largely black and Latino children who worked in these industries were not considered children wor-

thy. This exclusion led to improvements in the lives and life chances of Black children in an increasingly punitive state and the rise of new barriers and urgent problems. Since then, the law has worked as what legal theorist Patricia Williams calls “the law of the white man” both in Oakland and in American cities. It has blocked political action on the predicaments of Black children, with attention to black girls.<sup>40</sup> But it has had a profound impact on Racially coded images of ghetto youth and the development of public policies that treat boys as adults in the streets, and justice system. They have had to fight for social supports while making their lives as difficult as absolutely necessary.<sup>41</sup>

*For Kids?*

## *The End of Democratized Adolescence*

Community activists in Oakland have long had statutory concerns about young people coming of age too soon, but some adult “children” are now shrinking, even disappearing, for some people, leaving room for others. These anxieties highlight the instability of adulthood as stable, taken-for-granted in the twenty-first century.<sup>42</sup>

Neoliberal economic shifts and state policies have moved from *dependent* childhood to *independent* childhood in the post-World War II era when an expansive, relatively “orderly” transition to adulthood was the norm in the United States.<sup>43</sup> Back then, youth would finish high school, get a full-time job, move out, buy a home, and then start their own family. This was that linear path, but it remained the norm when they were measured. Today the path to adulthood is a series of roundabouts. Economic insecurity and the need to stay at home with young people leave home at later ages, often into their parents far into their twenties, if not later. Books on “the mid-mid-life crisis,” “becoming an adult,” and “grow up” document our struggle to understand adulthood.<sup>45</sup> Scholars have called this new adulthood “late adolescence,” and some developmental psychologists now define adulthood as beginning in the midtwenties.<sup>46</sup>

Changing state policies over the last century have blurred the boundaries between childhood and adulthood. On the one hand, the United States has expanded child protection. Raising the drinking age, increasing the age on statutory rape, the state has extended its reach into and beyond the teenage years. Other state policies have led to a radical shrinking of the age of majority. The country prosecutes younger and younger people, and people have not experienced these shifts in the same way. Geographer Susan Ruddick calls “developmental” childhood “profoundly frayed. The category of youth is being stretched and class lines in Oakland: poor kids, who are often in the system, while the protected children of the middle class are not.”

cence

expressed two apparently contradictory things of age: children were growing up but never grew up. Childhood seemed to be lengthening for kids at the same time it was lengthening through deep disruptions in childhood and the loss of “natural” categories at the start of the 20th century.

Welfare policies changed the idealized path to independent adulthood that emerged in the industrial economy helped produce a reality for most young people in the United States. They finish their education (often just high school), leave their parents’ home, marry, maybe start a family. Not all young people followed this norm against which most deviations in adulthood has many more detours and delays. Extended education mean that many young people stay and remain semidependent on their parents well beyond.<sup>44</sup> News features and self-help books called “boomerang kids,” and “boys who never grow up” understand these delayed transitions to adulthood as a new reality “emerging adulthood,” and sociologists now argue that adolescence extends to young adulthood.

In the last thirty years have also redrawn the boundaries of adulthood in contradictory ways. On the one hand, created an ever-expanding culture of permissiveness and smoking age and cracking down on the boundaries of childhood as a protected status. On the other hand, get tough on crime and the loss of childhood as jurisdictions around the world treat younger children as adults.<sup>47</sup> Yet young people are affected equally. The material basis for what was called “democratized adolescence” had become a reality where youth itself seemed to split along racial and class lines. Poor kids of color, grew up too soon, and the middle class never grew up.

Law and order politics has helped childhood. Since the 1970s, white and middle class children have been removed from the juvenile justice system, they are now housed in private facilities and treated in an expanding private system. At the same time, and not coincidentally, the number of children in custody increased for the largely black and Latino population. California Proposition 21, the Gang Prevention Act, epitomized this get tough approach. In response to reports of gang violence, voters passed Proposition 21 when youth crime was at a twenty-year low. The law imposed penalties for a wide range of juvenile offenses, including gang members, and, most controversially, tried kids over fourteen as adults for any violent crimes.<sup>49</sup> Between 1985 and 1997, the number of children in prisons more than doubled in the United States. They are disproportionately charged and incarcerated, and the category of childhood and the protection of children. Historian Barry Feld argues that these changes represent a “social triage,” separating “our kids,” who are seen as people’s kids, who are framed as irredeemable, from the criminal justice system have created a new class of boys and criminality that threatens to become increasingly potentially dangerous.<sup>55</sup>

These changes in the path to adulthood have reinforced racial and class lines, while they have also shaped social reproduction in black communities. The unequal opportunities have been torn apart, and the families have prospered as never before. But the juvenile justice policies have created shadows and foundations of many others. New generations of black communities as more black women pursue education and progress stalled. Even black middle class families are spending time ensuring that their children remain in the middle class than do white families.<sup>56</sup> Marita Stanger’s *Saving Our Sons*, captures the intensification of this face as they come of age. For her son, she draws a demarcation between childhood and adulthood that is a precipice.<sup>57</sup>



to codify new racial exclusions from middle-class youth have been removed, their problems increasingly medicalized in a system of mental health facilities.<sup>48</sup> Initially, punishments have significantly impacted Latino poor kids left in the public system, including Violence and Juvenile Crime Prevention on youth trend. Scared by mass media and Proposition 21 in 2000 even though.<sup>50</sup> The ballot initiative increased penalties, enhanced penalties for alleged offenses, gave prosecutors the authority to charge any felony crime, including nonviolent offenses, increasing the number of youth incarcerated in adult prisons in the United States.<sup>52</sup> Black and Latino boys are incarcerated as adults, excluding them from the protections of the juvenile justice system.<sup>53</sup> These changes have served as “criminological” tools to be seen as salvageable, from “other” to “deemable.”<sup>54</sup> These racial inequalities in the United States have redefined the popular equation between black youth and adulthood, redefining black boys across class lines as

adulthood have increased fears across the country, which have caused an even deeper crisis of opportunity for all communities. As formal legal barriers to adulthood have come down, some black middle-class families are struggling. But economic restructuring and criminal justice reform have rocked waves that have destroyed the traditional boundaries between gender fissures have emerged in black communities. While black men prospered while black men’s economic opportunities have eroded, middle-class families have a much harder time maintaining a secure foothold in the middle class. Michelle Golden, author of the popular book *Black Boy: A Story of Resilience*, defined risk that black boys in particular face. In an interview with Michael, she explained, “the line of adulthood was not a border, but a

## *Oakland's Divided Landscapes of*

Oakland's unequal childhoods were shaped by geography, which runs from the formerly flatlands to the tall hills filled with parklands through the suburbs. The "flatlands" and "the hills" provided a lens through which government and provided an important lens through which and contested deepening divides in youth. Both significant symbolic boundaries and physical terrain. In 2000, in many areas of the East Bay, 52 percent of households lived below the 580 freeway there were virtually no

This geographic divide provided a window into divisions that were racial, but could not be easily seen. Both the hills and the flatlands had experienced the post-civil rights era, with an expanding African American and Asian migration. But white residents remained in the hills, while the flatlands remained predominantly black (Figure 2). In Oakland politics at the turn of the century, the hills still often served as a symbol for the white middle class, while the black masses. This geographic metaphor provided Oakland residents to debate more concretely the contours of political power in the city.

Fears of youth crime and violence were shaped by the geography of inequality, with the hills and flatlands, especially in East or West Oakland. The geography of space and danger reified fears of black youth violence presented in Alameda County's juvenile justice system. Black youth were 20% of the juvenile population, 51% of juvenile arrests, 61% of adjudications.<sup>59</sup> This conforms to a nationwide trend: for the same offense, black youth were six times more likely to be incarcerated than white kids. The disparity is cumulative and increases at every stage.

These divided landscapes shaped the lives of children, creating very different coming of age dilemmas. Childhoods were structured in complicated ways. For more on this, see scholars Sarah Holloway and Gill Valer

## *Childhood*

...e written into the city's physical geog-  
...industrial flat plains along the bay up  
...at lie between Oakland and the inland  
' shaped Oakland's historical develop-  
...s through which residents interpreted  
...uth. Freeways and boulevards marked  
...and real racial and class divides in this  
...East Oakland flatlands, between 27 and  
...ne poverty line, while in the hills above  
...o poor households (See Figure 1).

...way to talk about the city's class exclu-  
...be reduced in any simple way to race.  
...become more racially diverse in the  
...ng black middle class and rapid Latino  
...ents still predominated in many parts  
...ed mostly black, Latino, or Asian (See  
...rn of the twenty-first century, the hills  
...city's white elite and the flatlands, for  
...aphor also provided a flexible way for  
...mplex racial and class inequalities and  
...contemporary city.

...e in Oakland conformed to the city's  
...s generally coded as safe and the flat-  
...nd, as dangerous. This general equation  
...ack youth, who were vastly overrepre-  
...justice system.<sup>58</sup> In 2000, while county-  
...juvenile population, they represented  
...ations, and 65% of institutional place-  
...e pattern: even when charged with the  
...nes and Latino kids three times more  
...ds.<sup>60</sup> The disproportionate treatment is  
...e in the juvenile justice process.<sup>61</sup>

...e politics of youth in Oakland, creat-  
...mmas and political mobilizations that  
...by race, class, and place. As geogra-  
...ntine contend, "geography matters to

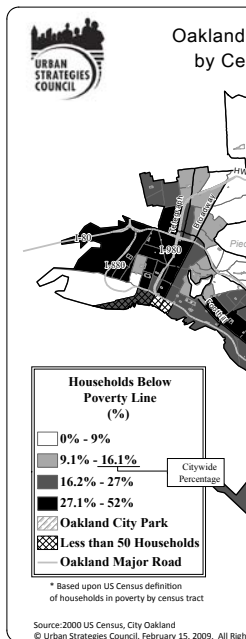
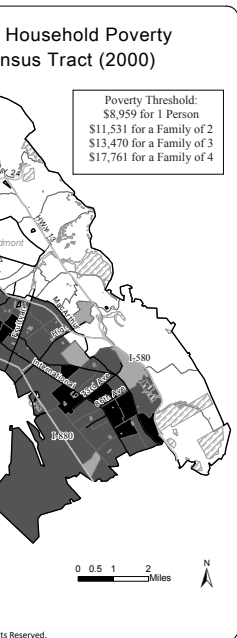


Figure 1. Oakland's landscape of poverty. Urban Strategies Council, 2009.

the social construction of childhood and Oakland's neighborhoods played a significant role in shaping young people's dreams and opportunities, and the actions of adults as they tried to improve the city. Oaklanders regularly debated whether the flatlands meant for children growth and opportunity to the hills for poor kids, or if the middle class was impossibly steep? What were they really talking about black kids? Now that the divide between the hills and the flatlands is seen in simple black-white terms?

These debates about race, place, and class are part of a larger conversation between global processes and local place. As Comaroff argue, many of the global crises of late capitalism "congeal in the contemporary" and economic changes reverberated through



type of poverty. (Copyright  
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and in the everyday lives of children.”<sup>62</sup> Significant role in creating and containing communities,<sup>63</sup> but they also shaped the fears we understand and respond to youth in what the divide between the hills and coming up in the city: Was there a ladder in the flatlands? Or was the path to when people talked about “flatland kids” kids? What was the significance of race and the flatlands could no longer be

and youth shed light on the connections we see.<sup>64</sup> As anthropologists Jean and John discuss the rises and anxieties created by neoliberal conditions and predicaments of youth.”<sup>65</sup> Global through Oakland’s homes and neighbor-

*for Kids?*

hoods. Decisions made at the city, state, and federal levels of investment and disinvestment that shape the lives of adults in Oakland's neighborhoods exist within and are shaped by these global and national processes. The city has generated new techniques of governance and new concepts of the self that enable new political

### *Oakland's Complex Racial Politics*

Oakland offers a microcosm of diverse racial and ethnic groups that characterize many American cities. The stories in this book echo stories that can be heard in other cities. These stories have infected the populace and transformed the city. The alleged "wildings" in New York, gang activity, and loitering laws, which express broad social and economic generation that we have abandoned a

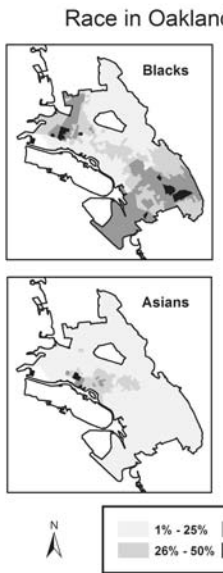
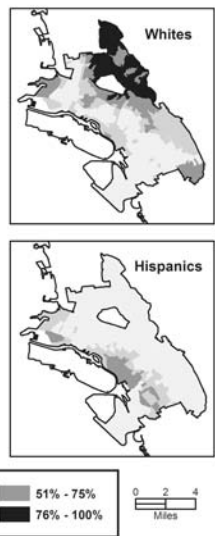


Figure 2. Oakland's complex geography and the ways white populations are concentrated. Latinos, and Asians predominate in the western hills. (Mark Kumler and Diana Sinton)

te, or federal levels created patterns of shaped children's lives. But children and experienced, interpreted, and reworked These struggles at the local level have ce, ideas of citizenship, and even con- cal and economic orders to emerge.

CS  
 sides in youth, politics, and generation es. The concerns and findings in this many other cities where fears of youth ormed urban policy making. Think of s in Los Angeles, or Chicago's curfew d public ambivalence about a younger nd now try to contain.<sup>66</sup> Or consider

d, Census 2000



phy of race. These maps highlight entrated in the hills, while blacks, the flatlands. But they also show the n the East Oakland hills and lower n, University of Redlands)

the more mundane frustrations adult America when confronted with your wearing clothes or speaking a language. In many ways, Oakland embodies the racial segregation alongside rising black deep racial divides, disinvestment along

At the same time, Oakland has seen an especially rich exploration of race, a mid-sized, historically working-class city for black migrants during and after World War II, its racial history and politics, in contrast to cities, developed primarily along a black and white divide. Oakland is the birthplace of the Black Panthers, Oakland has a long and diverse history of black organizing, and poverty exists in Oakland, but there is also a black middle class, which complicates the relationship between class and blackness with class or blackness with poverty. There are entrepreneurs, doctors, and lawyers who live in Oakland, and black homeowners throughout the flatlands, and workers, or security guards and take care of their own homes and gardens as symbols of success. The civil rights movement enabled black Oakland to gain political power in the 1980s and '90s as Oakland became a black city. Even though many saw Mayor Jerry Brown as the start of a black urban regime, black politicians, community leaders, and retained significant power within city government, including a black city manager, chief of police, and heads of most city departments.

Oakland is also now one of the nation's most diverse cities, which enables an investigation of how our cities are changing as they become less black and white. Oakland has a long history of segregation, and many that fall neatly into neighborhoods, schools, parks, and bus lines in Oakland. Oakland disproportionately affects black, Latinx children, 33.5% of Asian children, and poor in 2000, compared to 17.5% of white children. Oakland's history and categorized understandings of race, class, and identity in the twenty-first century even though a black city, and the way many residents thought about



s express in towns and cities all over  
ng people littering or loitering, often  
ge adults neither like nor understand.  
core contradictions of urban America:  
k political power, racial liberalism and  
gside gentrification.

Several distinctive features that permit  
class, and youth politics. Oakland is a  
ty that became a primary destination  
World War II. Consequently, Oakland's  
t to those of many other western cit-  
-white binary. Perhaps best known as  
Oakland has long been home to vibrant  
g and politics. Entrenched black pov-  
also a substantial, politically powerful  
s the often simplistic equation of race  
he city is home to wealthy black entre-  
ve in the hills, as well as middle-class  
lands, who work as bus drivers, postal  
enormous pride in their carefully cul-  
ls of their life's work. Oakland's civil  
nders to amass significant local politi-  
Oakland became a majority black city.  
rown's election as the end of Oakland's  
civil servants, and community activists  
y government. In 2001, the city had a  
chief of probation, and black heads of

ion's most racially diverse cities—so it  
concepts of race do (and do not) shift  
Latino, Asian, black, and white fami-  
one of those categories—share streets,  
land. Childhood poverty in Oakland  
o, *and* Asian children: 34.7% of black  
26.5% of Hispanic children grew up in  
white children.<sup>67</sup> This diversity compli-  
d youth in Oakland at the turn of the  
ck-white binary continued to structure  
race and urban politics.

*for Kids?*

Oakland is a self-consciously liberal city, but it has tested the limits of liberalism, its failures to address racial and economic inequalities, and the dangers of the corporatist politics that pervade American politics. Oakland is a city with deep traditions of community organizing and radical politics during Jerry Brown's tenure as governor. It has challenged emerging forms of neoliberalism, such as color blindness, many of which worked to suppress protest politics in the face of calls for government to solve the city's complex problems. It has shown that calls for community governance could be a step forward that had been most prominently made by the city's black parent and neighborhood activists. It has shown that "city hall works with its neighborhood."

Look at the history of Oakland, where the city's black neighborhoods, the Black Panthers had their interest to really be listening to the city's needs. They revolted. They got guns and went to jail. They were taken hostage. Memories just don't go away. We don't want that to ever happen again.

Studying race and the politics of youth in Oakland is a contemporary black politics. This book is a study in political science and anthropology that explores the politics of race and neighborhood participation.<sup>68</sup> Scholars like Mary Pattillo, and Michelle Boyd have shown that the politics in the post-civil rights era, especially in urban political economies have deep roots in the past. Activists construct political identities in Oakland that were reconfigured by the diverse forms of political participation that have become common in neoliberal cities. The politics of race, generational as well as class contours. The politics of race and class owners were integrated into urban governance. The politics of community policing initiative, volunteering, and controlling many of the city's major social services. The politics of black (and Latino) youth and poor families. The politics of the punitive state apparatus. These very dif-

ral city, which enables us to explore  
to confront persistent structural racial  
color-blind ideology that has come to  
s also home to vibrant and competing  
and politics. This means that Oakland  
s mayor included plentiful voices that  
eral governance and resisted calls for  
ed to revive Oakland’s long history of  
communities to partner with govern-  
ems. But it also means that neoliberal  
l draw on calls for community control  
by the Black Panthers. Robert Jones, a  
st in the Laurel district, explained why  
s.”

en they were not in touch with the  
happened. So I think they found it in  
o their neighborhoods. As opposed  
happened here. People got guns and  
Sacramento and took the lawmakers  
y. They are reaching out because they

th sheds new light on the complexity of  
t builds on a growing literature in polit-  
ores vibrant traditions of black politics  
olars like Steven Gregory, Adolph Reed,  
ve traced important changes in black  
ploring how complex transformations  
epened class divides in the ways black  
and interests. Black activism in Oak-  
rms of community “partnerships” that  
ties. These engagements had profound  
Black elders and middle-class home-  
ernance, working with Oakland’s com-  
g in schools, running local nonprofits,  
or city departments. At the same time,  
ilies were subjected to an increasingly  
fferent kinds of relationships with state

institutions helped produce deep generational politics. Linking the study of youth and the consequences of the profound changes of the 1960s and the hip hop generation.<sup>69</sup>

Oakland politics complicated the connections that were solely white middle-class fears of youth were neither confined to the white nor black youth. And *fears of youth* were not only fears, they were negotiating an increasingly difficult politics of youth across Oakland's complex geography. This forces us to reconsider a core question in the history of the fate of the black middle class remain relevant. So, does linked-fate politics remain viable in a city of temporary racial and class geographic divisions? How do we reconfigure the ways activists construct racial and class identities. The politics of youth in the twenty-first century suggests some significant changes in the post-civil rights era. Race and class are still important but far less categorically than before. Youth has become a racialized category in Oakland, and the changing structures of exclusion in contemporary Oakland.

Oakland's black communities were central to the history and America's law and order politics. In the twenty-first century, argues, black community activists have become agents imagining and fighting for remembrance. Black activists have been at the forefront of the struggle for a childhood that refuses to abandon social justice. Efforts have emerged out of black political traditions of American history to help us to imagine solutions to the future of the young people coming of age in early twenty-first century Oakland. We need a road map to create more justice. We need to learn from the urgent dilemmas that Oakland's activists have confronted and the solutions they have promoted. As legal scholar, argues, black communities, in the twenty-first century, are canaries in the coal mine.<sup>72</sup> They promote national action to address the broad challenges of contemporary America.

rational and class divides in Oakland's  
politics sheds new light on the causes  
between the civil rights generation

common assumption that fears of youth  
of poor black kids. In Oakland, fears of  
white middle class nor focused solely on  
closely linked to *fears for* youth who  
cult path to adulthood. Exploring the  
plex racial and class geography enables  
the literature on black politics: Does the  
linked to that of the black poor, and if  
able?<sup>70</sup> It also lets us ask whether con-  
es are creating new linkages that may  
ct racial, class, and generational politi-  
Oakland at the turn of the twenty-first  
nges in the way we think about race in  
s remain linked, as do race and space,  
the civil rights movement. Youth has  
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not simply victims of urban decline  
s. As Oakland historian Robert Self  
ve been among "the most thoughtful  
edies to urban crises."<sup>71</sup> Indeed, black  
the struggle to forge a new politics of  
ome children as irredeemable. These  
political organizing and have reshaped  
maternal politics. These activists may  
fundamental crises facing many young  
first-century America. If we are look-  
st policies for the nation's youth, we  
mas and substantial roadblocks Oak-  
he often contradictory public policies  
rs Lanier Guinier and Gerald Torres  
this case black children, may be like  
vide a critical warning and a call to  
crises facing children and youth in

*for Kids?*

## *Are You a Reporter? Urban Politics*

This book draws on ethnographic work among Oakland's "attentive publics" of citizens, young and old, and the politicians and city's responses to the problems of day-to-day life. My fieldwork loosely corresponded with the tenure of Oakland's mayor. I spent 1998-2001 conducting fieldwork and returned for periodic visits and interviews with many ethnographic projects, my work continued the course of my fieldwork, following the paths of informants, institutional doors that opened and closed, and controversies, like Proposition 21 and the 2000 mobilizations.

I conducted ethnographic fieldwork in Oakland's divided geography: a largely black neighborhood in the East Oakland flatlands where high rates created urgent crises for young people in the multiracial lower hills neighborhood where parents fought to ensure that their children would not fall back to the middle class; and a wealthy, high-class neighborhood in the high hills where a local public high school divides, past and present, into sharp racial lines. I explored the complex terrain of local politics: the role of neighborhood associations, and community policing, and the city's responses to the needs and problems of the neighborhood. I conducted fifteen-twenty interviews with community activists, political networks, and community activists. I attended council and school board debates about education and juvenile justice policies. To understand the needs of youth also required that my methodology explore the public political realms and the private spheres of everyday life, so I explored activists' memoirs and oral histories about the transition from childhood to adulthood. I documented the landscapes of childhood and the ways that some of the daily conflicts over where youth lived and took place on street corners, in schools, and in homes.

Many of the neighborhood activists were women, and exerted a significant amount of influence on the city's

## *Local Fieldwork*

ic fieldwork and historical research  
“community wardens,” the active citi-  
ns and policy makers who shaped the  
dangerous and endangered youth.<sup>73</sup> My  
erry Brown’s two-term tenure as Oak-  
ducting research full-time in Oakland,  
interviews between 2003 and 2009. As  
y research methodology evolved over  
the path of relationships I built with  
opened or remained shut, and events  
, that created new spaces for political

k in three neighborhoods across Oak-  
ck and Latino working-class neighbor-  
where unemployment and high crime  
people coming of age; a mixed-income  
hood where many families struggled  
make it up a steeper and longer path  
historically white neighborhood in the  
ool brought Oakland’s racial and class  
belief. In each neighborhood, I observed  
the youth groups, PTAs, homeowner’s  
g councils that tried to shape the city’s  
of youth. In each neighborhood I con-  
a activists that explored local history,  
ivism. I followed these activists to city  
out curfews, cruising, police practices,  
erstand the politics of childhood and  
ology not reify a distinction between  
realms of family, childhood, and par-  
ries of childhood and their anxieties  
to adulthood as they raised children.  
hood across Oakland’s geography and  
young people belonged—conflicts that  
s and parks, and in living rooms.

s were tightly networked into city hall  
influence over local policy making. For

historical reasons, black and white activists and their networks in the neighborhoods I studied were generally the most engaged in neighborhood organizing. As I touched and many others have found, homophily in government and private sector groups and organizations “class” hides an enormous diversity in political beliefs and racial identities through their political affiliations. This study became how Oakland activists and their generational identities within different political networks, especially with black political activists and parents, and how they developed relationships with white, Latino, and Asian Americans who participated in interconnected political networks.

I explored several city and county government agencies and nonprofits to determine the role of youth violence in Oakland. Months before the shootings, I met the nonprofit agency leader and other government employees who were involved in the work. I conducted over fifty interviews with community members and providers. I also traced the history of Oakland’s political networks through archival research in the Oakland library and through the support myself financially during much of the study. A number of foundation-funded initiatives, including the Oakland programs and Oakland’s political networks, were involved. Providers was a familiar one since after collaborating with a neighborhood-based nonprofit in Chicago. I participated freely and became “a frequent flyer” in a citywide collaborative. Frustrated by the lack of political networks, I often served as a liaison between providers or activists working on similar issues. My participation threatened a preexisting narrow understanding of research ethics, and a provider, an informant, she reminded me of the importance of community. “It’s not like we’re some isolated tribe that’s just destroying our culture.”

There are significant benefits and so many challenges to participating in multiple political networks. My involvement in multiple locations helped me to develop a more nuanced understanding of Oakland’s race and class divisions shaped by different political networks simultaneously.





ages within Oakland's political culture between city and county service providers and homeowner activists.<sup>78</sup> I was connected to particular city or county agencies left out of the corridors of power. But this did not limit my research in significant ways. Instead, by doing, I formed the closest relationships possible, deeply embedded in the terrain of local politics: poor parents, and young people experiencing police action. I often got to know the police officers better than the community meeting circuit even better than the neighborhood. One particularly busy week, I spent more time in the homes of informants than I would have liked. But my daily routines and ways matched those of the community activists: afternoons and evenings in community meetings with other activists in similar political contexts.

My own interests as an activist and researcher shaped my work. When I first moved back to Oakland, I attended a local Resistance conference in 1998 and became involved in youth activism in the Bay Area. I also spent time in juvenile hall for *The Beat Within*, a book about youth and for incarcerated youth, which was a critique of youth in the system. Although I was not part of my fieldwork, when Proposition 21 was passed, I began to participate in planning meetings about the measure as a participant and as an observer. Youth activists in local politics, but they were not silent. In Oakland's vibrant youth activist networks, I interviewed and conducted four focus groups with youth activists. I observed young people on city streets, at school assemblies about discipline, and watched young people and adult activists in community meetings. In these spaces, young people challenged dominant discourses about where they belong.

As I conducted this research from various locations, I occupied multiply marked identities. This was true to me in complex ways: a young, high-

re, divisions between neighborhoods, elders, and between youth activist networks. I would identify which networks were well connected to city departments and which were largely disconnected. The political networks themselves also shaped my experience. As I traveled from meeting to meeting with the people who were already engaged in political politics and met fewer immigrants, except those already engaged in political activities, police officers and city officials on the campaign. I knew activists in any one neighborhood. A police captain joked that he saw me on a busy schedule of meetings, I spent more time on the streets of Oakland than I did in my home and my personal networks in many ways. I studied youth activists who spent most of their time in meetings and formed close relationships with political networks.

My role as a youth worker also shaped my fieldwork. In the San Francisco Bay Area, I participated in the Critical Mass movement and learned about growing networks of activists. I began to conduct writing workshops and was featured in the Bay Area weekly magazine produced by the movement. This kept me in contact with the perspectives of the activists. These activities were not formally part of my research. When I was added to the March 2000 ballot, I spent time on door-to-door canvassing, street outreach, and rallies, both of which were frequently marginalized in the eyes of academic observers. To understand Oakland's political landscape, I interviewed youth leaders and conducted ethnographic research in the neighborhoods I studied. I visited parks, streets, and playgrounds, attended school events, and observed interactions between youth and adults. I wanted to see the formal and informal ways in which people talked about what youth need and how they should be served.

Within very different political mobilization strategies and discourses that influenced people's responses to the issue, I interviewed highly educated, upper-middle-class white

woman without children, a researcher. Observing my own comfort and discomfort in these networks helped to highlight the racial politics of Oakland's politics and geography. I felt like an outsider in networks of progressive political activists and community workers. To go out to bars and restaurants and socialize with them, I was at largely African American community events. I "fit in" in a very different way. People who were nonprofit or government employees, who were young and age located me in Oakland's political culture. I was a politically engaged twenty-something who had grown up from my childhood home in San Francisco. I was in neighborhoods every day and night as part of my work as a "parent" living at home with my parents. I was not and worried about. I was significantly different from the people interviewed and conscious of the respectability politics I have called Mrs. Jackson, an African American woman. My name, though I would do so with Victor and Robert, a younger parent close to my own age. If the names in this book are pseudonyms, I refer to Oakland as "Oakland" in respect I used in my everyday interactions.

Reflecting on my years in the field, I always consciously managed my identity in my fieldwork. With older African American parents, I talked about how I thought racism had shaped my life. I came to see a kind of racial politeness that I had learned. In professional planning meetings, I often learned from a worker informed about the best practices in the field. I had a very different style at youth-led rallies and meetings. I was an activist fighting against police brutality. As a community organizer, I decided that the most ethical way to interpret my interactions with my informants, and my own experiences and critiques.

This book leads readers on a journey through time and space in Oakland at the turn of the century. It explores memories, local histories, geographic spaces, and the ways that influenced debates over how to resist the effects of coming of age. These debates about community and place, not only, or even primarily, in

, and also a resident of San Francisco. Comfort moving through these political, class, and generational structures of Oakland, most at home in the multiracial network in the lower hills, where I met friends and used the local café as my office. When I attended community meetings in the flatlands, I was often mistook me for a reporter, or a journalist, which was exactly where my race, class, and political and social geography. Like other nonprofit workers I knew, I traveled throughout San Francisco through Oakland's poorer neighborhoods in the name of my "work." I was one of the "adults" that some of my informants talked about as being younger than most adult activists I knew. I did not have the respect that required. I simply never would have been seen as an American grandmother, by her first name, or as a sixteen-year-old youth activist, or as someone of my own age. Although most names in this book were given to me and activists according to the codes of the community.

As I did fieldwork, I realize that I actively, though not intentionally, participated in different ways throughout my life. Like many other African American activists, I often explicitly talked about Oakland's history, in order to overcome the challenges that accompanied many early interviews. I dressed up and spoke like a nonprofit worker, a social worker, a voice of youth reform, and I cultivated relationships with youth. But as I did fieldwork with youth in Oakland, my approach as well as community policing activities was to share my emerging political approach along with my own political commitment.

They have moved through the politics of youth, race, and class in the twenty-first century—through the challenges of globalization, and fragmented state institutions that respond to the crises young people face. The challenges that children and youth occur in particular in Oakland, in the disembodied contexts of the mass

*For Kids?*

media. The first three chapters of this book explore the importance of place, showing how Oakland shaped children's lives and the political consciousness of the reader from the flatlands up through the hills. This path through the city mirrors the way that people themselves move through Oakland's geography, often forged through media coverage of crime in the flatlands. But these representations of the hills to shape the perceptions of a city that people themselves moved up the hill and away from the safer places. Arriving in schools or parks, they often have fears of flatland kids.

Each chapter begins with a portrait of a person who highlights his or her memories of childhood and how young people need, and political struggles that activists into their political practice and demands. How local history shape the politics of youth and how way community partnerships have affected the way activists defined the needs of youth. The book explores public and private responsibility, and the role of community policing activism in Elmhurst. It also looks at homeowner activists whose nostalgia for a better past to construct a vision of a disciplinary city. Chapter 2 examines a racially and socially conscious activists in the lower hills who vociferously demand to expand public investments that would provide supervised time to all kids in the neighborhood. It also looks at the conflicts around Skyline High School between white homeowners who fought over violent and dangerous criminals or innocent kids. While private estates often framed youth problems as a result of that naturalized Oakland's man-made geography, it also looks at how that justify California's disinvestments in the city. Black parents vociferously defended their children from youth criminality that threatened to ruin their own schools and streets.

Chapter 4 steps back to examine Oakland from a citywide perspective, exploring the role of the city and the city's urban redevelopment projects.

s book are organized to highlight the Oakland's geographies of race and class of youth. These chapters lead the lower hills and finally into the hills. ways images and young people them-aphy. Fears of youth in Oakland were of crime and images of the youth in ns of "inner-city kids" moved up into adults and activists in the hills. Young s they searched for better schools and rks in the hills, they often encountered

it of a community activist that high-od and childrearing, analyses of what ggles. The chapters follow these activ-aily lives, exploring how memory and th. Each chapter highlights a different fected political practice by influencing vyoung people, the boundaries between he idea of the state. Chapter 1 explores urst, examining the dilemmas of black or disciplined youth encouraged them y state with expanded police powers. cioeconomically diverse group of par-olunteered their private time to try to d extend middle-class structured and ighborhood. Chapter 3 explores con-between black middle-class parents and whether kids at the school were dan-White homeowners living in Oakland's blem as "cultural" or familial in ways e geography of inequality and helped the public infrastructure for children. heir children against the image of black ddefine them as dangerous outsiders in

Oakland's urban redevelopment from e links between the politics of youth olicies and practices. It begins with a

portrait of MacArthur Boulevard, a neighborhood's fitful and incomplete transformation to a landscape of consumption and the role played in this process. It shows how neighborhood activists' efforts to save children's urban space characteristic of many neighborhoods are captured in this book with the voices of youth activists and their activism in Oakland and an alternate vision of the place of youth in the city.

Oakland's activists offer important insights in this book: Is a more progressive political vision about kids are urgently real and deep? There are no simple answers to the dilemmas that does not mean, as we saw Jerry Bruns' introduction, that there is nothing good about children's lives in Oakland and the existing conditions are incompatible with the true meaning of the American Dream. With high levels of insurance and growing support for after-school programs, observers wonder whether a new wave of state public support for an expanded vision of youth we need to ask: What would it require to live up to its promise to provide equal opportunities for youth? What kinds of public policies would democratized childhood and youth? Just how much politics and activism would get the nation to live up to its ideas about childhood and the state's responsibilities?



tain thoroughfare that embodies Oakland from a landscape of production to the contradictory role young people have in new landscapes of childhood and community. We have helped to create the privatized neoliberal cities. Chapter 5 concludes the book, who offer a critique of neighborhood politics and a vision of the politics of childhood and

insights into the underlying question of what kinds of childhood possible? People's fears are deeply felt. We can't just wish them away. We face the dilemmas Oakland's activists faced, but we can learn from Brown suggest at the beginning of this book what government can do. The inequalities in the exclusion of black boys from childhood and the loss of democracy and the promise of universal public support for children's health care, after-school funding, some public policy that would be of "kids-first politics" could reinvigorate the welfare state.<sup>79</sup> To evaluate that question for the United States to make good on its promises to all of America's children and to ensure that state practices would encourage that, just as importantly, what kind of politics would be needed to make those investments? And what would be the way?

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## Back in the Day

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Linda Jackson had never wanted to be a preacher's kid," she was in church seven days a week. When she left home she swore, "I was never going back else. That's the end of it." But she got "tired" of the white flight and economic decline hitting her neighborhood and she watched her neighborhood struggle to maintain the precarious distinctions between middle class and poor. Over twenty years later, when I first visited her, she was frustrated by the city's failed promises, the drugs, the dealing and violence, and angry at "the police for shooting up people."

Linda Jackson spoke with the rhythmic cadence of a woman from Arkansas. "I'm just a simple little countrified girl," she said. Her words, before her voice took on a steely edge, were shining through an otherwise polite southern drawl. A woman in her mid-sixties, she had been a nurse soon after it was integrated, retired from a hospital, and now ran a small family confectionery business out of their home.

Mrs. and Mr. Jackson raised two children and were as proud as their two grandchildren were of them during their teenage years in East Oakland. Their home was on a low hill in Toler Heights, a predominantly African American neighborhood where many neighbors worked in professional fields but many others lived below the poverty line. Only a few apartment buildings, liquor stores, and a few small businesses along MacArthur Boulevard in the space between the hill and Elmhurst.

Mrs. Jackson first joined her homecoming group after a series of robberies in her neighborhood.

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nted to be involved in politics. As “a  
n days a week doing community work.  
never going to participate in anything  
thrown back into” community work as  
Elmhurst hard in the 1970s and ‘80s,  
uggle with crime and blight that erased  
iddle-class and poor in East Oakland.  
visited her home, Linda Jackson was  
fed up with ongoing problems of drug  
his generation of kids that’s out here

thmic cadences and broad vowels of  
try girl,” she’d say in community meet-  
tone, her impatience with city officials  
outhern demeanor. An African Ameri-  
d attended a state college in Arkansas  
om administrative work at a local hos-  
struction company with her husband

children, and they now watched anx-  
gotiated the transition through their  
ample 1940s bungalow nestled into a  
nantly black middle-class community  
fessional or government jobs, but oth-  
one block away lay the run-down 1970s  
l mostly empty store fronts that cluster  
rawling and much poorer flatlands of

owners’ association in the 1970s after a  
d. They created a neighborhood patrol

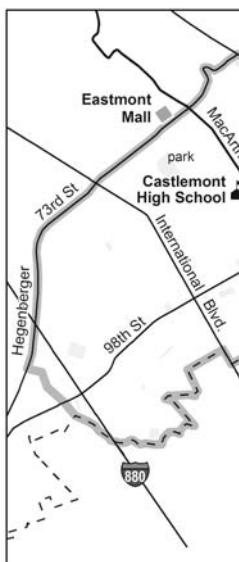


Figure 3. Map of Elmhurst  
Kumler and Diana Sintor

and built a close relationship with the committee seemed to lead to another, and most vacations working with the Prevention Council, and neighborhood kids began to go to the neighborhood working with the schools as well.

By the time we sat down in her home a leader in neighborhood politics. She council, gave interviews to newspapers of neighbors to crack down on cruising out East Oakland. “All of us that are chosen to stay here. We could have left we’re no longer going to be ignored.” She “forgotten stepchild.” “People will come canned speeches. You know how many fed up with watching those plans pile up

“What people seem to forget is that most ridiculous crazy man on the radio



st: In the Flatlands. (Mark  
, University of Redlands)

police department. One meeting and until soon she was spending evenings association, the Neighborhood Crime and redevelopment efforts. As her grand-public schools, she was drawn towards

me to talk, Mrs. Jackson had long been e regularly spoke in front of the city s, and organized with a strong network g, drug dealing, and violence through- participating own our homes. We have ft but we decided not to. We decided he described East Oakland as the city's ne out and give us a lot of lip service, y plans they've had out here?" She was up, unfunded and never implemented. we all have a stake in this. I heard the o. He said he wasn't interested in edu-



an better be interested.” She knew the kids that you’re leaving behind with-  
tmare in the future. The have-nots are  
She looked back at the massive budget  
d saw the results all around her neigh-  
or it.”

strict southern household and worried  
the proper discipline in children. Her  
children back in Arkansas and taught  
a get.” Growing up poor, she remem-  
n school clothes. “Not a one of us went  
ent. We left home seventeen, eighteen.  
end on our parents to take care of us.”  
n’t brought here to be your friend. I  
ay you need to be trained.’ They kept  
I got old enough to know better.” She  
in things, my parents would kill me.”  
anything would happen to them. In fact,  
ng out there to jump on you if you say

d through adolescence safely. Raising  
nger, and desperation of East Oakland  
were too close to ignore. “Everyday I  
not one of those kids out there on the  
at my daughter did not fall into that  
fare and never getting off. To me that  
nephew, “a perfectly intelligent young  
rs in and out of treatment, was “back  
d the whole family’s disappointment as  
at his imminent death. “I would have  
gs it would be him.”

nd of her husband had kept her own  
was growing up, he was always devil-  
where they were.” She often drove her  
up, so that they wouldn’t be tempted  
r and follow them, I did. I would come  
. It took them awhile to know how I  
her children to death” explaining the  
es they made. But she also made sure

they knew that child abuse laws didn't. One day, she invited a police officer to her home. "If you ever wants to whop you, I'm going to hold you accountable for this problem," she explained.

But Mrs. Jackson still worried as much as her husband. They had avoided the most obvious path to success: "I'm pretty well self-sufficient." But they still weren't. They got out of college only a few units shy of a degree. Her husband had recently "hit a brick wall" trying to get into a job. While other guys were given permission to leave their job, he wasn't. He quit in frustration to start his own family business. He now understood what his father had told him: "You've got to get yours before you can give yours." He taught kids this enough. If you're black, you're not. You are three times better qualified. Expect to be paid three times when you go out there. . . . We have to get ours first.

Mrs. Jackson and her husband had lost their own patches—through divorce, a lost job—like them to be able to buy their own home. But they do have their own apartments. It's really hard for kids to do that. At some point, you have to give them with a down payment." Mrs. Jackson's frustration over the escalating cost of renting an apartment was a common one. Two part-time jobs. A divorced single parent. No child support, she had recently come to a realization: "Mom, you're running me down." She had learned, "It's true": economic redevelopment is not for the poor people."

Mrs. Jackson measured her children's risks that face black children coming out of the ghetto. In Elmhurst, the children of many black families were moving into the expanding black middle class. Some were urged their parents to follow. But many were still struggling and maintain jobs, and some remained in the ghetto. On almost every block, one could hear the sound of a gun. It's grown up too soon, about children raised in the ghetto who fell into drug dealing, drug abuse, and other things.

Mrs. Jackson worried even more as her children entered an awkward stage between childhood and adulthood.



It didn't mean she couldn't discipline them. She would come tell her children, "If your mama knocked you down." "That took care of that."

As she thought about her kids' futures, she saw pitfalls. "They both work, and they are still struggling. Her son had dropped out of graduation to take a job at UPS, and he was having trouble getting promotions in the company. She wanted him to return to college while retaining his education and started working for the family business. At his mother had always been telling him, "You get there." "I don't think parents should expect you better make darned certain you don't get knocked down three to four times before you have to prepare ourselves."

She had helped the kids through rough times, and they would do so again. "I would like to see my house by now, to own their home, but I can't. I do understand in this day and age it takes time. At some point in time, I may have to help my daughter. My daughter's daughter struggled to afford the rent in Oakland despite income from her mother of two whose husband didn't work. She complained about her mom's commute to work out of town." Mrs. Jackson acknowledged that gentrification might displace "some of the good people."

Her daughter's success against the extraordinary odds was a rare feat in contemporary American cities. Many young homeowners had made it securely. Some had moved to the suburbs and others had struggled to finish college and were still living at home far into adulthood. She thought about some neighbor's child who had been in trouble with the law, some young relative who had been in jail.

As she watched her grandkids, still in their late teens and early adulthood. She and her husband were

paying for their granddaughter's apartment in an LPN nursing program, while she achieves her dream of becoming a doctor would end their support. "With kids there are chances. You can make good choices. I loved to make comic books, but had to stop. She had warned him recently, "You are in your life. We'll be disappointed. But he decided he wanted to graduate, but she was an age where he could get drawn into drugs, hoping that he doesn't."

Mrs. Jackson insisted that the neighborhood economic development plan. She wanted to see young people would have some alternative. They could get into hanging out on the street. The neighborhood would never be able to attract investment. Shooting things up at night and there's no way right now to keep things under control. It's not the answer to our problems, but they're not things accomplished."

She didn't worry much about racial profiling. "Attacking these crimes are our young black men." She acknowledged that black men in her neighborhood were "very leery of giving the police too much information." She recently objected to her support for racial profiling on Boulevard. "Well, I haven't done anything." "Well, this is the situation: either we let the policemen to make things safer for our young people. MacArthur and if he was stopped, to be honest, it's amazing, he came to realize—those we

ment for one year while she enrolled  
till maintaining hope that she would  
or. But if she didn't apply herself, they  
these days, people are too lenient. You  
choices." Her grandson, then seventeen,  
not been applying himself in school.  
re making choices that will affect you  
you will pay the price." He had finally  
e knew he wasn't safe yet. "He's still at  
o some of this craziness out here. I'm

ghborhood needed a long-term eco-  
the city to build a youth center so that  
ative to "the temptation and trouble"  
street. But she worried that the neigh-  
ct any investment "if you have people  
no control. . . . We need the policemen  
l. We realize that the policeman is not  
re the Band-Aid until we can get some

l profiling because "the people perpe-  
ck men in our neighborhood." But she  
homeowners' association were often  
much power." Even her husband had  
ndom police sweeps down MacArthur  
hing," he insisted. But she explained,  
continue the way we are, or we allow  
r us." She told him to avoid driving on  
do exactly what the officer said. "It's  
ere the choices."

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## Disciplining Youth and Families in the Flatlands

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Back in the days, our parents used to  
Look at 'em now, they even fuck  
Callin' the city for help because  
Damn, shit done changed.

In February 2001, one of the  
vention Councils (NCPC) met in a club  
Clay, the dapper African American NCPC  
community policing officers, a tall, heavyset  
heavysset Asian officer, to sit up at the  
hot seat.” The officers explained that the  
suppression in response to the recent riots  
areas with as many as twenty-five officers.  
They were targeting parolees and corrections  
at drug hot spots. Mr. Clay then  
and asked for community concerns: “V

Mrs. Gilbert, Mr. Lawlor, Mr. and Mrs.  
daughter sat around tables with fifteen  
room where pictures for Black History  
Older African American homeowners  
bers in the NCPC, but they were joined  
younger African American homeowners  
Arab business owner, and the school  
officer, both African American. This NCPC  
A small number of people came monthly  
ings with the police chief or city manager  
as two hundred residents through its  
tains, informal phone trees, and relations

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# nd nds

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ed to take care of us  
in' scared of us  
they can't maintain

—Notorious B.I.G.

Elmhurst Neighborhood Crime Pre-  
classroom at a local middle school. Bill  
CPC president, invited two uniformed  
broad-shouldered white officer and a  
front of the room with him, “on the  
they had been doing a lot of violence  
ise in homicides, “flooding” particular  
cers and “stopping everyone we can.”  
nducting undercover buy-bust opera-  
told the officers to take out their pens  
Who’s got the first problem?”

Mrs. Riles, Mrs. Taylor, and her grand-  
n other people facing the front of the  
y Month surrounded the blackboard.  
rs formed a clear majority of mem-  
d by a couple of white senior citizens,  
ers, one older Latino homeowner, an  
vice-principal and a code compliance  
CPC was typical of most in Elmhurst.  
nly, but more would turn out for meet-  
ager. This NCPC could reach as many  
homeowners’ associations, block cap-  
onships among neighbors.

Residents began to describe problem addresses, sometimes using drug dealers' names about where drugs were hidden and sold. One woman complained that she had to move her garden to the side of the house so she wouldn't hear a car at the door. "All the dealers in East Oakland are gone," she agreed; she still had a lot of dealers on her street. A man in his midforties, who had been a police officer at a store when Deputy Chief Bryant was in charge, said, "The roaches, the mess, the noise level is out of control." Deputy chief, he added, "I'm talking about the police."

A broad-shouldered African American man, Deputy Chief Bryant responded that he knew the neighborhood in this neighborhood before moving to the area. He visited the church, visited his mother, and mentored young people. Bryant described his vision for how to deal with crime and violence. "We can't rely on the police, and we have locked up a lot of folks. The [Police Department] is good at that. In California, the police are being defunded and darn near bankrupted this year. We've asked for volunteers to go door to door to talk to people, to hand out literature on anger management, to recruit members for community policing. The idea is to recreate the Elmhurst neighborhood."

People will begin to talk to each other again. We're going to Elmhurst Middle School, if I did some more. I got home. We knew each other. We knew what my kid's doing. This is about rebuilding from the ground up. The strength of the neighborhood. What we need is you.

Mrs. Riles, a black woman in her late thirties, said that is that parents are afraid to chastise their children because the kids might call the police on them. She said that the police only arrested parents in the past. "It's an excuse that I can't handle. We have to take responsibility, we want to have them, and we want to have them in the community. Those values have to come back."



blems with drug dealing at specific dealers' nicknames and offering details when drugs were sold. Mrs. Gilbert granddaughter's bedroom to the other drug dealers' conversations from next door are at that address." Mrs. Taylor dis- on her block. James Richards, a black persistent drug dealing at a local liquor ed into the room. "They're like cock- trageous," he said. Turning to the dep- across from your mother's home." rican man with gentle eyes, Deputy y the problem well. He had grown up to the Oakland hills. He still attended ed young people in the neighborhood. address Oakland's persistent problems esolve the problem by locking people ks in Oakland. OPD [Oakland Police rnia we have tripled the prison popu- state by trying to lock people up." He or to promote a pledge of nonviolence, gement resources, and to recruit new e deputy chief hoped this new program hood of his childhood.

once again. . . . In 1968 when I was at something wrong, my father knew when have gotten away from that. Tell me eaching out and building community he community comes from you folks.

ate seventies, spoke up. "The problem eir children and teach them properly" on them. Deputy Chief Bryant insisted n cases of serious abuse. "That's just an o get back to having children because o raise them to be respectable parts of ome from. . . ." He paused to wait for a

response from the room. Mrs. Riles recalled an African American man said “the village” and “I am the most liberal deputy chief and when it comes to raising children, DeWitt’s government deal with it. Let child welfare deal with it right here.” He called for neighbors to become “its own policing system.”

This NCPC meeting highlighted a common theme in black communities. In almost every interview I conducted in the past when adults disciplined children, a cohesive black community took responsibility. African American activists in Elmhurst, a single generation, as they ranged in age, shared memories of community meetings and conversations. Repeated stories captured the tension between young people today. “Young people have too much discipline.” “Youth have too much power.”

Children served as vital sites of memory in Elmhurst. Anthropologist William Bischoff’s “history” but a social practice shaped the present.<sup>1</sup> We look to the past at moments when the present is eclipsed. Nostalgia in Elmhurst is not just for whether the post-civil rights era represented a return to community—especially when activists look back at the coming of age in the neighborhood.

Debates about children and child abuse laws are debates over the role of the state and the family. Were the Democrats’ welfare programs the foundations of black communities? Did child abuse laws undermined the ability to solve the neighborhood crime problem? Was child abuse laws responsibility for discipline? Was child abuse laws in the home, as Mrs. Riles suggested, or was it? This meeting highlighted the complexity of black politics and the ways activists combined different political strategies. Nostalgia for disciplined youth shaped the neighborhood. Defining crime as a youth problem was a political act. “the home” and “the family” and bold political statements help that political scientist Melissa Ha

responded “home,” while another older  
age.” The deputy chief nodded, adding,  
and definitely the only Democrat, but  
Democrats have not done well. ‘Let the  
fare deal with it.’ We have to deal with  
to become mentors and for the neigh-  
system.”

a pervasive nostalgia in urban black  
ew, I heard stories of a more orderly  
a, youth showed respect, and a more  
onsibility for raising children as a vil-  
lmhurst’s NCPCs did not represent a  
ge from late thirties to eighties, yet in  
ns, they constructed a body of shared  
their sense that something was wrong  
le today have no respect” or “no disci-  
‘These children are taking over.’

memory and nostalgic longing in  
ssell argues that nostalgia is not “poor  
by specific spaces and politics in the  
nts when faith in the future or in prog-  
t highlighted deep ambivalence about  
sented true progress in the black com-  
ked at the hurdles young people faced

ldrearing encapsulated fundamental  
the causes of black community strug-  
ograms responsible for undermining  
? Or had state intrusions into the fam-  
parental authority? Could the police  
n? Or did the community have to take  
drearing the responsibility of parents  
or of a broader “village”? These debates  
itics in the East Oakland flatlands and  
political ideologies. Nevertheless, nos-  
e politics of childhood in this neigh-  
problem focused activists’ attention on  
stered conservative ideologies of self-  
orris-Lacewell argues have “deep roots

in African American history.”<sup>2</sup> Specific also helped to construct a particular view that thought children needed patriarchal “control” and a kind of disciplinary father and supporter to punish young people.<sup>3</sup> Black people used these memory practices in ways that called for the police to restore village discipline.

This NCPC meeting illustrated an emerging community policing initiative. While police intensified police action, police officers also argued that the community (not the police) was the crime problem. These calls for community policing within the context of the implementation of neoliberal urban governance became a forum through which neighbors debated over the form of the state and the ways in which it both reproduced and sometimes resisted its own ability for maintaining order from government.

Community policing reshaped the ways in which people defined their community and framed their political demands. Urban anthropologists, like Steven Greener and Robert Guano, have begun to explore the ways in which community participation “produce an alternative form of citizenship and community belonging that is a category but draws on complex ideas of what it means to be a people or groups as full members of the community. We need to explore the ways activists forged their demands within different political networks in order to challenge the power of black middle-class families, excluded poor families, renters, immigrants, and the community constructed in these meetings.

Community policing is part of a system of governance that legal scholar Jonathan Simon has called “neoliberalism.” A narrow logic of crime prevention and public safety and politics, shaping where we live, how we live, and from our government. Governing through community policing the “purposes and tasks of the state” and the ways in which the state in two important ways. First, the state is the “perfect object lesson” in “individual responsibility” and the principles of neoliberal modes of governance.

ic ideas about what children needed  
vision of the state. Since many activists  
discipline,” they turned to the police as  
ported expanded state powers to moni-  
city officials participated actively in  
encouraged Elmhurst activists to turn  
e.

interesting tension within Oakland’s  
e black homeowners campaigned for  
ers, like Deputy Chief Bryant, often  
police) had to solve the neighborhood’s  
unity self-governance were a key ele-  
e in Oakland. Community policing  
bors, politicians, and the police strug-  
through which neighborhood activists  
ed neoliberal efforts to shift responsi-  
rnment to communities and families.

ne ways black homeowner activists  
d their rights as citizens in Oakland.  
egory, Jeff Maskovsky, and Emmanuela  
ys specific structures and practices of  
d reproduce different forms of urban  
g.”<sup>4</sup> Citizenship is not just a legal cat-  
culture and morality to define some  
he nation, while excluding others. We  
ged racial and class political identities  
Oakland. Community policing rein-  
s homeowners in Elmhurst, but often  
grants, and youth from the moral com-

trikingly illiberal trend in neoliberal-  
defines as “governing through crime.”  
d security has reshaped our daily lives  
w we raise our kids, and what we expect  
ough crime has helped to reconfigure  
d the relationship between citizens and  
he criminal justice system offers “a per-  
nsibility and accountability,” core prin-  
ce.<sup>5</sup> Second, governing through crime

has constrained the legitimate terrain of the state as policeman, or as Simon says, “a nostalgia for disciplined youth helped inform common sense” that redefined the central function of sufficient police protection.<sup>7</sup> But communities of community, discipline, and care replaced village discipline as policing and accountability. Activists in Elmhurst turned to the police because they felt they had so few choices, and a massive crisis of social reproduction. In the face of this crisis, they called for more police because they demanded state accountability in a neoliberal

### *Elmhurst: The City’s “Forgotten Story”*

Elmhurst extends across the East Oakland to the bay, between 73<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and the bay. It portrays this neighborhood as a largely middle-class neighborhood that was labeled “the killing field” in Oakland. Oakland peaked. But Elmhurst also has a history of violence and a long history of black community organizing in the 1960s. Long-standing struggles against gentrification left many activists frustrated with the police. Homeowner activists found themselves increasingly concerned about the future of the neighborhood. At a moment of state retrenchment, the police seemed to promise a visible state commitment.

Older African American homeowners and the membership and leadership of the Neighborhood Councils and homeowners’ associations in the 1960s. Residents bought homes in Elmhurst in the 1960s. It was then a racially mixed and upwardly mobile neighborhood, one of Oakland’s “industrial garden” neighborhoods. Small yards clustered near industrial and commercial districts, neighbors who were respectful of adult authority. The crack epidemic hit Elmhurst hard. Local activists fought for years against drug dealing, violent crime, and the loss of the neighborhood.

of state action and reified a vision of the state as enforcer and protector.”<sup>6</sup> In Oakland, community policing produced an emerging “penal commonsense” that redefined the right of citizenship as the right to suffer police violence. Community policing radically reshaped definitions of justice among black activists; it redefined accountability as arrests. Neighborhood police used their discretion to recreate communal discipline and order. Faced with limited state resources, community police used their discretion. As we saw in Linda Jackson’s portrait, community policing was one of the few ways they could assert their authority over the general political order.

### *Step-Child*

Oakland flatlands from the 580 freeway to the San Leandro border.<sup>8</sup> Popular media has labeled these “ghettos” and “ghetto” poor, crime-ridden black neighborhoods” in the early 1990s as murder rates in the area rose. Community activists as many black and Latino homeowners’ community activism dating back to the early 1970s. Community police used their discretion to recreate communal discipline and order. Faced with limited state resources, community police used their discretion. As we saw in Linda Jackson’s portrait, community policing was one of the few ways they could assert their authority over the general political order.

Community police used their discretion to recreate communal discipline and order. Faced with limited state resources, community police used their discretion. As we saw in Linda Jackson’s portrait, community policing was one of the few ways they could assert their authority over the general political order.

Neighborhood activists resented the stigmatized ghetto. In community meetings, residents were portrayed as “hard-working” and “tax-paying” to counter negative images of this neighborhood as dominated by welfare. Mrs. Jackson, whom we met in the city and developers “think our corner is in their pocket,” but she insisted, “some people have more money than in the hills.” A class gradient characterizes the neighborhood. The lower middle-class wealthier middle-class households than the lower middle-class gradation continues as one moves up. This was characterized the entire Elmhurst neighborhood with mansions, small 1940s bungalows, and scattered houses were built as subsidized housing in the 1950s. The MacArthur and International Boulevard area has a high school diploma, but 29% have some college and 16% have incomes are lower than the city average. 16% are making under \$10,000, but 16% earning \$10,000 to \$20,000, another 3.2%, over \$100,000.<sup>12</sup> The contrast is between owner-occupied (57%) and rental (43%).

African American activists in the neighborhood came from a broad range of the black community. Some retired African American men in Elmhurst worked in shipyards or in the military, and some women in civil rights activism opened new opportunities. One woman had a yard for a job in the post office before her husband. The Oakland Community Organization (OCO) had a corner store. Mrs. White retired from a job as a clerk at a supermarket. Mr. Lawlor, a radio repairman, was installing cable. Ms. Knight retired early from a job and moved to the neighborhood in her late 50s. Some neighborhood leaders, lived in the hills. One man joined the NCPC because he owned rental properties. He came from a managerial position in government and volunteered full-time in community projects and senior services in Elmhurst. Some people own rental properties in the neighborhood. Some others struggled to make ends meet on their own. Some that barely met their families' needs.



the image of Elmhurst as an undifferentiated community. Residents regularly described themselves as middle-class citizens, explicitly countering media narratives dominated by drug dealers and families on the opening portrait, complained that poor communities have no money to spend in the neighborhood. People in the neighborhood probably live in a complex geography of class distinctions. Lower hills just below 580 include slightly better homes found below MacArthur, and this extends towards the bay.<sup>11</sup> But class diversity in the neighborhood with its mix of large Victorian-style apartment buildings, some of which were built in the 1970s. In the heart of Elmhurst between MacArthur and 580, 46% of adults have no high school diploma and 1% hold graduate degrees. Household income varies widely, with 18% of households earning between \$60,000 and \$100,000 and the community is also almost evenly divided between owner-occupied homes (43%).

Most NCCPCs were largely homeowners, but included working and middle classes. Many Elmhurst residents started their careers in the navy and then moved into government jobs as civil servants. Rev. Henry Chester left the shipyard to become a community organizer with the DCO). Mrs. and Mr. Riles bought and lived in the neighborhood after over thirty years as a meat wrapper. A younger man in his forties, worked in the neighborhood from a successful career as a lawyer in the mid-thirties. Mr. Clay, unlike most residents, moved to the neighborhood but became active in the Elmhurst community near a drug hot spot. He retired from the navy, and at the time of my research was involved in policing and in efforts to improve youth services. Some residents had bought or inherited property and had disposable income, while others had fixed retirement benefits or salaries.

Neighborhood activists had seen more of this in the '50s and '60s. As the East Oakland flatlands developed in the '50s and '60s, black and white kids increasingly sometimes fought over these spaces. Oakland was more integrated than many U.S. cities, but as a majority African American neighborhood, the Taylor family experienced these racial tensions. In 1955, real estate agents still would not sell to a white friend helped his parents get around the law to buy their house. Like most black pioneers, Taylor was and better off financially than many whites. In his kindergarten class, there were only one black child, the daughter of a teacher. By junior high, he was the only black student. He graduated from Castlemont High in 1965, where there were about twelve whites out of a class of eleven blacks.

Most people described Oakland's white flight as "white flight," but it was nonetheless destructive as they took advantage of cheap, federal-backed loans to racially restricted suburbs or to expand into them. Taylor maintained a good relationship with the whites for years. The kids grew up and played together, but eventually he moved his parents out, saying that "there were too many blacks." In the majority-black neighborhoods, housing prices fell, and landlords often abandoned properties or moved out.

White flight, economic restructuring, and the decline of the neighborhood's economic infrastructure, Oakland's white Republican political leadership, and planning policies that systematically prioritized the suburbs and underdeveloped Oakland's commercial corridors struggled with white flight and the growth of regional malls. The number of manufacturing jobs in the midtwentieth century, which had skyrocketed in the post-World War II era, began to decline. In the 1970s, unemployment ran as high as 20% in the flatlands, but economic decline was exacerbated by the loss of service sector jobs.<sup>18</sup> Plant closures escalated in the 1980s. In 1990, unemployment stood at 9.5% in Oakland.

massive transformations since the 1960s. Whites rapidly integrated during the '50s, sharing parks and schools, and memories of childhood.<sup>13</sup> Although Oakland was not immune, rapid white flight made Elmhurst a predominantly black neighborhood by 1970.<sup>14</sup> Deputy Chief Bryant's experiences first-hand. When he was born in 1935, his family sold to blacks above East 14<sup>th</sup> Street. A decade later, he found these informal racial restrictions in place. As a young man, his family was upwardly mobile among other white families in the neighborhood.<sup>15</sup> In 1965, only three blacks, one of whom was the principal, attended his school, which was 70% black, and when he left in 1973, he estimated that there were only about a dozen left.<sup>16</sup>

White flight as a peaceful and polite "exodus" was not always true. White families slowly disappeared from the neighborhood as they gradually subsidized mortgages to move to more desirable neighborhoods in the hills. Mrs. Bryant lived with one white family on her block for a while. The son even called her to help him get out of the neighborhood, explaining that because most whites refused to buy in the neighborhood, property values declined, and absentee landlords maintained them badly.

Deindustrialization and deindustrialization destroyed the neighborhood's economic structure. As historian Robert Self documented, the city government invested in regional development that promoted development in nearby suburban areas.<sup>17</sup> Businesses along the commercial corridor fled, and white flight, redlining in business loans, and the loss of the neighborhood was rich in manufacturing jobs, but black unemployment rates began to rise sharply in the 1960s; in parts of the East Oakland flatlands, unemployment was 25-30% in 1960. Younger black workers seeking better jobs began to relocate to nearby suburbs, a trend exacerbated by black exclusions from service jobs throughout the '70s and '80s.<sup>19</sup> By the late 1980s, Oakland, but in Elmhurst the rate was

14.23%.<sup>20</sup> Even during the economic boom, children were growing up below the poverty line. Mont High remained on the state welfare rolls, and declines in the welfare rolls in the state

Many neighbors traced the further decline of the neighborhood and the source of most of their current problems to drug dealing and the introduction of crack cocaine. Prostitution filled the neighborhood's economy. Cocaine and easy to process, crack generated a market that radically expanded the number of people associated with sales.<sup>23</sup> Neighborhood residents moved to their windows and installed reinforced glass, as dangerous spaces where children could be seen by adults, especially senior citizens, no longer safe. Crime rose rapidly in the late 1990s, persistent drug dealing, and though crime either had not really decreased

Black political networks dominated the neighborhood during increasing racial diversity of the neighborhood. As black families bought houses from black families, the neighborhood marker of racial change, by 2002, 90% African American, was 52.9% black, 37.1% African American, and .6% white.<sup>24</sup> Language barriers and low participation, since few neighborhoods had a strong history. But another barrier was that Elmhurst was a predominantly African American neighborhood. Even though Elmhurst may have been a predominantly African American young adults throughout the 1970s and '80s, without qualifications that Elmhurst was a predominantly African American neighborhood, sometimes reproduced this racial definition. Fruitvale, the historic heart of Oakland, was a predominantly African American neighborhood. I met with city council member Ignacio Carrillo and Larry Reid. The fact that Elmhurst organization throughout the 1970s and '80s so much of the neighborhood space. These struggles generated deeply rooted community schools, parks, and streets that activists had built and political power for which black activists

Black activists in Elmhurst took diverse forms. Some had been involved for decades, while others were newly retired. A few NCPC members participated in the civil rights and black power organization

room in 2000, 44.7% of Elmhurst children on the welfare line, and 52.4% of kids at Castlemead's program CalWORKS despite drastic cuts.<sup>21</sup>

The destabilization of their neighborhood led to the rise of street-level crack cocaine in the 1980s. Drugs and economic void.<sup>22</sup> Cheaper than powder created an entrepreneurial drug market of drug sales locations and the violence of the streets. Residents, who increasingly added bars and reinforced steel doors, described the streets as no longer play and where many no longer felt safe. Although crime declined, drug dealing made most neighbors feel as if crime had increased or would soon increase again.

Local politics in Elmhurst, despite the influx of Latino and some Asian families moving to the suburbs. As one parent at Castlemead High School, once almost entirely black, 37% Latino, 5.8% Asian and Pacific Islander was one barrier to newer immigrant parents. School meetings had translation services. Elmhurst was broadly defined as a black space. By the time I was half Latino by 2005, I would still meet throughout Oakland who would say without hesitation that Elmhurst was a black neighborhood. Latino residents' definition of space when they traveled to Oakland's Mexican American community, to the Mission District or La Fuente instead of Elmhurst's. They organized and fought as a black community. They solidified Elmhurst's identity as a black neighborhood. They felt claims to neighborhood spaces—places that activists had worked to revitalize—and to Elmhurst. They had fought hard.<sup>25</sup>

Divergent paths into local politics. Some became active only after they participated actively in Oakland's vibrant community organizations in the 1960s. Most first became

involved in community work through Eastern Star or Knights and Ladies or their children's schools. Mrs. Gilbert and grandchildren's school and did volunteer. One of her neighbors told her about the NCPC because the NCPC gave her some work on the corner." Miles Johnson, one of the first to have been a member of Men of Tomorrow, played a role in early civil rights activities. He was an active member of his homeowners' association and experienced personal tragedies. Mr. Lawlor felt comfortable on rough streets: he was young, had a car, and went to one of Oakland's many black motorcade events. He was shot and seriously injured as she walked to the NCPC to demand more police presence in her own neighborhood.

Many neighborhood residents curious about the Crime Prevention Councils got their start in the late 1960s and '70s fighting against crime in homes, apartment buildings, and neglected areas. They got involved when the Oakland Housing Authority built site housing in East Oakland to deal with the displacement which had displaced almost one-third of the population from the historic heart of Oakland's black community. The site was in already predominantly black neighborhoods and was built out the city.<sup>26</sup> Mrs. Love's home kept getting worse. "This public housing" next door. Since then, she went to complaints, she started organizing in the neighborhood town."<sup>27</sup> Mrs. Love moved from her work in politics to organizing for district elections and supporting black politicians to overturn the city's policies.

The vibrant story of Elmhurst's community work is a testament to sociologist Robert Putnam's argument that community is still active today—that we are *Bowling Alone*. The homeless, run mentoring program for at-risk youth, elderly throughout the East Oakland neighborhood, and NCPC members, and members of the community have volunteered for decades, doing good and bringing communities together."<sup>28</sup> But the challenge

a church, through black clubs like the  
of Pythias, or through volunteering in  
was always involved in her children's  
unteer work with her church, and then  
the NCPC meetings. She stayed involved  
y to deal with the "guys standing on  
first black policemen in Oakland, had  
7, a prominent black service club that  
ism in Oakland, and later became an  
association. Others were motivated by  
nfortable negotiating Elmhurst's some-  
d been a security guard, and belonged  
ycle clubs. But his daughter had been  
ked to the corner store. He joined the  
ce so his daughter could be safe walk-

rrently active in the Neighborhood  
start in homeowner mobilizations in  
t the growing numbers of abandoned  
gent absentee landlords. Mrs. Love first  
ng Authority began building scattered  
with the aftermath of urban renewal,  
of residents of West Oakland, the his-  
nity. This new housing was all located  
borhoods, instead of spread through-  
etting broken into by "youth living in  
he housing authority never responded  
her neighbors and "kept going down-  
work in neighborhood quality-of-life-  
tions in the late 1970s, which enabled  
white Republican political machine.

mmunity activists casts doubt on soci-  
t Americans are less involved in civic  
*Alone*. Black churches feed and clothe  
ns and AIDS ministries, and visit the  
flatlands. Many homeowners' associa-  
s of Oakland Community Organiza-  
esperately trying to "hold their com-  
es created by economic restructuring

and public policies that shifted capital communities were more than these volunteers could solve.<sup>29</sup> Many residents were frustrated with the city's failure to address the problem of fighting crime, blight, and economic decline. The same drug corners and landlords who were unemployable were also unemployable. Many were unemployed, underemployed, or on federal aid. The commercial corridors were vibrant businesses—barbershops, clothing stores, convenience stores—standing out among the stores, and check cashing stores. Many were in the city's black leadership and its economic life. Even during the height of the black urban crisis in the '90s, the city concentrated most public resources in Oakland.<sup>30</sup> Linda Jackson's description of Oakland as a "step-child" emphasizes both the persistence of the problem and her demand that the city nurture its families.

### *Post-Civil Rights Nostalgia*

When I was growing up, if I did

I first realized the prevalence of nostalgia one day in a meeting of nonprofit service providers to address a social problem in the East Oakland flatlands. A white woman began to explain that the problem was a result of a discipline: "When I was a kid, everyone laid down the law to different people. Now a kid doesn't have to be disciplined." A very familiar refrain, though quite surprising to me, I grew up at the height of Oakland's crack epidemic. I can imagine these phrases spoken by parents in the history in the United States of blaming the present on the past and of seeing the past through rose-colored glasses. Coontz argues in her book *The Way We Were* that the "decline" of the "American family" began in the early century. *Black Metropolis*, a famous study of black communities in the 1940s, contains a chapter on chaotic poor families fail to properly discipline their children.



and jobs away from black urban communities could be reasonably expected to be offset by the lack of progress after decades of economic decline. Neighbors continued to fight the battle year after year. Many residents still remained dependent on increasingly insecure jobs. Homes remained dilapidated, with the most basic necessities missing. Clothing stores, beauty shops, and small businesses were among many empty storefronts, liquor stores, and many residents expressed disappointment with the city's efforts to solve problems in Elmhurst. The urban regime during the 1980s and early 1990s showed little investment on revitalizing downtown Elmhurst as "Oakland's forgotten neighborhood" due to the constant neglect of the neighborhood and surrounding neighborhoods.

... wrong, I got hit by Mrs. Green,  
Mrs. Howard, and my mother.  
—Mr. Lawlor

... nostalgia for disciplined children as I sat  
... service providers talking about the crime  
... A 24-year-old African American man  
... that young people today had no discipline  
... and into me. It was you against all these  
... have to respond to anyone." This was a  
... surprising to hear from a 24-year-old who  
... crack epidemic. Closing my eyes, I could  
... parents in the 1940s or '50s. We have a long  
... blaming young people for societal decline  
... through colored glasses.<sup>31</sup> As historian Stephanie  
... *We Never Were*, people have been track-  
... family" since at least the late nineteenth  
... ethnography of Chicago's Southside  
... includes very similar complaints about how  
... discipline their children.<sup>32</sup>

*In the Flatlands*

Political scientist Adolph Reed sug South or pre-civil rights North as idy nearly universal status in black publi gia as “a historically specific class year the unchallenged role of the black mic models and race leaders. Jim Crow ne munal identity—grounded in middle when deepening class, gender, and g tions about the idea of black unity.<sup>33</sup>

Reed’s analysis offers important ins in Elmhurst. But Elmhurst activists we project of racial uplift. Black commun changes in childhood and families that post-civil rights era. They were enga dren in this neighborhood, including at the complex longings encoded in th worked in the daily practice of politics

Mrs. Gilbert and her husband gre large Victorian house in Elmhurst wh early 1960s. As we sat in her elegant, c ter did homework on the dining roo computer, and her daughter came in fr bert still worked as a school crossing g one’s children. She described her upbri

so different. When we were growing that stuff they had now. If we had t ballgame, we were like, “Oh night ou borhood, everybody knew each othe they could chastise you. We was afra was going to tell your mother or you get in big trouble. . . . That’s a big diff anything to people’s kids. Now kids w care. In my day, you wouldn’t dare say

She laughed as she imagined herse call her. I will not do this again.”

Mrs. Taylor grew up in Oakland in explained, “There were no drug boys.

uggests that nostalgia for the Jim Crow  
yllic, unified, and safe has “attained a  
c discourse.” He analyzes this nostal-  
ning,” a patriarchal vision that secures  
ddle class—the talented tenth—as role  
ostalgia creates a coherent black com-  
e-class values—at the exact moment  
enerational divides have raised ques-  
ights into the ways nostalgia operated  
ere not only engaged in a middle-class  
nity activists were struggling with real  
t challenged the idea of progress in the  
ged in an urgent project to save chil-  
their own. We need to look carefully  
ese memories to understand how they

w up in Louisiana and moved into a  
here they raised their children in the  
luttered living room, her granddaugh-  
m table, her husband sat at a nearby  
om work. At sixty years old, Mrs. Gil-  
guard, where she looked out for every-  
ing in Louisiana as

up, we made fun. We didn't have all  
en cents to go to the movies or the  
t.” We never had fights. In our neigh-  
er. . . . If you was doing something,  
aid to do anything because someone  
r grandmother and you was going to  
erence today, you're just afraid to say  
will tell you, “Well tell her.” They don't  
y, “Call her.”

If a child once again: “Oh please don't

the post-World War II era when, she  
” She characterized her teenage years

in Oakland as full of activities for you. park in the historically black neighborhood a swimming pool, tennis courts, and close communal and police monitoring trouble. The police would patrol the lot if any children was in the theater that to write a note if you were going to the she moved with her husband and child the third black family in their immediate when her daughter Jean was growing neighborhood as “good kids.” “They gave you voice, never spoke back. If you caught you’d say something to them, they’d say something to one. . . .” She laughed ruefully. Jean Taylor, her daughter, who grew up also emphasized how informal community had the fear of God that somebody would school. My mom’s friend was going to then “other parents were able to chastise getting their butt whopped if they skip mom.” Mrs. Taylor added, “Adults can teenagers. They’re trouble. When we would have a weapon on him. Now even

Mrs. Taylor and Jean Taylor even generations as operating with more respect they were doing wrong, they were still they knew that neighbors would call the one young man who dealt in the old her mom and bring them a six-pack of “Mom” and her dad “Uncle.” That generation dead, or out of the game. Now the drug They just “take it as their ground.” As Jean ers, she explained, “These youngsters house up. You have to be really, really

Many adults in Elmhurst, like Mrs. discipline young people on the streets to ist thought crack had “traumatized” “child-centered” tradition of the black middle-aged African American woman

ng people centered around a beautiful  
rhood of West Oakland that featured  
dancing lessons. She also remembered  
ng that kept kids in school and out of  
cal theater and “shine their light to see  
should be in school. Your parents had  
e store and you were out sick.” When  
ldren to Elmhurst in 1964, they were  
diate neighborhood. In the late 1960s  
up, she described kids in the neigh-  
rou the respect . . . never raised their  
t them outside doing something, and  
y, ‘Sorry ma’am.’ Now, if you say some-  
“You don’t know what could happen.”  
up in East Oakland in the late sixties,  
unal sanctions had kept kids in line: “I  
as going to see you, if you don’t go to  
pass by. . . .” They both explained that  
se your child,” but now instead of kids  
p school, “kids call the police on their  
n’t enjoy life anymore because of the  
ere kids, there was no such thing a boy  
erybody carries a weapon.”

described the drug dealers in earlier  
spect for the neighborhood. Although  
ill embedded in the community, and  
he police on them. Jean explained that  
days came by recently to say hello to  
f beer. He had always called her mom  
eration of drug dealers was in prison,  
g boys do not even live on their block.  
ean compared new and old drug deal-  
that are coming up, they’d blow your  
careful.”

Taylor, were simply too afraid to dis-  
oday. One younger community activ-  
the neighborhood and disrupted the  
community. At one NCPC meeting, a  
n complained about cruising and cars



ence, but when the police officer asked  
refused to answer. “I’m not a fool. I have  
ll Clay echoed this sense of constraint:  
alk up to a young person just because

ep sense of loss and frustration that  
discipline neighborhood youth. They  
work of neighborhood discipline and  
atchful eyes of aunts, grandmothers,  
even when parents had to work long  
I was raised in a village setting until I  
t, and there’s no more shame. When I  
you did something wrong you should  
hat happen again.” Mrs. Gilbert high-  
t community in establishing that sense  
and spoke proudly about how none of  
been arrested. “It would have been the

al concerns about their own kids and  
ements in Elmhurst politics. As soci-  
d, “activist mothering” traditions play  
community activists think of their politi-  
hurst, as in Naples’s study, described  
their “mother-work and community  
ed to politicize” their own “mothering  
ildren to overcome racial barriers. But  
“community other mothers” and men  
lijah Anderson calls “old heads.” These  
ns have been integral to broadening  
es.<sup>34</sup>

e Mrs. Riles blamed state child abuse  
discipline. Stories of children who had  
lated widely. According to Mrs. Taylor,  
couldn’t hit their son, who was on pro-  
Castlemont PTA and her homeowners’  
job and custody of her children when  
iplining her after the girl had started a  
w the girl is fifteen, out of control, and  
ic pastor of a very large congregation

in East Oakland, pointed out the irony of being told to carry batons and beat you upside the head to correct you! If your parents could do that, they wouldn't have to use their batons to correct you. That ultimate disciplinary power was undermined. The ultimate power to punish, whether with a word or a whip, was undermined.

Pastor John's concern about discipline was deeply personal. Many of their kids, now positioned to adulthood, completed high school and moved to the suburbs to raise their own children when they came of age. Pastor John was struggling on the track, fighting an uphill battle against a culture that had defined as cool. "I'll tear my son's pants off. I love my son. I'm not chastising him out of anger and I'm going to whip his tail before you get him to school, gets good grades. Then he's going to be what he can be."

### *Derailed Development*

Nostalgic stories of disciplined youth in the past were coming of age in a time of crises of child and adult. While Elmhurst children acted like adults, had children themselves, they were described "adult children" who never seemed to grow up. They lived in what geographer Cindi Katz has called "the land of both the promise of economic development and the path derailed."<sup>35</sup> The path from childhood to adulthood was one of blocked exit ramps and detours through the community. These detours took particular form in the iconic figures of a boy in jail and a girl in prison.

Many black kids in Elmhurst experienced a transition that moved directly from childhood to adulthood. As Toni Morrison argues, generations are often separated by years in inner-city black neighborhoods. Children and teens are expected to fulfill adult responsibilities, such as earning income and caring for other children. They are expected to work, earn income, and even compete with their parents for jobs. These adult responsibilities leave



... in such stories: "Police are still able to correct you on the street." While parented by the state, the state still had the physical force or criminal sanction. ... line, like that of many other activists, ... and grandkids had successfully transferred to school or college, bought homes, and raised their own kids, but they had seen others fall as a result of struggling to keep his own teenage son on the streets. ... peer pressure and what "rap culture" had become. ... tail up before I let him go to jail. . . . I had seen a lot of abuse . . . I'm saving this kid's life, because you will. I'm gonna make sure he goes to college and he's going to be all

... which encoded deep fears that young people were growing up in a society that had confused the very categories of adulthood. ... st activists told stories about kids who grew up too soon, they also seemed to grow up. Youth in Elmhurst was called "derailed zones," spaces where the lives of young men and children's futures have been derailed. ... adulthood seemed like a highway full of potholes that challenged the future of the black community. ... ularly gendered forms—encapsulated in the lives of a teenage mother on welfare.

... experienced an accelerated life course that blurred the lines of adulthood. As anthropologist Linda Burton has argued, ... ated by as little as thirteen to seventeen years, so age hierarchies are unclear. Many young people take on responsibilities by helping with housework and sometimes contribute to household expenses. ... parents for the same scarce service sector jobs. ... ead many teens to think of themselves



<sup>36</sup> In its most extreme form, this accelerated the oft-cited feeling of some kids that

catch-all category for the troublesome between an idealized protected, innocent world of responsible workers. Neighborhood and other criminals as “kids,” “young-uns” working or hustling in the streets of responsible, employed adulthood “kids” along with the fourteen-year-olds on the streets.

described in some detail how girls grew up. He would see girls who still had

midriffs or a skirt too short. . . . I know that. . . . Some men are not strong enough to cross that line.” They will take advantage of exactly what happens. A couple of them pushing a baby carriage.

men having children” didn’t know how to handle these kids with them, and they’re smacking them on the head. What I thought “this generation of kids that’s different from some of those teenagers not having

boys grew up too soon; they dropped out of the game. He explained that some parents might be paying the light bill, everything. . . . They don’t care because as long as they can sit back and relax.” Mrs. Taylor had grown up in East Oakland and helped keep him informed about community meetings and reporting everything that was so crucial that she ended up losing her job and Reverend Chester described an older man who took on the role of family provider,

and some parents became dependents to push kids in the right direction.

Jermaine Ashley, a sixteen-year-old to grow up fast in his East Oakland flat

Here's a place where right is wrong streets and those who are supposed to mies. . . . You have to grow up fast j ping out of your house is like stepping knowing who you can trust. . . . But y house, can you? *No!* Why? Because I I have to be. It's either be the beast or me and think I'm a menace to society best I know how. I tried to get a job. interview, but no one taught me how the drain.<sup>37</sup>

Young men had to become "hard" neither adults nor the state seemed opportunities. Jermaine's comments ec Devine, who found that in the toughest ultimately were responsible for their ov

Mr. Bennet, another Elmhurst NCF fundamentally shifted power from ad post office, owned his own house, and income. He had an older model car and or twenty dollars in his pocket. He ex in his neighborhood couldn't relate to because "on a given day they might h their pocket. So it's hard to tell somebo and on a cane." Reverend Chester agre ter way than selling drugs when he's lo cars with all this money, and you're wo

Black youth and young adults in E tions in the labor market. Youth unem high as adult rates, but black youth un In the summer of 2003, California's while for African American youth it w quadrupled from the 1960s to the mid

with neither the power nor the desire  
youth activist, described the pressure  
Flatland neighborhood:

and wrong is right. Dope runs the  
to serve and protect are common ene-  
must to keep up with our peers. Step-  
ing into another world. No love, not  
you can't be scared to walk out of your  
I'm a hard young *man*. Why? Because  
I be eaten by the beast. Elders look at  
me, but they do not know I'm doing the  
I put in an application. I even got an  
to present myself, so that job is down

in order to survive on streets where  
able to exercise control or offer real  
who the findings of anthropologist John  
in the worst schools in New York, young people  
own security.<sup>38</sup>

PC member, thought drug dealing had  
effects on kids. He had retired from the  
he had worked hard, but he was on a fixed  
and rarely had more than an extra fifteen  
explained that "the kids" dealing drugs  
the older people in the neighborhood  
have two or three thousand dollars in  
body when they see that I'm broke down  
said: "You can't tell a kid there is a bet-  
looking at that guy out there driving big  
working for nine dollars an hour."

Almhurst occupied very insecure posi-  
employment rates are routinely twice as  
unemployment rates remain far higher.  
youth unemployment rate was 22%,  
as 56.3%.<sup>39</sup> Black youth unemployment  
in the 1980s, while white youth unemploy-

ment remained relatively stable.<sup>40</sup> One estimated that youth unemployment rose during this period, most government funding for social programs dried up. Young black men experienced substantial drops in income and employment. Women made some significant gains in employment in the post-civil rights era. Women's gains have led to higher family incomes and lower child poverty rates. But for many, who are often either single parents or in families where the male breadwinner has stagnated.<sup>42</sup>

High unemployment levels in Elmhuysen make it difficult for young people to achieve the markers of adulthood: getting a job, owning an apartment.<sup>43</sup> African Americans often live in poverty and have a much harder time escaping it. In the end Chester explained that too many young people are still living at home without real jobs even though they are in their thirties: "When our generation came up, we had to go out and get ourselves a job. We got some people who are now thirty-eight, forty years old and have babies." He blamed overprotective parents for part of the problem, but also acknowledged that the economy was along we could get a job, even if it was a low-paying one that was automated: "they've got back hoes

Economic restructuring and mass incarceration have led to a new age in black neighborhoods like Elmhuysen. It is not just that a new deadly symbiosis has emerged between poverty and crime at the turn of the twenty-first century. It is also that the way we manage economic and social inequality has led to the prison population nearly tripling, so that one in ten African Americans was behind bars. But for African Americans in the thirties, the rate was one in nine.<sup>46</sup> "Over the course of a lifetime, nearly 70 percent of young black men, well over half young black high school graduates, will go to prison."<sup>47</sup>

Mass incarceration has destroyed black economic marginality.<sup>48</sup> Pervasive arrest and incarceration make it much harder for black men to get or keep jobs, let alone achieve economic markers of adulthood. In her book *Work in the Era of Mass Incarceration*, I

the study of Elmhurst in the late 1980s, unemployment rates were as high as 75%.<sup>41</sup> In this same period, black youth employment and summer job opportunities have experienced particularly substantial declines, even as black women have made gains in employment, income, and education in the past few decades. These gains have not translated systematically into lower unemployment and poverty rates, however, because they are concentrated in families with men whose economic status

Elmhurst made it hard for many young black men to achieve independence—a full-time job and the ability to leave home at later ages than whites. Black youth experience higher poverty than white youth.<sup>44</sup> Reverend Jesse Jackson and women remained dependents on their parents as they entered their thirties and forties. “We were glad to get eighteen years old and leave home,” says a parent now who has kids thirty-two, thirty-four, and thirty-six. “I never worked, and they are still their parents who let kids get away with anything.” The economy had changed. “When I came out of school, it was just digging holes.” Now everything is different.

Mass incarceration have reshaped coming of age in Elmhurst. Sociologist Loic Wacquant argues that the link between the prison and the ghetto has become stronger. Jail and prisons have become the main sites of social marginality.<sup>45</sup> Between 1987 and 2007, the incarceration rate for African American men aged twenty to twenty-nine increased so that one out of every one hundred African American men in that age group were in prison. Sociologist Devah Pager reports that about one in three young black men—and one in five young black dropouts—will spend some time in

prison. Black families and deepened black men's economic struggles, and felony convictions, make it difficult to get the stable jobs required as cultural and economic capital. In her book *Marked: Race, Crime, and Finding Work*, Pager argues that the prison expansion

has legitimated and reinforced “deeply young men as criminals. These stereotypes for all black men. In experimental criminal record had the same chance of records.<sup>49</sup> Black young men themselves.

The criminal justice system has fed drug war, with its harsh mandatory sentences to recruit younger and younger boys.<sup>51</sup> By 2000, the most common juvenile possession of narcotics.<sup>52</sup> This created “up too soon” and a fearful public sup excluding them from the protections of Jenks argues that by excluding violent them as “demonic man-children,” adult and purity of our ideals of childhood.<sup>53</sup>

Drug markets and the drug war spread in America so that coming of age sometimes became Johnson experienced the intimate cost of black police officers, from a prominent family, Mr. Johnson and his wife raised a police officer who was almost killed in prison for killing a police officer. He experienced police harassment in Oakland. Police officers harassed him and his family. He told his father, “I just couldn’t.” Marie Spencer received an invitation to the late eighties, she saw many successes that almost 50% of the men in her class.

There was a deep crisis of social reproduction. The path to adulthood was no longer a clear independence. Parents were sometimes absent for the family. Children became parents of independence, responsibility, or adulthood. Many were unemployed or underemployed for decades from their parents. Some hard-core citizens had less disposable income than And too many kids, especially boys, saw urgent crises were not private concerns but public engagements in Oakland.



embedded racial stereotypes” of black men have reduced economic opportunities, Pager found that black men with no criminal records were less likely to get jobs as white men with criminal records. Black men have been redefined as criminal.<sup>50</sup>

and the adultification of black boys. The harsh sentencing laws, encouraged drug deals for the most risky street-level dealers. A juvenile felony arrest in Oakland was for a vicious cycle in which boys “grew up” without the protection of childhood. Sociologist Christopher Jencks argued that children from childhood, representing a generation that has been able to secure the sanctity of childhood.

hand guns and violence in urban America became a matter of life and death. Miles of violence. One of Oakland’s first black middle-class California families lost two sons in Oakland. One became a police officer in the line of duty. The other was in the military. He was big as a teenager and frequently in Oakland. Later in college when some fraternity brothers, he struck out violently. “I can’t live in that bullshit world.” When she went to her ten-year high school reunion in Oakland, she realized that many of the graduates, but realized that many of the graduates were dead.

production in Oakland’s flatlands. The clear progression from dependence to independence was dependent on children who provided support before they had achieved any kind of adult maturity. Many adults remained dependent for decades, unable to attain full independence. Working middle-aged adults or senior citizens were often younger than young street-level drug dealers. Many simply died before they grew up. These experiences, but motivated a wide range of black

## *Faulty Families and the Disciplin*

I sat one day talking with Reverend C. Robertson, who had an office storefront on International Boulevard, and Mr. Robertson, who worked closely together in neighborhood programs. Both worked with Oakland's community development programs, the Blight Committee, and Oakland Commission on Crime, Blight, and Economic Development. The two men gave very complex and divergent views on the neighborhood.<sup>54</sup> They described how economic forces had abandoned a generation of black children, and how "common labor" anymore so it was hard to find without an education. New high-tech jobs were being filled by workers from "India or Korea" to fill the gap. They were sure unemployed black men were trained for these jobs, but that the police arrest drug dealers in the neighborhood, and that sometimes "it seems like they want to get rid of us." But Rev. Chester and Mr. Robertson both agreed that the problem lies as the problem. Rev. Chester worried about the future because women were at work and families were broken. Robertson returned to the mantra, "The neighborhood is broken down. Until we get back to the basics." Talk of structural forces quickly receded into the background. Complaints about broken families and neighborhoods were the focus.

At a city council hearing, city council member Robertson nostalgic narratives as he called on the council to bring down on crime.

I am an African American man. Last year, I was arrested. I was not African American. If you look at the people that look like me, I don't want to keep locking up people that are innocent of the criminal justice system. But I don't want to be held accountable for their actions, and when

To applause from the audience, he began to hold parents responsible, pointing to the impact of their children's lives."

Chester and Mr. Robertson in the small that served as a community outreach friend Chester and Mr. Robertson had good politics for over twenty years. They community policing initiative, the Elmhurst Community Organization to address prob- development in their community. Both explanations for changes in the neigh- omic shifts and political decisions had dren. They worried that there was “no rd for young people to make a living businesses were bringing in immigrant ew professional jobs instead of making ned for them. Even as they demanded heir neighborhood, they also worried at to get every black kid on probation.” returned repeatedly to identify fami- ried that kids were raising themselves lies had been broken up by welfare. Mr. e home is where it starts and the homes o that family life, we’ve got a problem.” ed as the conversation turned towards nostalgia for parental authority.

cil member Larry Reid drew on these black community to support cracking

year there were 113 homicides. Eleven at my district, the people dealing drugs re making [the neighborhood] unsafe. hat look like me and making them part n’t know when we begin to hold people a we begin to hold *parents* responsible.

e repeated for emphasis, “When we arents who’ve disengaged themselves

Explicitly addressing youth activism, Reid defined drug dealing as “a crime of poverty.”

Let me tell you about Valerie Reid. Valerie Reid of Cincinnati, she had ten children in the neighborhood. She eat Spam and how many ways to make a crime of poverty. People can pull the rug out from under them making excuses for people standing in the gutter. . . . Be proud that we didn't give up. We choose not to be productive citizens. We get a good education and live in a neighborhood where we can see the front of their homes. And these seniors, they can't be able to walk to the corner store.

Many black homeowner activists, like Bill Clay, and young people today were trapped in a cycle of poverty. Their analyses were shaped by a set of commercial and racial exclusions of the Jim Crow era.<sup>55</sup> Bill Clay, who he recently had with his granddaughter, told Bill that he just didn't understand why he had to make a living. There was no other way. Bill needed a lesson in how it was before, when he was young. “Now there are opportunities, and you can get ahead.” Bill Clay recognized the continuing significance of the struggle. It proved to him that overcoming racism required a kind of personal strength. “I tell kids that it doesn't matter what color you are.”

Larry Reid never explicitly identified the connection between his repeated popular call to hold parents responsible and the spread equation between youth and crime. His rhetoric reinforced a pervasive nostalgia for a time when families for neighborhood crime. The “politics of respectability” in black communities and a gender-inflected moral valuation of motherhood. Anthropologist Brett Williams argues that families use these nostalgic images because “they lack the power, to address the inability of the state to provide housing and stimulating schools.” Not only that, but they are trapped in them from this quagmire.” In this way,

ists who earlier in the meeting had  
verty,” he continued:

lerie Reid is my mother. In the city of  
e projects. . . . I know what it's like to  
e corn bread. Don't let anyone say it's  
emselves up by their bootstraps. Stop  
out there selling drugs on the cor-  
up our neighborhoods to those who  
. We fought for our children to get a  
rhood where they can play outside in  
ors who have worked hard deserve to

like Larry Reid, resisted claims that  
a poverty. Their political culture and  
non experiences with the more explicit  
Bill Clay told me about a conversation  
er, who married a man in jail. She had  
how it was for young black men. “They  
er way.” Bill thought young black men  
when he couldn't even get a union job.  
a just have to take advantage of them.”  
gnificance of race, but his own success  
n or rising out of poverty was a matter  
if you work hard, you can make it no

d “youth” as responsible for crime, but  
nts accountable reproduced the wide-  
ime. The story of his virtuous mother  
family discipline that blamed faulty  
ese comments drew on a long-stand-  
k communities based on a “class- and  
otherhood and proper childrearing.”<sup>56</sup>  
that black urban politicians embrace  
y have no money, and little political  
e poor to find decent jobs, affordable  
stalgia and calls for self-help “deliver  
black politicians become complicit in

disavowing federal and state responsibility for contemporary urban inequalities.<sup>57</sup>

Locating children in the private sphere and framing public actions fundamentally shape the normative definition of childhood. Childhood was secure in private homes, and off the state's radar. State child abuse laws drew narrow boundaries and blamed the state for interfering in private life. Clearly here how focusing on the bad can reify a false distinction between public and private. Important questions. How did change in the neighborhood identified affect the ability of young people to get out of poverty? How did state crime policies along with increasingly punitive justice systems affect social mobility? How did economic conditions, availability and security of well-paid jobs, and the ability of families to raise, supervise, and discipline children? How did housing costs affect the stability of neighborhoods? How did state cuts in education and social services affect children from childhood to productive adulthood?

Defining crime as a private disciplinary matter was a political action in Elmhurst. It certainly pressured the state to invest in education, create a living wage, create programs, or create paths to work for young people. As argues, these narratives framed "black and brown youth and policing instead of community service and social work. The role of the police was to protect citizens from the crime. Larry Reid called on Elmhurst activists to support the police. They answered his call. They supported Mayor Reid's plan to hire three hundred police officers and to expand the police's role in drug busts or cruising, and in targeting drug dealing, prostitution, and other crimes.

Neighborhood activists built these programs because they desperately wanted to save their children. Chester explained,

We will call the police if we see a drug dealer. We will call the police if we feel like we don't want them in our neighborhood. We will call the police if we see a young person standing out there selling drugs because we don't want them in our neighborhood.

ability for addressing the massive costs  
ere can easily erase the ways in which  
family life and children's worlds. Our  
icates children in the family, safe and  
street. Even the common criticism of  
boundaries of responsibility for children  
the sacred space of the family. We see  
choices of children and parents can  
lic and private that forecloses several  
es in the class structure that Mr. Rob-  
young people in Elmhurst to work their  
ackdowns on drug dealing and crime  
ce policies themselves serve as barri-  
mic transformations that decreased the  
common labor jobs" impact the ability  
discipline their children? How had rising  
many low-income families? How had  
vices affected the security of the path  
od?

nary problem had far-reaching effects  
nly did not encourage demands for the  
ving wage, expand drug rehabilitation  
former prisoners. Instead, as Gregory  
youth as subjects in need of discipline  
vices."<sup>58</sup> These stories left the state little  
e results of failed socialization. When  
sts to defend their community, many  
or Brown's efforts to hire an additional  
expand police powers to seize vehicles  
d they campaigned for intensive police  
tion, and other street crime.

partnerships with the police in part  
ve youth from lives of crime. Reverend

g dealer or young prostitute because  
r neighborhood. We don't want them  
use the first thing happens with that

young man is that he gets busted for a record. Then if a good job comes around, he can get a job any place.

By not clearing the corners of drug activity, police “endanger that generation that’s going to make money. Why should I go out and get a few hundred dollars or five thousand dollars a week?”

Partnerships with the police provided a form of discipline and to restore the authority of fathers in the neighborhood.<sup>59</sup> Mrs. Taylor would discipline drug boys and other neighborhood boys. “I don’t bother them because she used to sit on her porch with her children and their bikes up the street. “They would come by and would ask, ‘Why you looking at me?’” Her husband called George (her community policing partner) and he disciplined him. George said if they bothered them, she would. She chuckled as she explained that they would not bother them anymore.

Community policing activists, like Mrs. Taylor, were a form of state power that had the police acting as their enforcers. Elmhurst activists mobilized to support curfews, laws, curfews, and anticruising ordinances. They would arrest kids but also to set limits, to get them off the street and away from a life of crime.

At one Elmhurst NCPC meeting, Mrs. Taylor proposed daytime and nighttime curfews to reduce crime. To a chorus of “That’s right” from many other mothers, she insisted that it might even take putting the police on the street to discipline that they “have to be accountable for their actions. The state could discipline the family itself, but it’s not the divisions between public and private.

This idea of the state as disciplinarian was a form of patriarchal and physical discipline prevalent in American history. American activists used the phrase “discipline” specifically to refer to physical punishment grounded in a clear hierarchy between parent and child. Adult authority based on fear as well as



for drugs. They give him a criminal  
and and he wants to work, he can't get

g dealers, Mr. Lawlor agreed that the  
coming up to see that 'Man, that's easy  
a job when I can make four thousand  
selling drugs?'"

led a way for elders to recreate village  
ty of community other-mothers and  
aylor complained that she could no lon-  
neighborhood youth: "I don't say any-  
cause it's dangerous." She explained that  
daughter and watch the drug boys ride  
l stare at us on our property, and one  
He would make this a habit everyday. I  
g officer) and they found him and they  
bothered us again, he'd jack them up."  
e drug dealers believed him and didn't

Mrs. Taylor, constructed a broad model  
g "in loco parentis" as disciplinarians.  
ort truancy ordinances, antiloitering  
nces. They did not want the police just  
o hold kids accountable, and to keep  
e of crime.

city manager Robert Bobb called for  
uce crime and to keep kids in school.  
ny black homeowners in the room, he  
g a parent in jail to make parents real-  
or their child." Bobb suggested that the  
y reestablishing proper parenting and

arian built on the nostalgia for both  
ealant in Elmhurst. Many older Afri-  
se "to discipline," "to chastise," or "to  
l discipline. "Discipline" needed to be  
n children and adults and a model of  
as love and respect. African American



Figure 4. A disciplinary state: Oakland police officer talking to a teenager in Elmhurst. (Photo by author)

men (and some women) often emphasized their role as strict disciplinarian. Mr. Lawlor described his father as the foundation for the village he was growing up. “Without that father figure, discipline based on fear of repercussion, these kids would be. They feel no responsibility to you or to the community. Kids, like I do.” Since kids did not fear police, police activists could use the threat of the state to become the ultimate male authority figure for the youth.

This nostalgia did not on its own constitute a vision of a disciplinary state. Pastor John Johnson’s communal discipline when he brought his church to the school to reduce violence and improve the community. The organization drew on activist mothers’ demands for state investments in after-school programs that would nurture youth in the flatlands.



police stop and question a young black

)

sized the importance of a father's role  
described the discipline he received from  
age discipline that existed when he was  
re, without that basic respect, which is  
children are not going to respond. . . .  
I. You have to basically frighten those  
parental or village discipline, Elmhurst  
e's power to use force. The police could  
figure and instill fear and discipline in

lead community activists to create a  
hn drew on similar memories of com-  
s congregation into Castlemont High  
ove education. Oakland Community  
ering traditions in its campaigns to  
ool programs and small schools that  
Individual residents also reached out

to young people and their families. Bill  
dren at the local middle school and w  
donate computers, buy walkie-talkies  
for a student essay competition. Mrs. T  
toys and equipment for home daycare  
watched a young girl she met as a cross  
could keep going to classes at City Col  
ories of communal solidarity laid the g  
that involved older African American  
munal bonds, often reaching across ge  
the divide between “law-abiding” and

Defining crime as a youth problem  
the police were the right answer. Black  
about investing in education and social  
homeowner activists supported expa  
asserting that the police could not solv  
member of the NCPC, insisted, “I don’t  
cation is key.” Reverend Chester worri  
resentment and hostility among young  
pline. We need to look more closely a  
community activism to understand w  
used so much social capital and polit  
and to expand the disciplinary state.

### *Partners in Policing*

City manager Robert Bobb spoke at  
to announce a new program to better  
to reduce violence. In a community r  
NCPC members, homeowners, and b  
out East Oakland, Robert Bobb urged  
combat high murder rates. “The comm  
year-old African American woman, a  
church, quietly said to the man sitting  
Robert Bobb continued, “The cost to  
guys in white hoods came in to our  
we’re killing each other, the enemy is  
after it with as much aggressiveness.”  
called for the black community to defe

l Clay volunteered to mentor two chil-  
worked with other NCPC members to  
for the school, and raise prize money  
Taylor hosted block parties and bought  
providers on her block. Mrs. Gilbert  
ssing guard after school so her mother  
lege. In these cases, visions and mem-  
groundwork for a politics of inclusion  
citizens working to reconstruct com-  
generations and sometimes even across  
“criminal” citizens.

often led to questions about whether  
ck homeowner activists always talked  
al services for youth. Many NCPC and  
anded policing while simultaneously  
ve the problem. Mrs. Gilbert, an active  
t think locking up people works. Edu-  
ied that police enforcement only bred  
g people instead of respect and disci-  
at the structures of the local state and  
why homeowner activists in Elmhurst  
ical power to demand more policing

a large public meeting in East Oakland  
track and supervise parolees in order  
oom in the Elmhurst mall filled with  
black church members from through-  
d the audience to raise “an uproar” to  
unity has to be angry enough.” A fifty-  
member of a prominent black Baptist  
g next to me, “We are. We want jobs.”  
the community is so high. . . . When  
communities, we’d beat them. When  
in our neighborhood. We have to go  
Robert Bobb, much like Larry Reid,  
end itself against criminals, as the ene-

mies within.<sup>60</sup> His public reference to the Ku Klux Klan reframed personal self-defense. Clearly, not all agencies he proposed would solve Elmhurst. Community policing did work to resolve tensions between the community and the police. Oakland's efforts were successful, not so much in reducing crime as in bridging the gap between black citizens and the state. The Neighborhood Crime Prevention Councils redrew the boundaries of "the neighborhood," and, incidentally, brought the police into a "black space."

Criminologist Wesley Skogan has identified the most significant innovation in policing as "community policing," where "cops" and citizens, who can then serve as "eyes and ears for the police force." Sometimes it tries to get police officers to do "unconventional" or "unusual" foot patrols. It often includes a broader focus on neighborhood "quality of life," instead of just reacting to crime. I describe community policing as a specific strategy that involves meeting with neighborhood groups, but it is also a broader philosophy that must pervade and reshape the way police think about policing. Policing is often described as the opposite of community policing (e.g., drug busts, and arrests), but in practice, these two strategies are often combined. In Oakland, community groups and took part in neighborhood operations with names like Operation Community Shield, whether community policing is simply a strategy or a philosophy.

Community policing became the dominant strategy in the police department in 1994. The city created a unit of Neighborhood Crime Prevention Councils, each with a Neighborhood Services Coordinating officer.<sup>62</sup> These NCPCs served as a vehicle to increase community involvement in local crime prevention. Richard Word, an African American officer who became chief in 1999, described his hope for a true partnership in which police officers would be a part of the community but . . . be a part of the community regularly called on "the community" to solve crime problems. The police chief described "partnership" and "self-help" drew both

memories of black historic struggles  
policing as a core aspect of black com-  
munity members agreed that the poli-  
ce's problems. But in important ways  
shape relationships between the black  
community policing initiative was suc-  
cessful as in rearticulating the relationship  
"The Neighborhood Crime Prevention  
Initiative" and, somewhat surpris-  
ingly, "self-help" initiative in Elmhurst.

Community policing as the  
concept, but it means many different things to  
different people. It tries to create relations between "beat  
cops" and the community as "the eyes and ears of the police  
officers out of cars and onto regular streets."  
The focus on improving neighbor-  
hoods and responding to 911 calls for service. Some  
describe it as a specific formula that assigns beat cops to  
territories, while others describe it as "a philosophy"  
of the whole police department. Community  
policing is the opposite of enforcement (police sweeps,  
stop-and-frisk, etc.), many police departments combine  
community policing officers both met with  
massive drug and violence suppression  
strategies like Bullseye. Scholars continue to debate  
if it is just "rhetoric" or represents real change.<sup>61</sup>  
Community policing is the official strategy of Oakland's police  
department, a unique system of fifty-seven Neighbor-  
hood Safety Councils (NSCs) staffed by a civilian police employee,  
a Neighborhood Safety Council (NSC), and a community polic-  
ing officer. It is the centerpiece of Oakland's efforts to  
improve local governance. Oakland police chief  
George Gascon, an officer who rose through the ranks and  
believes that community policing could lead  
to a more equitable city would not "work against or separate  
the police from the community."<sup>63</sup> City and police lead-  
ers have called for "community" to take more responsibility for  
public safety, but they could not do it alone. These calls for  
change have led to new technologies of urban gover-

nance and also on black self-help traditions. Oakland embraced this call for partnership, and the most active Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council.

Oakland's community policing initiative sought to change the historically hostile relationship between the police and black communities. Oakland experienced periods of racial tension as early as the 1930s, but these tensions peaked during the 1960s period.<sup>64</sup> The Oakland Police Department established neighborhood district councils in the 1950s, created a Community Relations Department in the 1960s, and formed the nation's first "community-oriented" police department. The department described these efforts as "good community-police relations," they had their own problems between the police and black communities. A major protest in the city.<sup>65</sup> In 1966, the Black Panther Party led a community against police brutality, demanding the resignation of the white Republican city council. The city still tell stories in Oakland about how the police recruited southern recruits in what seemed like a "southern" style in Oakland's black communities. In the 1970s, the district councils, and, later, the African American Crime Prevention Council reached out to bring black communities into partnership with the police department.<sup>67</sup>

Oakland's community policing initiative was part of a larger trend. Community policing developed and flourished in the 1990s. The Department of Justice in the 1990s.<sup>68</sup> The 1992 Los Angeles riots, attention focused once again on the police. Crime had deteriorated nationally with the end of the Vietnam war. A federal 1994 omnibus crime bill provided funding for Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), a multi-billion-dollar program providing funding to police departments if they provided the fiscally strapped Oakland Police Department with grant-funded officers for several years. The program provided funds for ongoing training in new methods of community policing. It brought in consultants and model programs from cities that had achieved large crime reductions through community policing strategies.<sup>70</sup> Even as federal funding dried up, sociologist Eric Klinenberg argues that the 1990s were a time for cities to expand their policing capabilities. The police agencies at the core of a restructured local government.



tions. And Elmhurst activists eagerly organizing some of Oakland's first and Convention Councils.

initiative drew on earlier local efforts to relationship between black communities and periodic protests against police brutality. Tensions escalated in the post-World War II era. The city launched its first effort to organize a community affairs office in the early 1960s, and home alert groups in 1967. While the initiative was generically about improving "community relations" in the escalating racial tensions of the 1960s, at the height of black political militancy the Panthers took up arms to defend their neighborhoods, describing OPD as "an occupying army" and the city as a colonial government.<sup>66</sup> People's movements in the police department imported white nationalism into a racial war between the police and the community. In the 1960s, Oakland's home alert groups, and an American Advisory Committee on Community Development brought community leaders into new kinds of part-

icipating in the initiative also drew on new models of community policing funded by federal think tanks and the Department of Justice. In the aftermath of the Los Angeles riots, the city's approach to community-police relations, which included the expansion of gang sweeps and the drug war, led to the creation of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), a federal dollar grant program, which provided funding for community policing. COPS provided the Oakland Police Department with fifty new officers, money for equipment upgrades, and training in new models of community policing.<sup>69</sup> OPD adopted the programs from particularly "successful" cities, and introduced elements of community-policing to cities that declined in most areas, but that COPS "created new fiscal incentives for cities" and to place law enforcement in the hands of local government.<sup>71</sup>

*in the Flatlands*

Community policing helped resolve Oakland's ambitious efforts to reduce crime. It enhanced support for the police department among a segment of Elmhurst's black community and cracked down on quality of life crimes, such as drinking in public.<sup>72</sup> Chief Word often expressed "citizen complaints low" even as it tried to reduce crime. A police department that worked with community leaders through several scenarios of communication could build trust and insulation when claims of police brutality or harassment arose.

Oakland's black urban regime helped build a relationship between the city's black community and the political scientist Adolph Reed has argued "increasingly assumed administrative governance."<sup>73</sup> This has institutionalized a regime managing deep racial and class marginality. The police chief, probation officer, and city manager were all part of the regime. Most neighborhood service coordinators were African American women. Black women ran Oakland's group homes for youth, and many of the police as private security officers were African American. The Department had diversified, with 54.5% of its employees African American in 2000.<sup>74</sup> Many black police officers, remained networked into their neighborhoods through extended families and social ties. As Oakland's city manager, police officers, and city officials circulated through communities, and the solidarities they engendered were often frustrated that increased black political participation by city officials had not led to substantial changes in Elmhurst. And these close relationships between the police and the black community did break down a clear opposition between the police—and the black community—and the black political mobilizations in Oakland.

Black activists in Elmhurst embrace the police on long-standing demands for police accountability that were most explicitly articulated by the NCPCs. The NCPCs gave activists symbolic power,

Some of the tensions created by Oakland in Jerry Brown's first term as mayor. The department within a politically powerful city as the city increased police sweeps for crimes like cruising, loitering, and drink-driving. It claimed that Oakland wanted to "keep up" to emulate New York City's success in community training session led officers and community workers that showed how better community control of the police department from protest and social assessment emerged.

It helped reshape the oppositional relationships between the community and the police department. As argued, black professional workers have had a great deal of control of the institutions of urban Oakland. It defined the black middle-class role in many ways in urban America. Oakland's police department gave a very public face to the black community. Community coordinators (in charge of the NCPCs) and black entrepreneurs ran many of Oakland's community centers, probation officers as well as social workers. Even the Oakland Police Department was 25.9% African American. Community employees, including some police officers, were historically African American. Community families, churches, and service organizations. The police chief, other black police officers, and community meetings, these relationships were often evident. Activists remained skeptical of state power and their relationships with the police. Improvements in neighborhoods like the flatlands did not always prevent protest, but the tension between the state—and specifically the police—that historically undergirded many of these relationships.<sup>75</sup>

It helped build community policing because it built community accountability and community control over the police. The Black Panthers.<sup>76</sup> Participating in community meetings and some real power, over an impor-

tant arm of the state, one that had a presence in Oakland. They could call police brass members and generally count on a prompt response to their call. They could focus police drug enforcement on corners and sometimes shape departmental priorities that the city assign a specific community officer to state drug and violence suppression units. They could hire an officer who grew up and worked in East Oakland, aware of the history of police disrespect in black neighborhoods. Activists hold on tightly to the limited power they have.

Black community activists often framed their demands for and for better policing as claims for recognition of a broad government abandonment of the neighborhood. They argued that the police department neglected the neighborhood and disorder if Elmhurst had been a police precinct. They criticized absentee landlords who profited off the neighborhood but did not invest to screen their tenants. They condemned the police's role in the regional drug market, confining the market to black, not white, neighborhoods. Activists criticized the building of low-income housing only in the hills. Community activists highlighted the ways in which police power was structured across Oakland's geography.

Demanding police action was one of the most visible state commitments to the neighborhood. Community policing meetings to demand expansion of city police presence and the election of city politicians like Chief Workman's shotgun approach and for "unloading" the neighborhood. Jackson insisted, in a letter to the city, "If you want to put up its end of the community policing partnership, you need to do yours." Community activists had significant effects on local politics, reshaping the neighborhood and the ways they constructed their rights.

Community policing made significant changes in the relationship between "the black community" and police officers and with police department leadership. Regular officers were regularly given rounds

particularly racially charged history in  
and city leaders on their private num-  
(if not always satisfying) response to  
ing investigations on specific blocks or  
ent priorities, for instance, by insisting  
ty policing officer to each beat or rein-  
mits. Captain Bobbie Daniels, an OPD  
ast Oakland's flatlands, explained that  
communities made community activ-  
r that community policing offered.

amed their demands for city services  
racial equality and justice.<sup>77</sup> They crit-  
ment of Oakland's black flatlands and  
ever would tolerate the drug dealing  
white neighborhood or a neighbor-  
ntee landlords in the suburbs and hills  
t failed to maintain their properties or  
suburbanites who used Elmhurst as a  
chaos and social costs of the drug war  
nd they criticized Oakland's history of  
the flatlands. In these ways, Elmhurst  
h burdens and resources were racially

78

way Elmhurst activists struggled for a  
borhood. They often used community  
ed state action, much to the frustra-  
d, who criticized the NCPCs for their  
' too many issues on the police. Linda  
manager, that the city wasn't holding  
partnership: "If we do our part of the  
Community policing did not produce  
s in Elmhurst,<sup>79</sup> but it did have signifi-  
g the kinds of demands activists made  
ghts as citizens.

cant strides in overcoming an oppo-  
ck community" and the police. Afri-  
usting relations with individual police  
eadership. At Elmhurst NCPCs, pop-  
nds of applause when they gave their

reports and were occasionally present explained that the police got to know and “a lot of people who didn’t like the ing the gun. That’s when I know they’ve of trust changed community policing brutality and harassment. When four for planting evidence and beating susp most NCPC activists defined those of of as evidence of a broader culture of department. At a city council hearing Eva Blanton, an African American act described how community policing a and trust with the police department profiling was a significant threat in h time when laws like the antiloitering African American communities, at th loitering ordinance would help all law-

People rarely raised concerns abo community policing meetings, but this tance to partnerships with the police, black men in their forties remained police powers. Richard Stevens was a owners’ association who worked clo profoundly disturbed by the law and o leadership. He worried that African A every young person as a potential pro black children, but he said that people quiet. “They still have to live here. It’s one knows everyone.”

### *Redefining Moral Community, Root Causes, and the Rights of Ci*

Oakland’s community policing initi throughout the city in ways that restru broader network of thirty-seven hom to the 1970s, an active community dist federal economic development funds tions, and periodic community organ

ed with community awards. Bill Clay the “good people” in the community, the police officers before, they stop seeing them as “bad apples.” These relationships activists’ responses to claims of police brutality. Oakland police officers were arrested in what became “the Riders” case, treating officers as individual bad apples instead of systemic disrespect or abuse within the police department. In 2003, Ms. Jackson, an activist in her midsixties from Elmhurst, allowed her to build real partnerships with police so that she no longer believed racial profiling in her neighborhood. While there was “a law would have a negative impact on the community at this time we are confident that the anti-protest laws are abiding citizens.”

But police harassment or brutality in the past did not mean that there was no resistance, just that it was largely silent. Younger generations were more reluctant to support expanded police powers. A member of the NCPC and his homelife closely with Linda Jackson, but he was not the primary focus of East Oakland’s political organizing. American neighborhood activists saw the problem and were helping to criminalize police officers who shared his concerns often stayed in a very tight community where every-

## *Citizenship*

initiative reached out into neighborhoods that had fractured black politics. Elmhurst had a homeowners’ associations that dated back to the 1950s, a district board responsible for distributing funds to powerful churches, youth organizing efforts by Associated Commu-

nities Organizing for Reform Now (A  
Organization (OCO), which mobilized  
organizing committees. These commu-  
build community power, engage low-  
make demands on the state. The NCP  
ist infrastructure, although individuals  
The “community” in community poli-  
transparent reflection of a preexisting  
community policing initiative privileg-  
owners and deepened class divides in the  
community.<sup>80</sup> The specific structures of  
activists defined the root causes of crime  
community, and described their rights as c-

The Oakland Police Department oft-  
vital part of its effort to move beyond  
causes of crime.” City leaders and poli-  
achieve long-lasting reductions in drug  
arresting people in many of Oakland’s  
Community policing officers often serv-  
on drug- or violence-suppression activ-  
blem solving as “real police work.”<sup>81</sup> No-  
continually tried to restructure and retrain  
“long-term problem solving” instead of

The emphasis on problem solving in  
initiative provided a flexible frame within  
define the “root causes” of the neigh-  
frequently spoke about the importance  
tation for criminals while they were in  
to improve schools and provide after-  
keep kids from turning to crime. City  
broad interpretation of what problem  
“On 96<sup>th</sup> Ave., if it’s a socioeconomic is-  
paper that they are increasing the num-  
could do problem-solving around the  
jobs. Maybe we need jobs, recreation.”  
times defined neighborhood problems  
nity policing initiative made it hard for  
political action around these broad vis-  
to expand police enforcement.



CORN) and by Oakland Community  
zed residents through church-based  
community organizing groups worked to  
income residents, create tension, and  
Cs operated separately from this activ-  
sometimes crossed political networks.  
cing was neither representative nor a  
g unified community voice. Oakland's  
ed the concerns of older black home-  
the ways activists constructed political  
of the NCPCs reshaped the ways black  
me, drew the boundaries of their com-  
citizens.

en described community policing as a  
crime suppression to address the "root  
ce were frustrated by their inability to  
g dealing and violent crime simply by  
flatland neighborhoods like Elmhurst.  
ved simply as "a tactical squad" focused  
ities, and some officers didn't see prob-  
etheless, the police department con-  
n all officers to work with citizens on  
f traditional enforcement activities.

in Oakland's community policing ini-  
n which neighborhood activists could  
neighborhood's crime problem.<sup>82</sup> Bill Clay  
ce of providing training and rehabili-  
n prison or insisted that the city had  
-school programs and jobs that could  
manager Robert Bobb provided a very  
n solving in the NCPCs could entail.  
ssue, we'll deal with it. . . . I saw in the  
ber of high-tech visas to 240,000. We  
at and how we can get some of those

While activists and politicians some-  
s broadly, the structure of the commu-  
or community activists to mobilize for  
ions and instead encouraged demands

Community policing, in practice, of crime in terms of *problem places* or racial inequalities. At an NCPC meeting described the department's new focus of simply responding to 911 calls: "Instead they had to look at the source of the problem in the block. Maybe it's an absentee landlord they didn't know how to evict someone. . . . One person explained his understanding of the broken windows thesis. Most crimes are trash, loitering, problem businesses. . . ."

Oakland's community policing initiative adopted the broken windows thesis, which defined disorder as the primary threat to urban neighborhoods. The broken windows thesis creates a revisionist history of crime in blighted housing, fear, and economic insecurity, educational disinvestment. City officials often redefined the root causes of crime to decrease crime rates by decreasing disorder. . . . Even further, defining crime and grime as the root cause of Oakland's economic woes. As city council member Robert Bobb said, "Under leadership of Robert Bobb, crime . . . economic development will be restored."

With this definition of "root causes" of crime, police officers did move beyond trying to arrest individual offenders to the problem. Oakland embraced a range of powers across the spectrum of the city's powers to maintain order. Community policing leaders worked closely with other city agencies to regulate liquor stores, shut down illegal dumping and public drinking, and address other nuisances. This expanded vision of the state's role encouraged community policing activities that targeted the behavior of undisciplined young people.

The structure of community policing incorporated citizen participation into fifty-seven NCPCs tied to neighborhood activists to address broader social issues. . . . Engaged participants to frame their analysis in localized terms. By decentralizing citizen participation to police beats, neighborhood activists found

most often redefined the root causes of *problem people* instead of economic conditions. At a meeting in East Oakland, Chief Worden pushed for proactive problem solving instead of just arresting the drug dealers, the problem. It might be a crack house down the street, or a landlord. Maybe it's an old landlord, and maybe it's a problem person. An African American police captain explained problem solving: "I am a true believer in the idea that the issues are attached to grime issues, and if it looks bad, people act bad."

The initiative had embraced "the broken window theory" of behavior as the cause of crime and disorder in neighborhoods. As Steven Gregory argues, this is a form of crime that locates the root causes of crime in declining public decency instead of economic conditions, or racial exclusions.<sup>83</sup> Oakland embraced these causes of crime in these terms and tried to solve them by "grime." City officials routinely went so far as to claim that grime was the *causes*, not consequences, of crime. Council member Henry Chang explained, "We will not tolerate crime and disorder in Oakland. It will not follow."

In the wake of crime, the police and NCPC led the way out of East Oakland's crime problem with zero tolerance policies, using the full force of the law to maintain social order. The police and community worked with code compliance and other city departments to crack down on problem motels, crack down on drug use, and target landlords of problem properties. The police's role in maintaining order probably explains why residents turned to the state to control the crime problem in the neighborhood.

The initiative, which divided neighborhood parades into police beats, made it hard for neighborhoods to address structural causes of crime and encourage community analyses of neighborhood needs in very localized ways. Community participation to the level of specific projects was focused less on broad policy changes

that might impact crime, and began to focus on particular corners and at particular times with the police. At an ACORN meeting on a particular street, a neighborhood activist raised a call for more police. The police captain explained that the only thing that would get young people to already existing job-training programs, the chief seemed frustrated by his inability to provide for jobs, respect, and community development. He provided the captain with some more information about the corners so that we can have that list to work with at this meeting when neighbors identify specific problems, abandoned cars at particular addresses, and so on. This defined the role of the police as solving problems at particular corners or specific streets.

Since the police and code compliance were the only agencies of the state at NCPC meetings, if neighbors wanted to formulate their demands within the language of the police, cleanup, calling for action on particular corners, instead of more general calls for jobs programs, the NCPCs continued to work on issues such as job training, development programs, community development, and accessible government agency. Whatever the reasons, the activists had with the failure of the police, the police officers were available monthly at the NCPCs. The police officers, between meetings, to respond to neighborhood problems. In the NCPC structure, the state most easily worked with law-enforcement practices, activists could indeed experience their concerns through the police in the community space.”<sup>84</sup>

Elmhurst activists redrew the moral boundaries of the neighborhood they participated in the NCPCs. Corbin Blanton and Linda Jackson, often considered the most decent, hard-working, and tax-paying members of the neighborhood who were drug users, criminals, and so on, were not preexisting stable categories of “street corner” as sociologist Elijah Anderson has argued, but rather emerged from particular public policies and structures. The police and community activists came to monthly meetings to discuss neighborhood crime problems with the police, to

to view the problem of crime as located at specific addresses that could be cleaned up by improving neighborhood safety, when a neighborhood was asked for jobs to solve crime problems, a police officer's only job was to point out the training programs. At the same meeting, the inability to respond to broad demands for economic development. He suggested that the people should focus on "specifics, some problems, some work to do." The chief only took notes on identified problems with drug dealing or other issues in the neighborhood and implicitly suggested that problems only through enforcement.

Police officers were usually the only agents who neighbors wanted action, they learned to speak the language of policing or neighborhood safety, such as "hot spots" or "hot corners" or at particular addresses, such as "hot spots" or youth centers. While some programs of economic development or youth centers made the police the most visible, the frustrations of community policing made the police the most visible. Police to control crime, at least police officers. At PC meetings, and often on cell phones, neighbors made demands. Since through the years they responded to community problems, police officers were encouraged "to represent and respond" through the tactical logic of controlling

the moral boundaries of their community as community policing activists, like Eva, constructed a clear opposition between "decent" citizens and other people in the neighborhood or generally "lowlifes." These were "decent" and "decent" orientations, as social distinctions were produced through practices of community participation.<sup>85</sup> As they met and talked about neighborhood safety, they constructed a kind of moral com-

munity of respectable taxpayers struggle against people, trash, noise, and crime sanctity of their homes and the security Jackson described people “drinking a “Get them out. I want my nightmare to her question abstract rights of citizen treat the bad guy equal.”

Community policing activists learned of the police, to understand, and some police. Community policing activists of “hot spots,” “buy-bust” operations, and define “proactive policing” in terms of explained how hard it was to get a go constraints on their rights to search. system as lenient and complained that juveniles at all unless they already had sations, neighborhood activists and p “drug boys” and criminals had more ri

Activists often used community pol of their memories, Elmhurst’s midcer homeowners strived to maintain code fought against street vendors, taco trucks streets, defining these working-class as as violations of the neighborhood’s m any expansion of low-income housing conversions of garages. These actions lies, renters, and sometimes immigran

The ways community policing acti tity also posed problems for the ways problems of neighborhood youth. Ma perately wanted younger people to pa the NCPCs were not spaces where peo lines. Only one teenager came regular and she was Mrs. Taylor’s granddaughter spoke with were hesitant to come to a in his early twenties who was handed are there, it ain’t for us.”

Young people were often implicit nity constructed at these meetings. Th

gling with the police as their partners  
e that they framed as undermining the  
ty of their lifetime's investment.<sup>86</sup> Mrs.  
nd selling drugs" as her "nightmare."  
o go." Her frustration with crime made  
ship and think "we shouldn't have to

ed to see the streets through the eyes  
etimes resent, legal constraints on the  
often used police language, speaking of  
l "hitting corners." They often began to  
f sweeps and arrests. Police routinely  
ood case on a drug dealer because of  
Officers portrayed the juvenile justice  
juvenile hall generally would not hold  
d long records. Through these conver-  
police constructed a shared sense that  
ghts than citizens.

icing to try to recreate the community  
ntury industrial garden suburb where  
es of middle-class respectability. They  
cks, and men who repaired cars on the  
nd poor economic survival strategies  
moral order. They campaigned against  
g and against overcrowding and illegal  
implicitly excluded many poor fami-  
ts from full community belonging.

vists constructed their political iden-  
activists responded to the needs and  
ny community policing activists des-  
articipate in community policing. But  
ople came together across generational  
rly to the NCPC meetings I attended,  
er. Other teenagers and young adults I  
meeting run by the police. As one man  
a flier for an NCPC said, "If the police

y excluded from the moral commu-  
e absence of youth in NCPC meetings

encouraged older activists to blame young subjects in need of discipline instead of the neighborhood. As community police to control neighborhood spaces, the streets as problems. I noticed this in The more I attended NCPC meetings, on the street as drug dealers. When I daughter Jean, they both quickly replied

Community policing activists were police suppression than younger residents he had heard Elmhurst activists tell the added, “to be honest, they are not the backyard. They are not going to be the and female activists acknowledged that the police than younger men walking around Chester suggested that “driving as “driving while young and black.” “Just mental stretch and drive all the way don’t get stopped. But you put a young man

Most NCPC leaders could avoid hearing the basic accoutrements of a middle-class police enforcement in Elmhurst often by car could insulate them from some practices. When Linda Jackson’s son and husband focus of police suppression demanded to avoid MacArthur Boulevard and drive to structure their lives in ways that avoid commercial corridors, which lower-income they shopped and waited for buses. This ample to a common assumption of the young citizens will return to public space. Enhanced enforcement may actually encourage to avoid public spaces so that they avoid

Many community policing activists choice but to ally themselves closely with son bemoaned state and federal cuts in under Reagan for creating “this generation thing.” But Linda Jackson’s own choice significantly shaped by state disinvestment



outh for crime and to frame youth as  
f as political actors who could improve  
icing activists worked closely with the  
they increasingly defined all youth on  
n my own responses to young people.  
the more I started to identify all kids  
mentioned this to Mrs. Taylor and her  
ed, "They probably are."

less likely to be affected by enhanced  
ents. A black police officer told me that  
e police to "go on and profile," but he  
ones who are likely to get beat up in a  
e target of profiling." Many older male  
t they were less likely to be stopped by  
or driving in the neighborhood. Rev-  
while black" might be better described  
ohn and I can get in a Lincoln Conti-  
wntown on East Fourteenth and never  
in that. . . ."

avy police enforcement since they had  
class lifestyle, particularly a car. Since  
i focused on "clearing corners," travel  
of the effects of state disciplinary prac-  
usband worried that they would be the  
d by the NCPC, she warned them to  
straight to the freeway. They were able  
voided the most heavily policed com-  
e and underage residents had to use as  
his provides an interesting counterex-  
broken windows thesis that law-abid-  
with a more proactive police presence.  
encourage black middle-class adults to  
being targeted by the police.

ts fundamentally felt they had little  
with the police department. Linda Jack-  
in aid to schools and youth programs  
tion that's out here shooting up every-  
ces as a community activist had been  
ments, economic transformations, and

the structure of Oakland's community crime and grime. These partnerships their rights as citizens. As Simon argued redefine the legitimate terrain of state policeman. As we saw in her portrait, some of her own rights as long as doing crime in her neighborhood. As she explained had no rights. . . . Now the crooks have start looking at the people have some she described the police only as a Bar economic redevelopment would not control was under control. As activists work embraced a reconstructed and limited demanded their right to sufficient police

Community policing drew on and disciplined youth in troubling ways. Core systems of care and accountability for importance of physical discipline and police as disciplinarians. But just as close communal relationships, and love youth. These core activist-mothering work to trying to save youth in Elmhurst. We initiative, however, encouraged activist accountability and choice that left jail the way to hold people accountable.

### *Conclusion*

At an NCPC meeting in January engaged in a lively debate about how youth and hold them accountable. Prop two months, prompting discussion that as young as fourteen should be tried at tion 21 would motivate a new generation their community. "The only people do We need to encourage our grandchildren make changes. . . . We need to be asking You will hear a lot about after school program thing else, we can't lock them up."

ty policing initiative and its fight on transformed the way activists framed issues, governing through crime helped action and reify a vision of the state as Linda Jackson was willing to give up so would help police crack down on explained, “people back in the old days have all the rights. Somebody needs to rights instead of the killers.” Though and-Aid, Linda Jackson accepted that come to her neighborhood until crime ed within community policing, they notion of their rights as citizens, and cing.

reconfigured black nostalgia for dis- community activists described nuanced r children. Stories that described the d “fear” could support a role for the often, activists defined shame, respect, ve as the keys to creating disciplined values motivated a broad commitment orking within the community policing ts to adopt criminal justice models of and exclusion from the community as

2000, Bill Clay and other residents the community could best discipline position 21 would come up for a vote in roughout Oakland about whether kids s adults. Bill Clay hoped that Proposi- on of young people to get involved in oing anything out here are over forty. dren so we can sit back, and they can ng kids what’s wrong and how to fix it. programs. If we don’t give them some-

Neighborhood activists afraid of k  
constituency for get tough on youth cr  
Clay reminded me that since I didn't  
understand the appeal of Proposition  
hood, and you see how youth disrespe  
are going to say you should try twelve  
those twelve-year-olds out there on th  
guys to do their work for them." Wit  
divide between childhood and adult  
activists did support trying juveniles  
disciplinarians.<sup>87</sup>

But Bill Clay and other activists at  
lage could reach out and incorporate  
story of catching a kid drawing graffiti  
quite an artist. Why don't you go over  
You see a lot of kids are not that bad.  
him. I think we can deal with children,  
too." Bill Clay returned to the juvenile  
something better, people who are afraid  
for it."

Black homeowner activists in East C  
a visible state commitment to their ne  
able choices in their political practice.  
mitments to social welfare and new fo  
black neighborhood activists often en  
plinary father. Elmhurst homeowner a  
cipline, and they forged partnerships w  
people in line. But here is the surprisi  
the police into this imagined black com  
essary to save black children. Nostalgia  
tensions between the police and the b  
generational tensions between rowdy y

Community policing encouraged th  
order constituency that had a dispropo  
ties. NCPC members became the mo  
An aide to council member Larry Rei  
city hall." These were the community  
police chief, and mayor called whene  
initiatives to reduce crime or violence.

kids on the street formed an obvious  
time proposals like Proposition 21. Bill  
live in the neighborhood, I couldn't  
21: "When you live in the neighbor-  
ct you, it's going to be a hard sell. They  
e-year-olds as adults because they see  
ne streets. Older guys recruit younger  
h twelve-year-olds dealing drugs, the  
hood became so blurred that many  
as adults and turned to the police as

this meeting still insisted that the vil-  
troubled kids. James Richards told a  
iti on his fence. "I told him, 'You are  
to [the youth center] and take classes.'  
I came to his level, and I got to know  
, but we have to deal with their parents  
e crime bill: "If we can't come up with  
d to come out of their houses will vote

Oakland had struggled for decades for  
ighborhood, but they faced unaccept-  
In the context of retreating state com-  
rms of community-based governance,  
nembraced a vision of the state as disci-  
activists wanted to recreate village dis-  
with the police in order to keep young  
ng twist: community policing inserted  
munity as the disciplinary father nec-  
a for disciplined youth helped reframe  
black community in familial terms as  
youth and adult authority.<sup>88</sup>

he formation of an organized law and  
ortionate impact on setting city priori-  
st recognized leadership in Elmhurst.  
d described them as "hard-wired into  
representatives that the city manager,  
ver they sought support for new city  
These community-police partnerships

were fragile, and activists were often frustrated by the rapid turnover of community police. Community policing did relentlessly refocus Elmhurst police (and more effective) policing in ways that in the long run would become part of coming of age for the city.

Community policing illustrates several important lessons for political action. The decentralization of power for activists to make broad demands and the emphasis on partnership also promoted “partnership,” “collaboration,” and “delegitimized protest politics. Police encouraged the more confrontational “demands” of groups like OCO or ACORN as in the past. Police encouraged those groups to partner with the city. Police would form partnerships and take community action to demand state action and community action. Community help often hid the unequal resources and power of individuals and communities. Neighborhoods and individuals who were politically connected homeowners were more powerful than renters were. These partnerships and the emphasis on partnership and shrinking the space of politics and

frustrated by changes in police strategy  
policing officers, but community polic-  
activism on demands for more (and  
onically intensified the danger that jail  
or young men in the neighborhood.  
ome of the problems neoliberalism  
alized NCPC structures made it hard  
s on the state. Community policing  
ration,” and “consensus” in ways that  
and NCPC leaders often described  
of Alinsky-style community organiz-  
appropriate holdovers from the 1960s.  
participate in the NCPCs, where they  
mmunity responsibility instead of just  
ontrol. These calls for communal self-  
and burdens available for individuals  
d blocks with established networks of  
re able to “help themselves” far easier  
risked reifying Oakland’s class divides  
l the rights of citizenship.

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## Trying to Get up the

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“What I see in Oakland is even worse,” Walker explained that parents in the hills would drive up to Montclair Recreation Center in a van to get their children into schools farther up the hills. “Everybody’s trying to get up the hill for ever. What’s going on right here?”

Liz and Robert Walker first moved to Oakland and surprised to find a house they called “a hood” in the lower hills. When they first saw small bungalow houses and storefronts, they said, “at this.” There was everything they might need: a bank, a veterinarian, a drugstore, and a couple of restaurants. Soon the Woodlands became a new center of community life.

Robert, a tall and lanky African American man with dreadlocks grown just to his ears, was raised in San Francisco and marveled at finding a thriving black middle class in Oakland. “My son, Robert and Liz particularly appreciate it like a racially mixed, but stable neighborhood where you can come down and staying.” As Liz, a white woman, said, “It seems to have a pretty diverse working class that’s going to be displaced. It’s not all black.”

Liz and Robert bought a house right in the hills where they saw on a daily basis the effects of gentrification on children and youth. The Woodlands had a garden play structure for its five hundred children and a school recreation program. The school

everyone doing this shift up the hill.” Liz  
Laurel district often drove their kids  
a wealthy enclave in the hills and tried  
ner up the hill. Families from the flat-  
the lower hills to find safe spaces and  
ying to get up, up, and up. . . . I don’t  
everything. Why don’t we have anything

l to the Laurel district in 1991, happy  
ould afford in this “vibrant neighbor-  
st drove through the neighborhood of  
s, Robert thought, “Oh my God, look  
ght need along MacArthur Boulevard:  
karate studio, a hardware store, and  
rld Ground Café opened and quickly  
e.

merican man in his late thirties, with  
raised in a mostly white neighborhood  
ling “a true black community” with a  
. An interracial couple raising a young  
eciated that the Laurel district seemed  
borhood “where people were settling  
man in her late thirties, explained, “We  
-class population that isn’t necessarily  
and turning white. It’s mixed.”

ght next to Laurel Elementary School,  
cts of Oakland’s decaying public infra-  
Laurel school had only one old kinder-  
red students and no organized after-  
yard was often “packed with kids after

school, but there was no instructor, no one to teach. Liz bought three basketballs and told the kids to take them home. They could borrow them as long as they returned them to the house. They could become a Rec director just by having the balls. Liz had an entree to the kids. If they are cutting up, they can come out, and I am going to have a lot of trouble with them. I am going to call the cops on them unless they stop.

Robert became frustrated with the merchants about “all the kids, walking around, and I am an older business owner, his voice dripped into my business, spending money. . . .” “Well, at least they are spending some money, that’s what I see. Especially when they are black and brown. There is just ‘a problem’ with them, want them around, where do you want them to go?” “The answer was deafening silence. When people come out to attack these kids, there are no solutions, no one was talking tangible solutions. There is nothing for these kids to do.”

“We’ve lost a couple of generations of kids in the school in the hills, Robert explained, ‘a generation of education’ and now risked being tossed out of the city sweeping across the city. Liz added, “The problem is just stripped down to nothing. It’s just a problem so angry. And of course, the people that are angry.”

Liz and Robert both became deeply involved in the neighborhood and in trying to rebuild safe and nurtured neighborhoods through their own volunteerism. Liz and Robert, they knew just about everything about the Laurel district. Liz attended the Laurel Neighborhood Work on commercial revitalization and the Neighborhood Prevention Council (NCPC) that met regularly. Liz had been more hesitant than Liz to join in any way shape or form,” but slowly became involved in neighborhood meetings and became a member.

Over the next few years Liz and Robert worked with the NCPC, the PTA, and neighborhood meetings. Liz was particularly adept at working across the subtle lines of community politics in the neighborhood.

balls, no bats, nothing to do.” Robert told the kids where to find them next to his house as they kept bringing them back. “I don’t want balls and bats. That’s what gave me the idea. If you’re smoking or drinking, I am going to arrest you. But they also know that I’m not going to say anything if they are doing something highly illegal.” Robert heard the complaints of many neighborhood residents as they walked up and down the street. He imitated their complaining with indignation: “They walk around with their hands in their pockets.” In his own voice, Robert explained, “I don’t want money. People don’t want kids around, and they’re not their kids, and they tend to be afraid of them.” He asked merchants, “If you don’t want them? What do you want them to do?” Robert said, “I don’t want them, which meant to me that a lot of people didn’t want them, but when it came down to tangible solutions. Let’s look at our neighborhood and see what we can do.”

Robert was in Oakland.” Unless they went to the park, the children in Oakland had been “robbed” of their childhood by the wave of gentrification. Robert said, “They just haven’t had a thing in schools. It’s just disgusting. It makes me angry. The people who suffer the most are people of color.” Robert was actively engaged in the local public schools, organizing meeting spaces for young people in the neighborhood through volunteer labor and activism. Between Liz and Robert, everyone involved in local politics in the neighborhood joined the Community Action Project (LCAP) to help fund the new Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) in Laurel Elementary School. Robert was a member of the NCPC, “or to deal with the police” and he was pulled into the whirlwind of organizing as an officer in the NCPC.

Robert helped forge close relationships with neighborhood schools. They were particularly important in bridging the racial and class lines that crisscrossed the neighborhood, forging relationships with business

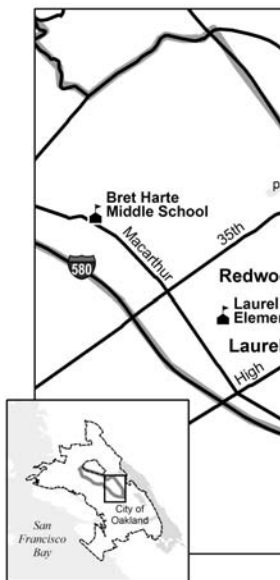


Figure 5. Map of Laurel: Nestled  
(Mark Kumler and Diana Sinton)

owners, African American church w  
homeowners, retired white women or s  
something for youth, and working-clas  
racial lines, whose kids attended the lo

Liz and Robert struggled occasionally  
the realities of being a black man in  
tive and didn't want her son, Jayden,  
believed in giving him a lot of freedom  
by a conservative black woman," belie  
childhood. Kids should be "seen and n  
be good for their inner child, but it is g  
And this society is harder on black m  
the road from when you could see a bla  
That's why I say kids have too many da

Robert trained Jayden how to deal w  
"If the police tell you to, stop. You do  
a right to sit yourself down and stop.  
friends because you ain't them. Period



in the Lower Hills.  
(University of Redlands)

women, white and black middle-class stay-at-home moms who wanted to do something about women on welfare across the neighborhood school.

ally with how to prepare their son for America. Liz was often more protective, not walking anywhere alone, but she also wanted her son to express himself. Robert, “raised in the stricter family rules of his father’s home, had not heard, which might not necessarily be the best way to keep them alive in this society. It was a hard sell. We are not so many years down the road from a black person being hung every weekend. We need to get our civil rights.”

with the police from a very young age. “You don’t have a right to do shit. You have a responsibility. Don’t be acting like your little white boy.” He paused, reflecting, “Maybe I’m a

bit rough on Jayden, but I'm no rougher to be. That's my bottom line. Some people I ask them, 'How will this country treat a six foot four, two hundred pounds? Will you run from him.'" Robert insisted that he was more educated than me and his mother combined because you're not getting a break. All the time when you're little, will not employ you.

Liz joined the PTA a whole year before Jayden entered kindergarten. She worked with other parents to clean up the school yard, and hold fundraisers. She was part of a public-private collaborative to bring more resources to elementary and middle schools in the neighborhood. She volunteered many hours to bring additional resources to the school. "I really struggled" with the decision to send Jayden to the school. She worried that he wouldn't be able to handle it and that her son might be "exposed" to other children who only takes a few kids "not getting their education" and everyone. . . . He's our only child and we want him to have the best." But she was determined to be able to deal with different people. . . . If Jayden had any special needs, we'd have to deal with it.

Even before their son entered kindergarten, Robert was the discipline that would protect him from the world as he grew up. "He's going to be really smart, but he needs to control himself. I'm very strict about him doing certain things. I don't want him to be in trouble at school next year, "Guess what? The school wants him quiet, and they want him to be quiet." In Oakland . . . if a talented black male is diagnosed with ADD." Then in seventh grade, they will say "he's gifted." "You are a fuckup. Oh no, you are a fuckup." Experiences in Bay Area schools, Robert said that in other schools, and I am going to be a very hard worker.

Robert explained that the twenty-first century's lack of and limited funding for social programs was the gap between "what we should do" and "what we can do." With many other volunteers, tried to fill the gap. He spent free time volunteering in classrooms.



ner on him than this country is going  
people think I'm absolutely brutal until  
at him when he grows to be eighteen,  
What are you going to do? You're going  
t Jayden "better come out better edu-  
ed." "I tell him, 'You've got to be better  
these people, who are very nice to you  
'"

fore her son was old enough to attend  
parents and kids to paint murals, clean  
sers. Eventually she became part of a  
new after-school programs to the ele-  
neighborhood. Even though Liz had vol-  
onal resources to the school, she still  
to put her son in Laurel Elementary  
get a well-rounded, quality education  
to a lot of bad language, violence." It  
r basic needs met to disrupt things for  
we don't want to make any sacrifices.  
t "we also want him to be like us, to be  
 Luckily our son is extremely bright. If  
go to private school."

lergarten, Robert began to teach him  
a from racial stereotypes and fears as  
structured. . . . He's five years old, and  
dogmatic about that. I don't want him  
sitting certain ways." When he goes to  
oolteachers are going to tell him to be  
Or all of a sudden he will have ADD.  
le is a little verbal, he is diagnosed as  
ll look at his test scores and say, "Look  
you are gifted." Based on his own expe-  
id, "I don't trust teachers. I don't trust  
ard parent to please."

rst-century realities of limited budgets  
ms meant there was often a large gap  
hat we can do." Robert and Liz, along  
ill that gap in the Laurel district. They  
oms, raising money to build new play



nts to secure state-funded after-school  
invest in recreation facilities for youth.  
efforts weren't enough to make up for  
schools, and a frayed social safety net.  
" in the school, she and Robert could  
even choose his teachers. "Of course  
Liz added, "If we see it having detri-  
ut of the environment. I really want to  
acrificing my child to do it." As a new  
n 2003, Liz worried that if the money  
nd volunteers would be insufficient to  
ed for her son. Robert reflected on the  
udgets: "The thing is, as the economy  
ervices. And the less we're going to get  
police. It's really funny. The governor  
me up with two hundred million dol-

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# Dangerous Times

## *Reconstructing Childhood*

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In May 2000, the Laurel Redwood Community Center hosted a meeting in the Laurel Elementary School auditorium with Mayor Jerry Brown. The mayor sat alongside representatives of assorted other city, county, and school officials on a stage at the front of the room. Neighborhood residents were meeting well, and at its height well over a hundred. Participants reflected this neighborhood as being more white than black, with a few Asian and Latino residents in the late twenties to the seventies, mostly homeowners but also a good number of renters from the Laurel Redwood Avenue.

Mayor Brown described Laurel as one of the “safer neighborhoods” in the city. “Oakland is on the map for crime, but not there yet.” The police captain reported a decline in crime statistics. “We are on the way to reversing a reputation for the city being safe.” He said, “You folks are the folks that can really make a difference.”

Discussion ranged across a wide variety of issues: crime and traffic, truancy and schools, community development plans. But residents and NCPC organizers were most concerned neighborhood youth—in particular, their playgrounds, and organized recreation programs. A recreation director for the area, a slightly older man, spoke about the importance of expanding after-school activities. “Education is not an eight-hour job. Twenty percent of our children to be competitive. . . . We have to make sure our hours children are safe and learning and having fun after school.” He announced plans to hire more staff to run

Wood Heights NCPC gathered in the room for a town hall meeting with Mayor [redacted] the local city council member and [redacted] district officials at a long table on the [redacted] neighborhood activists had advertised the [redacted] over a hundred people filled the room. [redacted] Wood's political networks: slightly more [redacted] Latino residents, ranging in age from [redacted] mostly homeowners and business owners [redacted] in the apartment buildings around 39<sup>th</sup>

“one of the most dynamic neighbor- [redacted] move, in the right direction, but we are [redacted] started major improvements in the city's [redacted] to a safe city, but next we have to make [redacted] we called on neighbors to stay involved: [redacted] get things done.”

[redacted] variety of local concerns: storm drains [redacted] commercial development and beautification [redacted] zers continued to return to issues that [redacted] particular the desperate need for parks, [redacted] n programs. The new Parks and Rec- [redacted] y built African American man, spoke [redacted] ter-school programs for kids. “Educa- [redacted] r-four-hour activity is needed for our [redacted] have to make sure that during school [redacted] nd that they are also safe and learning [redacted] ire Robert Walker to coordinate after-

school activities at the Laurel school. “I will be here” taking advantage of new

Robert Walker, in his role as parl recent NCPC successes: securing bet greater police presence at bus stops a “waves of children” gathered after sch Friends of Laurel School, “an offshoot o Laurel Jazz Festival to raise thirty thou tures at the school. “Have you seen how nothing to play on.” Several neighbors parks, green space, and playgrounds i his long, curly hair pulled back into a the Laurel PTA and NCPC trying to i out here at the yard, it’s still just concre mayor: “We gave you this city on a pla worked hard to make little things hap This is now the opportunity to get mo woman in her forties with curly brow invest in spaces and programs for kids: the kids in this neighborhood.” She o plained, “Some of these adorable kids garbage cans. It is a shame on all of u They’re good kids. They don’t want to g

This community meeting highlight hood that repoliticized children’s need for their care. Residents in the Laurel o children as “sweet,” innocent, and vuln to invest in schools and to create new rel district’s geography and political n “our kids” and “other people’s kids.”<sup>1</sup> I few Asian parents, and included profe the middle class, and poor families l whom shared concerns that Oakland’s no longer adequately providing the o needed to compete in the twenty-first lines, neighborhood activists built bro could secure a safe passage to adulthoo

Parents and neighbors in the Laurel and national effort to expand public i



Soon, he added, “your kid and mine  
earning opportunities.

liamentarian of the NCPC, discussed  
ter lighting along 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue and a  
at MacArthur and 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue where  
ool. He commended the great work of  
of the NCPC,” which had launched the  
usand dollars to build new play struc-  
w eager kids are to play? But they have  
s echoed Robert Walker’s call for more  
n the neighborhood. A white parent,  
ponytail, talked about his work with  
improve the school yard: “If you look  
ete.” He turned to speak directly to the  
tter. We have high expectations. We’ve  
open. It is time for the city to step up.  
ney for the city parks.” Another white  
wn hair echoed his call for the city to  
“I don’t have kids, but I’ve really liked  
described them as “sweet” and com-  
are left with nothing to play on except  
is. They should be our social priority.  
get in trouble. Teenagers too.”

ed the potential for a politics of child-  
ds and expanded public responsibility  
district drew on long-standing ideas of  
erable to call on neighbors and the city  
y safe places for kids to play. The Lau-  
networks broke down barriers between  
t brought together black, white, and a  
essionals, families barely holding onto  
iving in run-down apartments, all of  
schools and recreation programs were  
care, supervision, and education kids  
t century. By bridging racial and class  
ad support for public investments that  
od for all kids.

district united behind a growing local  
investments in after-school programs.

They worried that “free time” was disappearing. Kids don’t have enough to do after school. Concerns highlight a broad crisis of care that middle-class parents (and the middle class) are struggling to provide care for their children after school. But the Parks and Recreation department’s initiatives hinted at new anxieties about the path forward: more education and preparation than what was available. Programs were so appealing because they had changed what is considered “normal” childhood development. Middle-class children in school in structured, supervised, and supervised environments. Their parents try to secure their kids’ place in the middle class. These middle-class parenting practices have shaped children’s lives and exacerbated worries. Activists in the Laurel district mobilized around the idea that would enable all Oakland’s youth to have a childhood. They fought an uphill battle to secure the middle class childhood and adolescence.

Laurel activists’ efforts to rebuild childhoods offer important insights into the dilemmas of the state, what we call “the volunteer state.”<sup>2</sup> Children’s needs have always been met by a combination of public and private initiatives in the United States, but in the 1980s helped popularize the notion of the nonprofit, and faith-based organizations to support children and families.<sup>3</sup> Sociologist Robert Putnam’s book, *Bowling Alone*, as an influential rallying cry to rebuild the “volunteer spirit” of Americans in order to revitalize American democracy.<sup>4</sup> These ideas were embraced by George H. W. Bush called for citizens to be “a force of light” that would replace government. Clinton helped launch America’s Promise to support private partnerships to support children. The report describes America’s Promise as “the appropriate response of a downsized, reformed government to youth in inner cities, which it had done poorly.

We need to do more than simply bemoan their absence. Calls for civil society organizations (NGOs) to play a more

dangerous, repeating the refrain, “Kids so they get into trouble.” These con- at left working parents (both poor and are and supervision for children after director’s call for 24-hour education n to adulthood, a sense that kids need ever to “be competitive.” After-school new middle-class parenting practices “normal” and necessary for healthy youth increasingly spend their time out of “productive” educational activities, as progress up a steeper path to the middle practices have deepened class divides in es about the dangers of free time. So ed to build a public infrastructure that ave middle-class structured time. They aterial basis for a democratized child-

public landscapes of childhood offer s of activism in the context of what I welfare, education, and recreational mplex, shifting mix of public and pri- ut broad attacks on “big government” otion that private markets, volunteers, ons could best meet the needs of chil- Putnam’s book, *Bowling Alone*, served d civic networks and to reengage the er to repair our fraying safety net and e calls had bipartisan appeal. President o become one of the “thousand points nt programs, while President Bill Clin- to recruit volunteers and build public- en and youth. Historian Michael Katz otheosis of volunteerism,” the severely nvented government to the crises of e so little to alleviate.”<sup>5</sup>

y celebrate these volunteer efforts or ociety and voluntary nongovernmental central role in governance have gone

global, from India and South Africa to we need to explore how these new parity are reshaping our ideas of the state everyday practices of state institutions complex and shifting boundaries between for children as neoliberalism became twenty-first century. Middle-class parents and an expanding market of private care and 24-hour education children omy. But many parents and neighbors landscapes of childhood that were ne volunteers devoted their *private* time *public* infrastructure. They *had* to be a decaying school system and to create like after-school programs and parks government. Local and statewide active funding for after-school programs, and for children's care, supervision, and ed day. But these new publicly funded pro that had to compete for grants in a gro "third sector."<sup>7</sup> These nonprofit agencies children, but they also often reproduce need and what the state could provide left by increasingly insecure state invest Indeed, the volunteer state sometimes uities in children's environments.

### *In the Slants*

Robert Walker described the Laurel very diverse, a lot of people with good lot of gay people. We are right in the money as the people up on the hills. We people below 580. . . . We are the proto The Laurel district lay between two fr between the hills, above Route 13, and t nomic transformations that had decim formed the Laurel district. Once an ag the Laurel district now embodied ma

to Chile. As with community policing, partnerships between state and civil society, our concepts of citizenship, and the state.<sup>6</sup> Activism in the lower hills showed the tension between public and private efforts to care for children. The reigning ideology at the turn of the century often retreated to private schools and services that promised to provide the best education. The need to compete in the global economy in the Laurel district created new schools, neither purely public nor private. These schools used state money to rebuild the crumbling infrastructure and active volunteers in order to negotiate the loss of state and maintain services for children—services that were once provided by local activist efforts successfully expanded state responsibility and thus extended public responsibility for education beyond the traditional school programs. These programs were run by private nonprofits led by growing and increasingly entrepreneurial leaders who addressed urgent needs of Oakland's poor. They held very narrow visions of what youth needed. They could not bridge the vast gaps between state investments in children and their families. The state reinforced deep racial and class inequities.

Elmhurst district as “a lot like the country. It is a mix of good educations, a lot of single parents, a lot of people in the middle. We do not have quite as much state money. We aren't quite as lower income as the typical middle class. That's what I see.” The hills and creeks that mark the clearest borders between the flatlands, below 580. The same economic conditions that created Elmhurst had significantly transformed the surrounding, white, working-class community, creating many of the contradictions of a political

and economic order that generated more than a fragile middle class, and significant changes captured the neighborhood's precarious position. The term "the slants," evoking the ease with which things still slide down the hills towards the flatlands.

The Laurel district was "an up-and-coming commercial corridor, charming mix of 1920s architecture and burgeoning café culture had begun attracting young professionals looking for relatively affordable houses. While rents in the Laurel district skyrocketed in the 1970s, a young professional active in local politics, described Wood Heights (just up the hill) as "yuppie land," "yuppie" didn't simply equal "white." The neighborhood was diverse, with "African Americans, Asians, and others who were 'just making it in the [social] climbing." The neighborhood "very progressive in the 1970s."

But Laurel was far from a uniform working-class or poor families crowded into small buildings, or dilapidated motels right next door. Many neighbors described as a "zoning ordinance" where buildings were built along the MacArthur Blvd. Some of them clustered along 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The area had several apartment complexes, in what one local resident described as a "border" between the little bungalow dwellers and the high-rise buildings, both racial and class overtones. The Laurel district was called the "Bible Belt," where white homeowners had created a "racial space" in the flatlands and lower hills.

The Laurel neighborhood had become more diverse in the seventies, with a substantial black population. The Laurel Community Action Center, which the neighborhood had an equal percentage of black residents, had formed 60% of the neighborhood, which included Asians, Pacific Islanders, and Latinos. African Americans ran businesses on the MacArthur Blvd. Cornerstone Baptist, an African American church, had a large amount of property when it was cheap. The area along MacArthur in the 1980s. The stores that were often deteriorating Art Deco store fronts. The area was a mix of race and class contradictions: new ups

massive increases in wealth and poverty, divides in children's lives. Robert Caplan's relocation in Oakland's geography with the ease with which the neighborhood could be transformed into a gentrified neighborhood.

"coming" neighborhood. Its small colonial-style bungalows and older Victorians, which used to attract young professionals looking for affordable housing. With the high-tech boom, home prices in the area rose sharply in the late 1990s. Richard Jones, a white resident, described the Laurel district and Redwood City as "hippie-ized," but "because it was Oakland, it was white." The neighborhood was racially diverse, with many Asians, and whites," and a lot of people working in the [health services] agency world," which made it a desirable orientation."

Formerly gentrified neighborhood. Many of the houses were converted into tiny houses, apartment buildings, or newly remodeled homes.<sup>8</sup> In what Caplan called a "gentrification nightmare," hundreds of apartment buildings were demolished in the 1960s, many of which were replaced by new neighborhood. The neighborhood resisted many of these changes. A long-time resident described as a "battle between the residents and the developers." These fights had a long history in the Laurel district was on the edge of an area where developers "carved out a homogeneous neighborhood that lasted through the 1970s.<sup>9</sup>

The neighborhood became increasingly racially mixed since the 1980s, with a large and rapidly growing Asian population. A recent study estimated that the neighborhood was 40% black and white residents, who together with the remaining 40% was split among several ethnic groups. Several Chinese Americans and African Americans had bought a substantial amount of property, and commerce was declining along with the neighborhood. Many of the houses, all built into beautiful but expensive homes, highlighted the neighborhood's history of middle-class clothing boutiques and cafés with

wireless access were scattered among barbershops and nail salons, cheap Vietnamese restaurants, and working-class bars.

The neighborhood's diversity obscured its racial tensions. Some blocks were 40-50% Asian, predominantly immigrants. Just across the street, however, was a predominantly black block. Jenny Chin, a second-generation immigrant in the twenties, who grew up and still lived in the neighborhood, described it as "a Black and Asian neighborhood." The area was "all Chinese but was just across the street from a block that was African American. She had friends in her black neighbors, but her immigrant friends were in an apartment building a "crack house."

The neighborhood became both white and black as the hill towards the Redwood Heights elementary school, a beautiful public elementary school, a beautiful neighborhood. Redwood Heights was one of Oakland's most diverse neighborhoods (roughly 69% white, only 10% Asian, and 21% black) and informal efforts to resist racial change were formed in 1944 by white Republican Party members, explained that the "higher up you go, the more you have. Three blocks up, they think they're white. An agent had told them, "Every foot above the ground is white."

The Turners described their racially diverse neighborhood:

The neighbor across the street is Japanese. After the war, next to him a Chinese family, next to that a black family. He won't talk to anyone and is kinda paranoid. Next to that are families by these large families from El Salvador, Puerto Rican, and Samoan, African American, white, and black. They all come from Anglo-Saxon white.

A "yuppie African American couple" lived in the neighborhood, but there were "very few African Americans. It could be any ethnic group but black and it's mostly white. African Americans live in the apartment building. Several owners wouldn't rent their homes to African Americans."



99-cent stores and laundromats, black doughnut shops, no-frills takeout Chinese.

ered a more complex racial geography. predominantly first-generation Chinese however, might be a block that was 50% Chinese American woman in her late in the Laurel district, described it as “a apartment building she grew up in was meet from another apartment building formed close relationships with some of nt parents had labeled the neighboring

healthier and whiter as one moved up s neighborhood, which had an excel- iful park, and a new recreation center. d’s few majority-white neighborhoods (and 8% black), the historical legacy of e by a home improvement association homeowners.<sup>10</sup> Sam and Judy Turner, thur and were active PTA and NCPC p in the hills you go, the more money they are better than us.” A real estate e MacArthur counts.”

r diverse block on the edge of the Lau-

apanese who was interned during the xt a little old [white] lady who doesn’t

Next to them are two houses owned or that are childcare centers, Tongan te, Portuguese that distinguish them-

ple” had just moved to the neighbor- n Americans on this block. You could unremarkable, but [most of] the Afri- buildings.” According to the Turners, uses to blacks and some of the older

neighbors, like their Japanese neighbor  
neighborhood decline.

There was not a simple equation of  
erty, in this neighborhood. Many poor  
on 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue, but they lived alongside  
and Asian families. In one census block  
erty alongside 14% of black kids and 2  
middle-class black, Asian, and white  
cant racial disparities when one looked  
income levels. In the heart of the Lau  
made more than sixty thousand doll  
59% of white families did. At the lowe  
families earned less than thirty thous  
white families and 16% of Asian famil  
racial lines were concentrated in the p  
to sixty thousand dollars: 49% of bla  
31% of white families.

Laurel's location "in the slants" hel  
tics of childhood. Black, white, and A  
pering in the high-tech boom, lived in  
black, and white working-class familie  
increasingly polarized economic orde  
many in the city in that it not only inc  
actively reached out to incorporate t  
neighborhood politics: renters and pub

The NCPC often defined the apartm  
lems where, as Robert Smith explained  
packed in on top of each other." Fami  
ments," and their kids "were on the str  
stigmatizing renters and their kids, also  
ing some renters to join the NCPC. Th  
to focus on 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue, in order to in  
drug dealing, and push "slumlords" to  
security, and evict problem tenants. Ta  
raising her three sons on disability pay  
to a community meeting to defend ten  
perceived as unfair attacks. She worri  
lord to paint and landscape his buildin  
her eviction. But she stayed involved b

poor, described blacks as the cause of  
of race and class, or blackness and pov-  
black families lived in the apartments  
a substantial number of poor white  
black, 46% of white kids lived in pov-  
4% of Asian kids.<sup>11</sup> There were upper-  
families, but there remained signifi-  
ed closely at the distribution of family  
rel district, only 23% of black families  
ars, while 46% of Asian families and  
r end of the class ladder, 28% of black  
and dollars, compared to only 10% of  
ies. A good number of families across  
precarious middle-class range of thirty  
k families, 37% of Asian families, and  
lped create a distinctive kind of poli-  
asian middle-class professionals, pros-  
n close proximity to Asian immigrant,  
s, some of whom were struggling in an  
r. The local NCPC was different from  
luded older homeowners but also had  
two groups not frequently engaged in  
blic school parents.

ment buildings on 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue as prob-  
ed, “there’s lots of low-income people  
ilies were “crammed into small apart-  
eets.” This focus on 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue, while  
o had the surprising effect of encourag-  
e NCPC created a separate committee  
ncrease street lighting, crack down on  
o beautify their buildings, hire private  
anesha Johnson, a black single mother  
yments and part-time work, first came  
nants and her landlord from what she  
ed that all the pressures on her land-  
ngs would just lead to higher rents and  
because she hoped the NCPC could do

something for neighborhood children to get her sons away from the violence lands where she grew up. She found apartments that were “really really low income.” The landlord was “really forgiving of late rent.” One apartment complex was not. Yet she was the only parent of the building, and she didn’t know what to do. She wondered if the city should “just tear them down. If it weren’t for these apartments, I would have moved.”

Liz Walker helped forge relationships between parents which brought middle-class and working-class parents together. She encouraged Jean Schmidt and Bobbie Williams, two parents who lived on 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue, to join the NCPC. Sandra Collins, an African American parent with an MBA, who was a single mother, joined the NCPC hoping to beautify the school and make it more like an elementary school. She was a neighborhood that would watch over her children. She knew so many neighbors through her work. She knew her son walking around the neighborhood with her son walking around the neighborhood with freedom.”

Parent participation enabled the Laundress to challenge the institutional boundaries of community politics. The NCPC that extended beyond disciplining kids and organizing neighborhood activists, like Robert, Liz, and Jean, to public schools alongside working-class and parents. The NCPC investments in the public schools and the neighborhood extended to neighbors without kids at the school. Mary and Peter Thomas were new business owners and active members of the NCPC and they brought new upscale businesses to the Laurel district and they sent their daughter to a private school. Liz worked alongside parents in the NCPC and she worked in the public schools, so they helped fundraise and led fundraising efforts and beautification projects.

Sharing the same streets, and some of the same neighbors became painfully aware of the racial and class divide. As one white middle-class parent volunteered to absorb the magnitude of social neg-

. She had moved to the Laurel district  
re that plagued the East Oakland flat-  
cheap apartment, where most tenants  
ndlord charged only \$675 a month and  
block in any direction was “paradise,”  
young black men often hung out in front  
whether they were still dealing drugs.  
ear them down,” but she knew that “if  
d probably be in a worse place.”

ips with the local elementary school,  
ing-class parents into the NCPC. She  
Taylor, both working-class white par-  
the NCPC and PTA. She also invited  
an homeowner and businesswoman  
her active in the PTA. Sandra joined  
ool so it would “look less like a prison  
She wanted to create a friendly, caring  
ner son as he grew up. Since she got to  
r activism, she felt more comfortable  
neighborhood. “At least he could have *some*

Laurel NCPC to break out of the insti-  
licing and to forge a broader mandate  
s to caring for kids. Some middle-class  
z, and Sandra, sent their kids to public  
oor kids. So they shared interests and  
d playgrounds. But these connections  
nd parents whose kids went to private  
relatively prosperous white homeown-  
nd LCAP, where they worked to attract  
istrict. Mary was a stay-at-home mom,  
vate bilingual French school. As they  
, they became concerned about kids in  
d Friends of Laurel Elementary School  
ication projects around the school.

etimes the same schools, parents and  
ne inequalities in Oakland childhoods.  
nter said, “It has been heartbreaking  
glect in Oakland. We are witnessing a

massive loss of human potential. Most of the deep suffering of these children.”<sup>11</sup> friends with a kid named Peter who was next door,” whose parents were alcoholics and sent him to an alternative school. They sometimes went down with him,” but they cared for him. This kind of intimacy broke down clear lines between “other people’s kids” and led some parents to leave public schools and towards activism that used time and space in the neighborhood.

### *Divided Landscapes of Childhood*

Parents and neighbors who grew up in well-maintained parks, good schools, and recreation staff ran supervised after-school programs. Taylor grew up Oakland, “they let the time her daughter attended Laurel program was gone. Now as a white single mom I meet in an apartment on 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue, she doesn’t feel comfortable letting her daughter play on the street as she had as a child. “There is a sense of things now costs money too. A lot of things that where Bobbie sat, the public affordable recreation looked very different in the late 1990s to the early 1970s through the mid-1990s. The decline of recreation environments, especially schools and recreation centers, deepening class divides in the landscape, and a pervasive sense of decline was also shared in the structures and education that we think of as the transition to adulthood.

Oakland’s basic infrastructure of schools and recreation developed in the early twentieth century. The idea of childhood and youth as “age-graded phases” was a result of labor laws and mandatory schooling laws in the United States, excluding kids from the workforce and defining childhood as a time for school and play. The decline of these structures produced new problems, in particular re-

### *Dangerous Times: Reconstructing*

people are oblivious or insensitive to  
2 Sam and Judi Turner's son was best  
was growing up in the "rental cottages  
politics and who went to a county-run  
worried that Peter would "drag our son  
him since they "had semi-raised him."  
ar boundaries between "our kids" and  
rents towards deeper engagements in  
that would reshape the ways children  
ood.

d

o in Oakland in the 1960s remembered  
and school yards where Parks and Rec-  
ool recreation programs. When Bobbie  
e kids play ball till five o'clock," but by  
Elementary School in the 1990s, that  
ngle mother struggling to making ends  
he worried, "It's not as safe." She didn't  
play Kick the Can unsupervised on the  
a lot less for kids to do . . . and every-  
people don't have the money." From  
ble infrastructure for Oakland's kids  
than it had in the 1960s. Her memories  
dren's environments in Oakland. From  
public investments in children's envi-  
eation facilities, declined precipitously,  
pes of childhood in Oakland. But the  
aped by drastic changes in the kinds of  
ak kids need to successfully make the

ools, parks, and recreation facilities had  
y alongside our modern ideals of child-  
s in the life cycle."<sup>13</sup> By the 1920s, child  
d restructured childhood in the United  
orce and consolidating a definition of  
But this new concept of childhood also  
new worries about what children would

do with their “leisure time” and how that changed from childhood to adulthood. Many of the initiatives were directly with childhood and youth—playgrounds, Boys and Girls Clubs, summer camps, and so on. It was during this period as efforts to fill young people’s time that the first public playgrounds were built by the city and the clubs that formed part of a broad “child-saving” movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>14</sup> In 1907, the city created the Recreation Department to take charge of creating and maintaining a network of supervised playgrounds.

Oakland mobilized again to combat juvenile delinquency during the Great Depression in 1933. The Coochee Club, a collaboration of private social workers and middle-class citizens groups that was a precursor to the Coochee Club, let calling on Oakland residents to do their part. One headline read: “daughter” spent his or her “precious” time on “idle” activities.” The accompanying headline read: “idle” boys in particular might end up “settling for jail.” But the images of the scouting-style uniforms captured the fervor of the effort. The support they would become “all-American”.

Calls to fill kids’ free time cropped up again in the 1930s. II. Oakland created youth canteens to serve meals for kids and fathers were away. Even after the 1930s, the city fought “broken families and truancy,” but also against “commercial amusement establishments” that were cropping up in commercial districts. The Oakland Police Department created a new juvenile patrol division to monitor places where kids were hanging out after school hours.<sup>16</sup> These child-saving efforts were aimed at controlling working-class kids and their families, but middle-class reformers never lost sight of the ways kids used time and space. In the 1930s, Oakland created and maintained vibrant youth centers in the twentieth century, and middle-class kids still had plenty of unstructured free time.

We could look at this history as the story of how middle-class people organized themselves (without the government) to control children and youth, but this would misinterpret



they would transition from a protected institutions we associate most immediately with the city—grounds, the Boy Scouts, YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs—organized sports activities—developed to fill people's newly idle time. Oakland's first playground, the Oakland Club, one of many women's "child saving" movement in the late nineteenth century. By the 1920s, the city of Oakland had taken on the responsibility of establishing public playgrounds throughout the city.

At the "tragic misuse of leisure" during the 1910s, the Coordinating Council of the Community Welfare Organizations, churches, and the United Way, published a book that allocated funds to make sure "your son or daughter" leisure hours in "character-building activities suggest that without this protection, children are burning fires," hurting each other, or even the smiling faces of white boys and girls in the city. A fundamental belief that with the proper supervision of "American" children (See Figure 6).<sup>15</sup>

As the city grew up again urgently during World War I, youth reformers worried about how to supervise youth while mothers worked. During the war, youth reformers worried about how to supervise youth socializing in "dance halls, and movie theaters and amusement strips throughout the city. The Oakland juvenile bureau and a special juvenile court were juveniles might "congregate" during the war. Youth reformers always combined attempts to control youth with efforts to expand care for children. Youth reformers were entirely successful at transforming the city.<sup>17</sup> Working-class youth in cities like Oakland had to learn street cultures through the twentieth century.<sup>18</sup>

The heyday of "civil society," when people (often through government) to meet the needs of children and youth. How Oakland's park and recreation

# Misused leisure is a tragedy



your son or daughter spends an average 24 hours like this:



*How do they spend these precious hours?*

## TOMORROW IS TOO LATE!

2 BOYS HELD IN OAKLAND BURGLAR  
 3 Yacht Boys Go to Jail  
 Four Boys Hurt By Dynamite Cap  
 Stabbing of Boy, 7, by Playmate Probe  
 Two Oakland Boys Admit Setting Fire

children grow up only once

Figure 6. Tragic misuse of leisure, a recurring theme in a brochure was published by the Oakland Children's Room, vertical files)

infrastructure was built.<sup>19</sup> While some infrastructure (like the playgrounds, YMCA, and social welfare organizations, these organizations and often helped advocate for children and youth. By the 1920s, Oakland took responsibility for providing supervised recreation for the city and even ran a public summer camp. The Works Progress Administration increased the number of Oakland parks and built playgrounds. The city even helped launch the first nonprofit "Children's Room" in Oakland.<sup>20</sup> By the 1950s, Oakland had a well-known Department of Parks and Recreation, which provided programs at most public schools and organized recreation efforts for the city.<sup>21</sup> Adults in Oakland found their children in these facilities but also finding their first love in Oakland, and California as a whole.

for children and youth in the midtwentieth century.

YOUR chest dollars

*Fight tragic misuse  
of leisure*

"ON MY HONOR"



HAPPY



*Chest dollars*  
assist you to fill their leisure  
with  
*character building  
activities*

CONSTRUCTIVE

giving is YOUR protection

ring twentieth-century fear. This 1938  
Community Chest. (Oakland History

e of Oakland's recreation infrastruc-  
d Boys Clubs) were initiated by private  
anizations always worked closely with  
ate for expanded public infrastructure  
Oakland city government had taken the  
ed children's playgrounds throughout  
r camp at Feather River. The federally  
on (WPA) helped significantly expand  
d new recreation facilities. WPA funds  
"Boys Club" (now Boys and Girls Club)  
ad developed a substantial and nation-  
and Recreation that ran after-school  
coordinated juvenile delinquency pre-  
Oakland remember not just playing in  
st summer jobs in them.

, had invested in a basic infrastructure  
ntieth century that included decently

funded public schools, recreational facilities, and a university system. These public investments were seen as a path to a more egalitarian childhood and youth, with (and across degree racial) lines at least participated in. Oakland also had a vibrant private infrastructure of parks, playgrounds, swimming pools, skating rinks, rollerskaters, roller rinks, and businesses that provided spaces for people to play and socialize. The Laurel district had two movie theaters, a neighborhood center, and a variety of recreation activities in the school yard. As generations grew up on midtwentieth-century ideals of childhood, Oakland had this kind of “impressive array of public facilities that were the product of the Keynesian welfare state.”<sup>22</sup>

Nevertheless, Oakland in the fifties was seen as a paradise for black children, and forces that sought to destabilize the public and private infrastructure of the city promoted white flight and capital flight. This led to a decline in commercial districts and in the West Oakland and in the East Oakland areas. The crowded industrial areas of the city, with its vast parklands and new schools, remained committed to a low-tax and low-spending policy as they shifted public funding and services to the hills. As black kids grew into the police force that often trampled on the

White flight reshaped California suburban constituency that began campaigning for Proposition 13, the signature victory of 1976 and decimated the public infrastructure just as black activists were finally securing federal and Bush-era federal funding cuts further shifted welfare onto cities already struggling with economic inequalities.<sup>25</sup> By 1983 Oakland’s Parks and Recreation had half of its pre-Prop 13 levels.<sup>26</sup> School funding dropped precipitously through the early 1990s. By 1995 the branch library in the Laurel district had no longer provided after-school recreation. The city lost over \$17 billion in federal funding by 1995. Politicians and citizens tried to hold together the public spaces of childhood by cultivating pu-

ilities, and a rapidly expanding public  
ments promoted an almost democratic  
where kids across class (and to a lesser  
d in the same public institutions. Oak-  
structure of neighborhood movie the-  
provided inexpensive places for young  
rel district had a small public library,  
music store, and daily organized recre-  
geographer Susan Ruddick argues, our  
hood and youth depended on exactly  
c institutions that were part and parcel

and sixties was far from an egalitarian  
es were already in motion that would  
structure for Oakland's kids. Freeways  
t to the suburbs, starting a precipitous  
n the city's tax base. Black children in  
d flatlands were confined to the most  
while white families fled to the hills  
ols. The white Republican city council  
limited-government philosophy, even  
ices away from the black flatlands and  
eir teenage years, they faced a hostile  
ir rights to public spaces.<sup>23</sup>

te politics, empowering a white subur-  
ning to limit public spending in cities.  
California's white suburban tax revolt,  
olic infrastructure for kids in Oakland  
uring local political power.<sup>24</sup> Reagan-  
her shifted responsibility for children's  
with declining tax bases and increasing  
s and Recreation staff was reduced to  
unding dropped continuously and pre-  
the early eighties, the small storefront  
d closed and Parks and Recreation no  
activities at the local school. California  
etween 1997 and 2002 alone.<sup>27</sup> Oakland  
together the city's disintegrating land-  
blic-private partnerships like Friends

of the Library and Friends of Oakland money through contracts with nonprofit board member and youth advocate Gre schools and recreation programs were s kids: “We’ve pretty much sent the messa

Oakland city government struggle of the public infrastructure necessary Gordon, an activist in the Laurel d thought that by the late 1990s in Oa consciousness to do something for y school bonds. We know that the next cared for, and that it will create more is a standard concern, but now we kn Starting in the late 1980s, Oakland vo and special parcel taxes, trying to ma disinvestment in spaces for children a measures injected vital resources into and schools and began to make a der of deferred maintenance in Oakland The booming economy in the late 19 to slowly rebuild funding for children grams.<sup>30</sup> But California’s structural de the turn of the twenty-first century m ile.<sup>31</sup> Every few years Oakland would f threatened to decimate schools and cl nia budget crisis of 2002-2003, child 75% of the \$9.4 billion in reduced spe county budgets, as it did in every bu estimated that Alameda County lost a 1993 and 2003.<sup>33</sup>

Landscapes of childhood were deep at the turn of the twenty-first century. M had dealt with the crises in public scho vate markets to meet their children’s many middle-class residents in the Lau or tried to move “up the hill” where the boundaries of a “good” elementary white middle class, had “abandoned” t lawyer and white homeowner, sent her

d Parks and Recreation, and by saving for-profit service providers.<sup>28</sup> Oakland school superintendent Gregory Hodge maintained that declining investments were symbols of the state's failure to invest in children: "We're spending money on things like day care to kids that we don't care."

By the late 1990s to rebuild some of the city's infrastructure to sustain all the city's children. Peg Hodge, superintendent of the city's parks and recreation district for the last twenty-five years, said that in Oakland, there was "a great deal more investment in youth. People are willing to vote for it because the next generation needs to be nurtured and we're solving the problems by not nurturing them. It's not just a political issue now that it must be a social concern." Voters passed a series of bond measures to make up for decades of state and federal neglect of parks and youth in the city. These local bond measures funded Oakland's parks, recreation centers, and youth centers, but not the problems caused by two decades of neglect of the city's aging infrastructure for children.<sup>29</sup> In the late 1990s enabled the city and the schools to maintain their programs' environments and staffing for profit and the boom-bust economy of the city made these local investments very fragile. In the early 2000s face a new fiscal crisis that once again cut funding for children's services. During the California budget crisis, children's programs sustained more than 50 percent of their funding.<sup>32</sup> And the state raided city and state funds during the budget crisis. Supervisor Keith Carson said that about \$1.6 billion to the state between

was largely divided in the Laurel neighborhood. Many middle-class families in Oakland left the city for the suburbs, taking their children to private schools and recreation by retreating to private schools. Robert Smith complained that the Laurel district had fled to private schools and that the city had bought expensive homes within the city's public school district. "A certain demographic," he said, "has fled the public schools. Margaret Duncan, a parent of a child at Bret Harte Middle School, but

she was rare among her friends. Her family moved to public school in the hills for elementary school, “the tunnel” to Orinda or sent their kids to private school as schools began to draw from the hills. Rollinson, a real estate agent and a good friend, said that a lot of upper-middle-class people were moving to the hills, having sex, smoking pot, and cutting their hair. It was schools and city life.

Sociologist Barrie Thorne calls these “new” families and private day cares, with low-wage workers, provided much of the daily love and care that worked. Private schools and tutoring services were also public schools, and private play facilities and parks were spaces.<sup>34</sup> As more middle-class families moved to the hills to attract these kinds of private investments, the city began to (See Figure 7).

A nearby public recreation center and a Laurel café, but at thirty dollars a class was a bit out of reach for the working-class parents. Middle-class parents, the SCORE! Learning Center, a for-profit center, promised to propel its clients up an “independent path to success” so they could join the “Academy of Excellence.” Katz has argued, these privatized strategies were pushing kids up a steeper path to the middle class, leading to the abandonment of many children whose parents could not afford the private market.<sup>36</sup>

The Laurel district included families who had moved to private childhoods. As Robert Smith explained, “I can’t afford to take their kids up the hill,” but “the kids run wild outside the door.” Many parents were holding onto their middle-class status, but it was getting harder. That’s why, according to Robert, the hills were “a lot harder” for services for youth. Parents in the hills necessarily afford to pay for all the activities and services for their children. They paid “very high prices for services in terms of city services.” The flatlands had fewer resources, while in the hills, parents could “pay for ballet lessons, music.”



friends sometimes sent their children to private school, but most moved “through public school to private school after elementary school in broader geographic areas. Christine, a close friend of Margaret Duncan’s, agreed that many people in Oakland hear about teenagers dropping out of school and simply retreat from public

education to deeply “privatized childhoods.” Nanette, a young immigrant woman, is the care provider and care for children while parents work. For-profit services took the place of well-funded public programs. When the city moved to the Laurel district, it began to invest in programs, such as a new kids’ dance studio

and advertised “Mommy and Me” classes at the park. Because they were out of the reach of Laurel parents, parents could drive up the hill to a for-profit tutoring company, whose website advertised an increasingly steep educational “path to academic all-stars.”<sup>35</sup> As geographer Cindi Katz argues, such strategies may protect and propel some children from poverty. But they also fuel the public abandonment of children who cannot afford to pay for services in private markets.

Children living these very different public and private childhoods explained, some Laurel residents “could afford to pay for what others couldn’t, so they “just let their children go.” Laurel parents were only precariously middle-class, or striving to make it out of poverty. Children in the lower hills communities had to “fight to get the same parents in the Laurel district could not afford the trappings of a middle-class lifestyle despite high taxes” but were often “underserved.” Children had obvious needs and got a lot of city resources, but they didn’t need city resources because they



Figure 7. Private landscapes of the District. (Photo by author)

### *Controlling the Dangers of Free Time*

Parents varied significantly in how they structure their own kids' free time. Some kept them in structured after-school activities and supervised them very carefully. Others let their kids have more freedom to go to the neighborhood or to take the bus as they got older. One neighbor I interviewed in the lower half of the city saw this as a problem, often a dangerous one. She was a single mother living with "children coming from broken homes" or with "parents who are not providing the guidance they need." She worried that her kids would not be "just left to do whatever they want." She confirmed these broad concerns about children's free time. Her three highest priorities were "after-school activities," "child care," and "child supervision." She also mentioned extended music and arts classes that provided structure for kids during their free time.



of childhood in the Laurel

*ime*

, and how much, they tried to struc-  
drove their kids to and from school,  
programs, and supervised them very  
ore freedom to bike around the neigh-  
older. Nevertheless, every parent and  
ills described “free time” after school  
Chris Quan worried that kids “com-  
ents working late at night” weren’t get-  
nted schools to stay open late so they  
r.” Surveys in the Laurel district con-  
children’s free time. The community’s  
chool activities for youth,” “recreation  
o wanted academic mentors, tutoring,  
at would provide more education and  
ne.<sup>37</sup> Free time posed different kinds of

dangers for children across race, gender, and class, itself crossed racial and class lines and was a free time in the Laurel district.<sup>38</sup>

Most parents described unsupervised children as “endangered” by cars and adult predators on the streets. Dramas about kidnapping and child sex abuse, and the drugs, have left many parents terrified to let their children have free time in public places.<sup>39</sup> Anthropologists and sociologists have created “a dark picture of a generation of children menaced by innumerable threats.” This has led to an expansive culture of child protection. One African American mother asked for more police officers: “They are coming and stopping to try to talk to the kids. . . . It would be so sad if some little child got hurt.”

Even older girls were generally described as “endangered.” Neighborhood activists frequently talk about the dangers of men “coming and preying on the young girls who are walking home. Jackie Patterson, the president of the neighborhood, told me a story about one middle school girl who was in a stolen vehicle with a man she didn’t know. She didn’t become another headline about kidnapping. She was pregnant and would quickly end up pregnant because she was in the wrong places. . . . They don’t realize the dangers.”

Neighborhood activists defined older children as “endangered” potentially dangerous by free time. Most of the children, especially the poor African American boys, were living in the buildings on 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Liz described the dangers: “The poor black boys grew up without adequate supervision. A kid named Isaiah at Laurel Elementary School

was just a natural born leader. He was very smart. [He was at fundraisers], helping organize the fundraisers. He had a lot of influence. His dad wasn’t around and he was a natural born leader. I just see it happen to him. Now he’s one of the brightest kids. The kids are bright. You can’t just, by the time they get to karate class.” They need to have support.

Many neighborhood activists blame the lack of supervision for the Laurel district’s crime problems.

er, class and age categories, but the fear  
d drove efforts to structure children's

ed elementary school kids as "endan-  
the streets. News coverage and police  
exual abuse, as well as teenage sex and  
to let children have any unsupervised  
ogist Roger Lancaster argues that these  
childhood encircled by sinister forces,  
ey have also promoted an "ever more

<sup>240</sup> At one NCPC meeting, an African  
ice patrols because "kids say that cars  
to them." Tanesha chimed in, saying,  
got taken."

scribed as "endangered" by free time.  
ked about high school boys and older  
ung girls" at the bus stops or as they  
Neighborhood Services Coordinator,  
ool African American girl who rode in  
know without thinking that she could  
apped children. She thought that girl  
se she was "looking for love in all the  
e dangers they get themselves into."

er boys as both endangered and made  
many concerns focused on boys, espe-  
ys who "hung out" in the apartment  
ed what she had seen happen when  
quate support, structure, and supervi-  
mentary School

always willing to help sell tickets [for  
hole thing, but he had little parental  
is mother was whatever. . . . You could  
ut on the street. You know that these  
me they're in ninth grade, say "here's a  
rt starting in elementary school.

ed poor kids with too much "free time"  
s. That's why the NCPC first started to

build after-school programs, as Jackie of crime on the MacArthur corridor—drug activity—that’s not captured by the said, “There’s no space in the Laurel. A having trouble with preteens so they keep them away from getting in a lot neighborhood reproduced a long-standing children must be protected from the d also must be protected from dangerous.

Tanesha Johnson, on 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue, worried about everything: traffic, sex especially the lure of “easy quick money black men into drug dealing. She drove “kids get beat up going to school.” When school, she spent several months sitting when my children are unattended, and they’ll be safe.” She hesitated, “maybe . sha thought that she might be “a bit p the ways race, class, and gender struc posed particular kinds of dangers to po or be seen as drug dealers, the ultimate money, and poor health sapped her er and played video games. Tanesha wor the house wasn’t good for them. “Norm She wished they had a creek, a park, or young men hanging out in front of her ents had not kept them “in the house” a

Bobbie Taylor worked part-time as elementary so she could supervise her d let her go to the playground after scho drugs or “the wrong crowd.” There wa free time since she rarely had the mon tickets. We see here clear limits on p could arrange her schedule so she cou She could keep her children in the hou choose” to live in a house with a back y advantage of the emerging private land

Middle-class professional parents h about free time. Sandra Collins descri

Patterson explained. “There was a lot of theft, robbery, commercial burglary, and so on. That’s the data.” They surveyed students, who said, “Ain’t nothin’ to do.” They were mostly in need of developed after-school programs “to get them out of trouble.” Activists in the Laurel neighborhood found a troubling duality in child protection efforts: a dangerous public sphere, but the public sphere was not safe for children.<sup>41</sup>

Tanesha never let her sons play outside. She was worried about actual predators, random violence, and “the streets” that seemed to pull so many young boys away from her sons to and from school because of the danger. When one of her sons got suspended from school for not coming in on his classes. “There is no lax time for them. If there is no lags in time, then maybe they’ll be in. . . at least that’s my assumption.” Tanesha was “paranoid,” but her comments highlighted deep-seated fears about free time for poor black boys: that they would become “bad boys.” Tanesha often had little free time and energy, so her kids mostly stayed inside the house. She worried that keeping her kids confined in the house was what all kids do play outside on their block.” She had a yard to play in. But she looked at the other kids in the apartment and thought that their parents would do as she did with her sons.<sup>42</sup>

Bobbie was an after-school monitor at Laurel Elementary. She watched her daughter after school. She occasionally took her daughter to school, but worried that she might get into trouble. There was little for her daughter to do with her friends. She had to pay for bus fare, entrance fees, or movie tickets. She had to make parental choices. Like Tanesha, Bobbie would like to volunteer at her children’s schools. She would like to have a yard, but she did not have the money “to buy a yard in a safe neighborhood or to take them to the parks and landscapes of childhood in Oakland.

Some parents had more choices, but they too worried about their children. They needed to be providing care for her son before

and after school as a “big concern.” Her ability to arrange her work schedule so without sacrificing income. He got his but they got home at the same time so work and chores done, and play together in touch during the day and she tried ents. As her son was getting older, she him” because “now it’s more serious. It’s participated in a baseball league and a program also found a special after-school class in ized that most parents didn’t have the more care” after school before parents ten don’t want to get in trouble, but the

These concerns about “free time” a “crisis of care” that affected families across employment and single-parent households parents who stay home to provide child students in the city lived in families with working.<sup>44</sup> Many parents worked long hours and struggled to find childcare for children school for older kids. While some parents their kids after school, others could not “other parents” on the street to inform thought kids should be off the street, but “That’s another problem.” Not all homes

National reports and surveys echoed “free time” led to trouble and argued that “risk” into an “opportunity.” As the in *A Matter of Time: Risk and Opportunity* “unstructured, unsupervised, and unproductive to drug and alcohol abuse, crime, and delinquency” described adolescence as “a crucial stage in an individual’s entire life course and that the transition from childhood toward a stable adulthood was a complex process that had to be supported by a lot to learn . . . families help. Schools are not enough.”<sup>47</sup> This report argued that we need a “developmental triangle,” to communities. After-school programs could provide



professional position gave her the flexibility that she could be with him after school. She would pick up herself to school after she left for work, and then they could unwind together, get home, and eat dinner. She bought him a cell phone to keep in touch. She wanted to get to know his friends and their parents. Her goal was “trying to be more structured with his schedule, as if it was going to be high school time.” He participated in a computer program at the YMCA and had a tutor. She enrolled him in robotics for him to take. But she realized she was providing luxuries. She thought “kids needed structure. When they came home from work. ‘Nine out of ten kids are bored so they do.’”

After school programs point to a deepening “crisis in the middle class lines.”<sup>43</sup> High rates of maternal employment and dual-income households have decreased the number of children in the care of grandparents and other relatives. In Oakland, at least 64% of students have only one parent or two parents working or a single parent working long hours or two jobs to make ends meet. This has reduced supervised activities after school. Parents could rely on relatives to care for their children. There were fewer grandparents and other relatives who usually monitor kids after school.<sup>45</sup> Jenny Lee noted that “maybe they don’t want to be home. They need structure. They were safe and caring spaces for kids. We need to address these broad-based concerns that after-school programs could turn a corner. As a result of a influential Carnegie Foundation report, *Time and Learning in the Nonschool Hours*, explained, “unproductive” time often led young people to engage in drug use, and violence.<sup>46</sup> The Carnegie Foundation noted that this is a crucially formative phase that can shape the character of the child, thus the future of society.” Coming of age should not be passively managed: “In the critical years between childhood and adulthood, adolescents have a need for adult help. But increasingly they are not getting it. They are needed to turn to the “third side” of the street: community organizations and youth programs. We need to provide “an array of engaging and meaningful

experiences” that would help America’s “productive” members of society.<sup>48</sup> They sought to ensure they would not “veer into a

In the mid-1990s, youth advocates launched efforts to shift the terms of the debate to promoting “healthy youth development.” The *Blueprint for Youth Development* described a goal to ensure that all young people had secure relationships with caring adults to safely make it to adulthood. Youth advocates argued that where to turn for their sense of belonging was critical. If they find it with family, they are less likely to resort to an informal group, a gang, or turn to a community alternative. The *Blueprint* highlighted the importance of “relationships with caring adults.” The *Blueprint* highlighted the importance of youth development organizations, and the importance of ensuring, “We don’t do programs. . . . We’re not in the care of kids who aren’t your own. You’re not their children.”<sup>51</sup> These advocates attempted to shift the responsibility for children beyond the

After-school programs became the focus of the problems facing youth by the late 1990s. Diverse advocacy groups pushed the importance of funding for after-school programs in the late 1990s. School programs to help them meet the challenges of progress especially after the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act. Parents looked to after-school programs to help their children. And law-enforcement and crime-prevention programs could prevent crime. After-school programs could prevent crime and 6:00 P.M.<sup>52</sup> Nonprofits also developed programs to expand government funding.<sup>53</sup> These programs led to expansion in federal, state, and local funding. In the turn of the twenty-first century.<sup>54</sup> Many cities developed citywide after-school systems, like Los Angeles’ After-School Corporation.<sup>55</sup> By 2006-2007, \$1.5 billion was being spent in Oakland to provide after-school programs that served approximately 25% of

After-school programs were increasingly seen as a key investment for middle-class kids as well as for

s youth develop into “responsible” and they could keep youth on the right track another course of development.”<sup>49</sup>

s in Oakland and across the nation the debate from fixing youth problems moment.”<sup>50</sup> Oakland’s *Call to Action: A* described how community agencies could re spaces and relationships with caring young people inevitably “will find something and care. The question is whether formal peer group, find their way into native which provides consistent bonds highlighted Omega Boys Club as a model quoted founder Joe Marshall explained an extended family. . . . You just take do them the way you would your own to challenge the focus of many youth (like justice system) on controlling, controlling they tried to revalue care and to extend boundaries of the family.

consensus solution to a multitude of problems. Sociologist Anita Garey found that California state legislature to expand in 1998. School officials looked to after-school the higher expectations for academic achievement of No Child Left Behind. Working partnerships to help provide care and supervision. Prevention groups promised that after-school care in the crucial hours between 3:00 and 6:00 p.m. Pioneered sophisticated lobbying efforts to help combined efforts produced a massive funding for after-school programs at the time. Many cities have developed comprehensive programs like Los Angeles’s BEST and New York City’s BEST. In 2007, 17.89 million public dollars were spent on comprehensive, free, after-school programs for public school students.<sup>56</sup>

Increasingly framed as a necessary public program for well as poor kids who were struggling

to make their way up a steeper path. A recent opinion poll found that 84% of U.S. voters support a renewed commitment to ensuring that every child has access to an after-school program.<sup>57</sup> Advocates for after-school programs argue that children needed to be supervised during their after-school hours as a public responsibility for children's after-school care. These new ideals of and anxieties about children's after-school care emerged during fundamental economic restructuring that changed the paths young people took to adulthood.

### *Falling Off a Steeper Path to Adulthood*

Young people at the turn of the twentieth century were navigating a new road to adulthood and making the transition from childhood to adulthood in the twentieth century.<sup>58</sup> Pervasive economic changes created new anxieties about youth coming of age; one Carnegie Foundation study identified 20% of all U.S. adolescents as “at-risk” of “not making it.” In the late 1990s, 60% of American adolescents were identified as “at-risk” that children were worse off than when they were born. These changes, how economic restructuring and the changes in the lives of black working-class neighborhoods and communities, carried both that kids were “growing up” in a world where, without schools and secure work, they might not make it to adulthood has become longer, steeper, and more difficult for children as well. Middle-class parents have been navigating a new culture of intensive parenting and have reworked our ideas of what a good life is. The district developed after-school programs that tried to live these new ideals, by extending middle-class values to Oakland.

Broad economic changes created in the lives of working-class neighborhoods.<sup>61</sup> Globalization and the shift in the economy created massive inequalities not just between rich and middle class. Most new jobs created in California were in the lower spectrum, with far fewer jobs created in the upper spectrum. Some upper-middle-class families have been able to maintain their status, but most middle-class families experience a decline in their status. Between 1976 and 2006, the income of the top 1% increased 18.4%, while the middle per-

to adulthood. An After-School Alliance thought there should be a “national child has a space in an afterschool programs drew on long-standing ideas and protected to argue for expanded after-school time. But they also drew on adulthood that had emerged in response to that had created deeper divides in the

## *Adulthood*

Twenty-first century are taking a bumpier transition at later ages than in the mid-20th century. Economic insecurity has escalated adult fears. A Pew Research Foundation report described half of Americans as “not achieving productive adulthood.”<sup>59</sup> 60% of white adults and 77% of black adults thought that they were kids.<sup>60</sup> We saw in Elmhurst the ongoing significance of race decimated and many children’s lives. Adults worried that they were “growing up too soon” and also that without good support they would never fully grow up. But the road to adulthood is becoming more and more risky for middle-class children. Families have responded to these risks by creating afterschool programs that has transformed children’s daily lives. These programs address children need. Activists in the Laurel neighborhood are pushing for programs that would enact and democratize middle-class structured time to all kids in

the neighborhood. Intense “fears of falling” in this neighborhood. The transition to a service economy have generated economic inequality between rich and poor but also *within* the middle class. In California are at the extremes of the wage distribution. The bottom 20% in the middle-income levels.<sup>62</sup> While the top 20% have seen enormous gains in income, the bottom 20% have stagnant wages or downward mobility. The income of the top 20% of California earners in the bottom quintile increased a meager 1.3%.<sup>63</sup> This

emerging class structure has increased at the top and exacerbated parental fear down the class ladder.

Families also had to contend with what has called the *Great Risk Shift*, as job and income have all become much more precarious. Many white-collar educated professionals are underemployed and their incomes stagnate or declining. Middle-class families were able to maintain their status for three decades only because of the income tax, a coping mechanism that, given a modern economy and household labor, has only deepened their economic anxiety. Anthropologist Brett Williams has argued that, only too visible, many families have lost their class status—and tried to pass it on to their children at able levels of debt.<sup>65</sup>

College and graduate school have become a ticket to well-paid jobs in this insecure and volatile economy. Education has left many young people searching for markers of adulthood. As author Anya Kamenetz writes in *Generation Debt*, many young people leave college with that exacerbates their economic insecurity. Others find they need to earn graduate degrees to advance in their chosen professions. In the San Francisco Bay Area, another marker of adult success is a house. Even college no longer seems to guarantee adulthood. As the cost of college skyrockets, many kids in the lower hills worried, “Am I going to college at all? Is it really going to make a difference?”

Anthropologist Janet Finn argues that adolescence has changed as “our standard cultural scripts of adolescence no longer seem to work.” In the mid-20th century, adolescence as “a volatile stage en route to adulthood, experimentation, risk taking, and rebellion were not necessarily desirable. Finn argues that the modern adolescent experiment and “try on’ adult roles” but for the few “openings” available in the modern economy, adolescent risk and experimentation is now more common and far more dangerous.<sup>66</sup>

competition for the few well-paid jobs fears that their children might easily fall

what political scientist Jacob Hacker s, health care, retirement, and family insecure.<sup>64</sup> First blue-collar and then nals saw their jobs downsized or out- r fluctuate wildly. In California, many ntain their income levels over the last creased number of working mothers, ostly unchanged gendered division of e crisis of care in working families. As ed, and the 2008 housing crash made nly held onto their precarious middle- their kids—by racking up unsustain-

ecome increasingly required for access polarized economy. But this extended struggling to attain culturally expected Kamenetz chronicles in her book *Gen-* college massively burdened with debt urities in an already-risky job market. e degrees or to take unpaid internships s. With the soaring cost of home own- s slipped out of reach for many in the med to guarantee a safe transition to rocketed, Margaret Duncan said that Am I going to be able to afford to go to a difference? Can I afford to stay in?” that our understanding of youth has pts about middle class upward mobil- idtwentieth century, experts described te to adulthood,” in which experimen- e expected and seen as normal, if not today few youth “have the luxury” to out instead are “in training for a race” professional middle class. In this con- tion are increasingly seen as pathologi-

Many middle-class parents in Oakland and distractions of adolescence might threaten their children's future. Margaret Duncan, who lives in the district, described the escalating pressure on her kids to be a kid and make mistakes and experience things become "so scripted." Parents are worried about issues, having your kids out at night, having them be late every time they walk out of the door. She herself constantly evaluating whether her kids are "bright," was "really concentrating well" or not. A total sit-in-your-seat kid, well, do you remember before, with her first son, "You just don't complain about the "hype" and "competition" and emphasis on testing. Margaret tried to resist but felt herself drawn into the almost inescapable. She wanted her kids "to be economically resilient" and personality that could deal with some kid who is older than they were twenty-five or thirty. I don't

Many middle-class kids now experience this as they climb this steep path to adulthood. Margaret, on her stepsons, thought it could extend for a long time. "I remain kids for a hell of a lot longer. I don't know how long. It drives me nuts. . . . Something is something about not quite growing up and still relying on your parents. If you screw up, you're added, "The economic opportunity is not there. I never would stay in the Bay Area. It's not going to go to start their families? Are they're super-educated?"

This precipitous path to adulthood is a result of the care, time, and education we think children need to "get ahead."<sup>68</sup> Middle-class parents now create environments for their children, reshaping them so they can become "super-educated." So the culture of parenting the "logic of consumption" and the number of products and services produced is an advantage "in an era of economic anxiety" and buying with infants and buy educational toys and books into an endless opportunity for learning.





video games promise to teach preschoolers, parents a few minutes of adult time a day, and children to ballet lessons, soccer practice, and science camps. Parents are even enrolling their children into the womb by playing Mozart.

The new culture of middle-class parenting has changed the ways kids spend their “free time” and has also divided in the experience of childhood. Middle-class kids (and their parents) now spend more and more of their “free time” in organized, and often expensive after-school activities. Poor and poor kids still spend their “free time” playing independently with friends, visiting family, or watching TV. One report found that while 83% of middle-class youth participated in organized activities, only 15% of low-income youth participated in organized activities. This has redefined our sense of what is normal for children to compete in a global economy. It has also divided the ways middle-class and middle-class kids, who are learning to distinguish between “work” and “play,” skills that are increasingly valued in contemporary capitalism.<sup>75</sup>

Parents in the Laurel district experienced the pressures to prepare their children to compete in a global economy in a particularly acute way. They didn't have to travel to the next door), to see the massive inequality generated by the current economic order. The pressures and rhythms of childhood exacerbated fears about the future. Parents and neighborhood activists fought to bring middle-class structured time to all public spaces and to help both poor and middle-class kids navigate the increasingly rocky path to the future.

Race also shaped the politics of childhood in the Laurel district. Black middle-class parents in the Laurel district shared American neighbors deep fears of falling into poverty. They sought to create additional barriers for their children. Black families in the United States have long worried about the future class status of their children. While middle-class and upwardly mobile, recent studies have found that children born to middle-income parents grow up in poverty. For example, only 31% of black middle-income

...ers how to read (and to give frazzled  
almost guilt-free). Parents drive older  
ices, after-school tutoring, art classes,  
encouraged to extend learning opportu-  
t to their developing fetuses.<sup>71</sup>

arenting has fundamentally reshaped  
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od.<sup>72</sup> Middle-class kids (across racial  
their “free time” in structured, super-  
ol activities. In contrast, working-class  
me” in less structured activities, play-  
ing with relatives, or watching TV.<sup>73</sup>  
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ganized out-of-school activities, 40%  
none.<sup>74</sup> This 24-hour learning culture  
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ldhood in significant ways in the Lau-  
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r their children on the path to adult-  
ates have a harder time securing the  
an white families.<sup>76</sup> Instead of being  
ound that a majority of black children  
up to have less income than their par-  
e children exceed the income of their

parents compared to 68% of white children. The district faced a steeper path to the middle class, while many white families tended to cluster in the middle class, while many white families tended to cluster in the brackets. Black families also tended to cluster in the brackets, even when they made it up by generations of discriminatory housing policies. Black families had less money to invest in education, and survive temporary economic disruptions. Middle-class families lived in close geographic proximity and attended the same schools. As sociologists have shown, this geographic proximity means that Black children attend inferior schools and get drawn into a path to higher education and income stability.

Black boys faced additional barriers. Sandra Collins's son entered middle school and his future. Middle school is "a different world with tough kids and more peer pressure." "Middle school is succeeding in school, really failing and falling into the wrong crowd." Her son was surrounded with white and Asian kids, and he was in a public school, a sign he was struggling. He felt isolated to her dismay, his teachers didn't seem to care. "You'd think maybe the teachers would care! You'd think maybe the teachers would care!" she was active in the PTA, she "didn't get it." Her son's failure was unremarkable to teachers who expect (and thus help produce) black boys to fail. At the same time, her son also faced intense pressure from the powerful image of black boys as "tough." She moved him to a small private school, which provided individual attention he needed to get back on track.

Sandra Collins kept reiterating that her son had a "good heart," but she worried that people would "steer himself in the right direction." He nevertheless had to contend with people who were not good. When her son was in sixth grade, there were robberies near the school and they p

children.<sup>77</sup> Black children in the Laurel middle class for several reasons. Black children in the lower-income fractions of families clustered in the higher-income neighborhoods to have significantly less wealth than white children with the same income. This wealth gap, built up by discriminatory hiring and housing policies, meant that black parents had to spend more on their children's education or to surmount the effects of unemployment-like job losses.<sup>78</sup> Many black middle-class children's proximity to poor black families and neighborhoods, as sociologist Mary Pattillo McCoy has shown, meant that black middle-class children often found themselves in peer groups that pull them off the path to economic security.

Sandra was on the path to adulthood. As Sandra's mother, she began to worry more about her son's future in the "real world," she explained, "with a lot of uncertainty." My biggest worry right now is him not being able to get a good job and not being able to get picked on for hanging out with the wrong crowd. Sandra was getting picked on for hanging out with the wrong crowd. Sandra was text messaging her all the time from behind her back and had to repeat a grade, but Sandra was particularly concerned. "He's in danger of being picked on. He would be watching." But even though Sandra was not getting a progress report or anything." Her mother was particularly concerned about boys' educational disadvantage. At the same time, Sandra was under peer pressure to self-identify with the "black" community.<sup>79</sup> Eventually Sandra decided to send her son to a school prepared its mostly African American students where her son would get the kind of individualized attention he needed to get on track.

Sandra's son was "a good kid with a really good personality. People would assume "he's a bad kid" who would get picked on. Although Sandra was confident that he would not get picked on and "not fall into that trap," he was still under people's assumptions that he was up to no good. In fact, the police were investigating some allegations that were pulled over her son, who was walking

with a group of kids. The boys were badly.” She talked with her son, warning with you because if you act mad, they’ll come toward you.” As a young woman growing up, but she knew that as her son grew older, “open more” and they’d have to “talk about

Black parents struggled to secure the declining investments in children’s environments and policing of black youth. The difficulty in ensuring their children’s safe and sound to produce a sense of “linked-fate” politics of black youth criminality was not confined to affect poor kids. Black parents across the city with the ways this image threatened to be dangerous, especially as they crossed the line and teenager. Black middle-class parents taught their children the sense of middle-class entitlement on the class ladder, while at the same time the discipline that might be required to protect their child, taught their sons how to carry themselves as bad boys in school. They trained their children when they were stopped on the street. This parenting extended beyond the home. In the Laurel district, these concerns encouraged parents to work alongside poor parents to make schools safer for all kids.

### *Taking Back the Schools*

Robert Smith described an almost common theme in schools: “You have to take the schools back from liberal rhetoric to take care of children. It’s not those who espouse these liberal policies to take care of your beef?” We both laughed, and when he asked, “kids?” he said, “Exactly, that’s pretty much what you go to school?” The struggles of activists to “take back the schools” and to expand after-school programs provided insights into the dilemmas of activism in a neoliberal state. Parents and neighborhood

“scared, searched, and really treated  
ing him “not to let your anger get away  
y’re just going to be more aggressive  
ng up, she had never experienced this,  
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sts in the Laurel district to “take back  
ol programs for youth offer important  
in the context of the neoliberal volun-  
activists in the Laurel district worked

to revitalize the public infrastructure labor. They invested their time and skill to expand the publicly funded infrastructure.

Neighbors and parents in the Laurels by increasingly insecure public investment, parents volunteered daily and many of them. Robert became volunteer recreation coordinator for the school playground simply by buying equipment. Sam Thomas started Friends of Laurels to organize planting trees around the school. Marie retired from her work as a preschool teacher and coordinator for the NCPC, helping to improve the public schools. Several parents in the Laurels joined the PTA the year *before* their child began school, not just for teachers and principals but also because of their investment in the school. PTA and NCPC members were painting school portable classrooms, organizing fundraisers, and helped write grants and plan events. Liz, a “hills parent” on a local education blog, wrote that it is best when parents treat them as a community, not just for funds, but for time; time is more important to fight on unjust or poorly managed schools. She volunteered her time: “This is a public school where they can spend money. That’s why I’m optimistic that their volunteer work in the hills will get positive results more easily than they do in the flatlands. Elementary, Liz explained, “We don’t have a problem. Our test scores are 50%.” Unlike the flatlands, “It’s not eleven hundred kids.”

Women did most (though not all) of the work, creating a lasting gendered division of labor that was different from that for their children’s care. For this reason, a new culture of middle-class parenting emerged.<sup>81</sup> Some middle-class mothers sought flexible jobs, so that they could be available to address any problems that emerged in school or at home with their children after school. Some working-class mothers, like Schmidt—also took jobs in the school.



for children with their own volunteers to improve the public schools and to ensure for after-school programs.

The flatland area worked hard to fill the gaps left by the state in children's environments. Some parents volunteered weekly at their children's schools. A parent volunteer director at the Laurel Elementary School coordinated equipment. Neighbors led by Marie and Pat Jackson organized the School to raise money for playground equipment, a program of gardening and community work to improve the school yard. When Pat Jackson was a teacher, she became the de facto youth coordinator to plan new after-school programs at the lower hills, like Liz Stewart, joined the flatland school. They not only got to know each other but were integrated into the daily management. Some members spent weekends cleaning and painting. Some created school websites, led fundraisers, and organized after-school enrichment programs. A parent volunteer explained that Oakland schools "do not have a top. . . . The demands on parents are high. . . . In classrooms, time for meetings, time for meetings, time for issues."<sup>80</sup> Jenny Chin explained why parents volunteer at public school. It's free. There isn't tuition. "It's why it's up to volunteers." Parents were concerned that the lower hills schools would produce a generation of kids with no might in flatland schools. At Laurel Elementary, "to have a horrendous battle, it's very possible. . . . The elementary schools further down in the hills have a lot of kids on an overcrowded campus."

Some of this volunteer labor, given the long history of the state, holds mothers ultimately responsible for their children. In sociologist Sharon Hays defines the ideology of intensive mothering as the ideology of intensive mothering. Some mothers stayed home, while others took more time off work. Some were available to help their children solve problems. Some or so they could pick up their children from school. Some mothers—like Bobbie Taylor and Jean Taylor—volunteered as after-school monitors so they



kids' schools. But women often found  
ed by their paid work, unlike women  
t a space for their participation in the  
hers.<sup>82</sup>

ed to have *free time* to volunteer if you  
good education in the Oakland public  
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the kid wants an education, they can  
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n the mid-1980s when she was starting  
blems every day at schools with stu-  
ce bringing a loaded gun to school. "I  
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os and had more time to be involved,  
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Oakland public schools are shifting the  
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since parents are using their private  
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vate security bubble around their own  
adamental gaps in public funding and  
teers in the first place.<sup>84</sup>

al to efforts to build publicly funded  
lls. Liz Smith had been talking about  
o bring more resources to Laurel Ele-  
capacity to raise funds, but she didn't  
secure grants. A neighbor put her in

touch with the Bret Harte Collaborative. The Healthy Start grant with the support of the district in this program and thus had to navigate the complex process of applying for a grant.

The Bret Harte Collaborative is in part a result of having secured a planning grant and hired a coordinator among schools, parents, and nonprofits to tap into the growing pool of public funding for neighborhood-based social services. Middle-class parents, poor and working-class parents, used their own social capital to expand publicly funded programs in the neighborhood. By 2001, Bret Harte had received five hundred thousand dollars in grants from city and state governments, while Laurel Elementary received one hundred thousand. Roughly three hundred kids spent three hours a week on homework, playing sports, taking art classes, and nature and science programs. They sometimes went on field trips or participate in rope courses. Nonprofits provided the most classes and also provided family support services. These ties reduced working parents' anxieties about their children. They offered kids fun and challenging after-

### *Limitations of the Volunteer State*

Efforts to rebuild public landscapes in the 1990s highlighted substantial limitations of the volunteer model to expand public responsibility for social services. As one parent noted that "the Laurel was good at making requests, but it was hard to be successful in their efforts to attract more funding." The Laurel district had to establish clear policies and liberal models of urban governance for nonprofits, schools, even youth programs to "organize and ensure to achieve [their] goals." As anthropologist Robert Putnam's model "holds out the promise of results (if you work hard and plays by the rules), but fundamental structural constraints that ultimately determine success or failure."

Volunteer efforts were a risky strategy to improve children's environments. Middle-class parents had more resources—time and money, as well as social capital—to

ive, which had begun planning for a  
of a parent who worked for the school  
the knowledge and contacts to launch  
Federal grant.

many ways a true success story. They  
coordinator, who built a partnership  
t providers in order to take advantage  
for after-school programs and school-  
ents and neighbors, working alongside  
d their flexible time and cultural and  
d after-school programs for children in  
e Middle School had received well over  
s from the federal, state, and local gov-  
ceived additional government funding.  
ee hours every day at Bret Harte doing  
or dance classes, and participating in  
ometimes even led weekend trips to ski  
ofits and independent contractors ran  
y counseling. These supervised activi-  
s about the dangers of “free time” and  
school activities.

es for children in Oakland also high-  
olunteer state that hampered efforts to  
l reproduction. Many people told me  
noise” or “raising hell.” Liz argued that  
act public investment in children, the  
priorities and “be vocal about it.” Neo-  
encourage neighborhoods, individual  
anize, lobby and apply political pres-  
ropologist Delmos Jones argued, this  
lts (if a group is patient, waits its turn  
ntally masks the conditions and con-  
ess.”<sup>85</sup>

strategy for ensuring equity in chil-  
arents in Oakland’s hills had more  
l as social and cultural capital—to

invest in their children's schools than in the flatlands. Parent volunteers are typically middle-class professionals with careers who worked part-time. Middle-class parents participate in the schools, to nudge and to intervene to shape their children's education. His wife both had professional jobs that had inflexible schedules. They spent a lot of time volunteering. He usually could drive their kids to after-school activities. Most of his children's friends' parents were immigrants, did not volunteer in the schools. Immigrant parents had less flexible work schedules, less free time, and also felt less entitled to their children's education. Liz Walker said that people in the hills didn't participate in flatland schools. She said she did extensive outreach and parents here in the hills. "In the hills people know it's their responsibility. People don't come from that perspective. They didn't get into [this] school."

Parent fundraising abilities most common in the hills. Efforts could reproduce stark racial and class differences. PTAs in the hills, even the lower hills, raised more money than the schools in the flatlands. The amount also smaller, that money went much farther. Steppingstone Elementary School in the East Oakland flatlands held one school fundraiser that raised \$10,000. Redwood Elementary held one school fundraiser that raised \$106,000 the same year. In contrast, Redwood Heights' PTA held one school fundraiser a year and raised \$106,000 the same year. That funded a librarian, field trips, a lunch program, and classroom grants for teachers. Steppingstone Elementary parents raised \$150,000 the same year. Parent contributions directly follow class differences. Sociologist Allison Pugh describes this as "self-taxation" that "expose a weakness of the system. Neither fully private nor fully public, these schools are a 'middle ground,' similar to gated communities. The limited that the public is in effect private. This concentrates resources in middle-class schools and exacerbates inequalities in children's educational experiences."

most working-class and poor parents and PTA members were disproportionately flexible work schedules, and middle-class parents also felt more entitled to their kids towards the best teachers, children's environments.<sup>86</sup> Bob Yuen and that gave them the luxury of flexible volunteering in their kids' schools and after-school activities. But he knew that parents, who were first-generation Chinese immigrants, were the same way. Working-class and many poor parents had inflexible work schedules, less autonomy on the part of schools, and felt less entitled to intervene in their children's education. People always complained that "parents are not wanted at schools." But she insisted that schools rarely had not "necessarily been welcomed." Parents had a right to be in the school, but a lot of parents were not. Some just think, "Thank God I

clearly highlighted the ways volunteerism exacerbated class inequalities in children's schools. Parents in the hills, who were able to raise substantially more money, were able to raise substantially more money. Since the schools in the hills were further away from the city, they had to raise more money. In 2003, Horace Mann Elementary School in the hills, where 63% of students are poor, raised \$900, the equivalent of \$1.77 per student. The PTA organized six to nine major fundraisers in the same year, \$380 per student, money used for things like lunch supervisor, office equipment, and other things. Moving up even further into the hills, at Hillside Elementary School, a total of \$549 per child.<sup>87</sup> These efforts highlighted Oakland's class-segregated geography. Parents in the hills raised these parent-raised funds as a form of privatization. Neisser's research on parent fundraising efforts occupy a central place in communities, where "the collectivity is so individualized."<sup>88</sup> Volunteer time, likewise, concentrated in the hills, thus reinforcing racial and class inequalities in environments.

Playgrounds developed through volunteer efforts in the same neighborhood. The same school district similarly show how volunteer efforts in public investments in children's play could rely on a vibrant commercial district. In the wealthier neighbors who had committed to the school, the school raised the first playground structure. This private fundraising effort supplemented public funding. Jean Quan, then a school board member, committed herself to raising the money for new play structures at the school. This effort, along with trees planted by volunteers, helped to create a vibrant playground. At the same time, in the Elmhurst neighborhood, playgrounds remained concrete yards with old play structures, four-square and dodge ball courts.

The story of the Bret Harte After-School Program illustrates several problems with using volunteer efforts to create a vibrant playground. Expanded state and federal funding for mental health care and violence prevention grants for mental health care and violence prevention that there are plentiful resources available. But the competitive process of applying for grants is subject to fiscal constraints. New state and federal funding do not meet the needs of all children, or even all schools. They are not entitlements, but block grants or discretionary grants. Each city, school, or nonprofit group has to compete for grants in an entrepreneurial environment for grants for children and children's services. Specific grants for mental health care is difficult for cities, schools, and nonprofits to secure. When funding ended, Bret Harte struggled to maintain the program. He relied on volunteers, nonprofit partners (whom it cost to maintain) and programs that corresponded to kids' interests.

The competitive grant-making process exacerbates inequalities in schools and make inequalities in children's play. The school and cultural capital of Bret Harte's era helped him to build one of the first and most substantial playgrounds. But not all schools could draw on the financial resources or the organizing skills of professional parents. Principals in Oakland's flatlands, which are full of children and with a multitude of crises, spent most



unteer efforts like the one in the Laurel school district, some middle-class parents, and Friends of Laurel raised eight thousand dollars for a new playground. The effort attracted political attention and a school board member running for city council raised part of the money needed to build two new playgrounds, along with murals and to transform the concrete school yard. In the inner-city flatlands, most children's playgrounds are made of metal structures and faded paint marking

the school. The School Collaborative also underscores the need for volunteer labor to "take back the schools." The school district's focus on after-school programs, along with its emphasis on violence prevention, provides a false sense of security and is unable to invest in children and youth. The school district's reliance on grant programs for grants hides several fundamental problems. Grant programs are rarely adequate to meet the needs of all lower-income children. They are discretionary grant programs.<sup>89</sup> So each year schools must apply and compete in an increasingly competitive environment to provide after-school programs. Grant programs also come and go, so it is difficult for nonprofit youth providers to sustain investment in these programs over time.<sup>90</sup> When federal Healthy Start funding ended (and the school district would no longer pay), and high-quality programs were lost to other interests.<sup>91</sup>

The current process may disadvantage the poorest children and make their environments worse. The social capital of engaged middle-class parents helped it secure the funding for essential after-school programs in the city. Schools with flexible work schedules and grant-writing capacity are principals in overcrowded larger schools serving the needs of poor kids whose families struggle to find time of their time "putting out fires," as one

Elmhurst Middle School principal to get grants. Likewise, working-class and poor parents sought contacts that would enable them to get more for themselves. These hidden constraints may have influenced the distribution of state funds. California's 1990s budget cut 30% less state bond money for improvement projects than it had because the state allocated money on a formula instead of on the basis of need.<sup>92</sup> A 2000 study found that flatland schools were underserved by public schools, receiving 29% of funding for 40% of the Oakland population.

The devolved and decentralized structure blurred the boundary between public and private provision. Local governments increasingly provided social services, and nonprofit social service agencies, which had been common in the 1970s. An Oakland directory of youth and family services listed 200 organizations and ninety additional organizations. Community-based nonprofits had launched a variety of programs just in West Oakland between 1980 and 1990. The entrepreneurial nonprofit sector provided a significant portion of social services in Oakland. As historian Michael Perman argued, the devolved and decentralized state, any longer able to provide private in provision of social services, has become a political rhetoric.<sup>96</sup>

Activists with INCITE! Women of Color were more critical, labeling these partnerships as neoliberalism and stressing several ways nonprofits were being co-opted.<sup>97</sup> Nonprofit organizations are by law required to change.<sup>98</sup> Facing pressures to professionalize and bureaucratize, nonprofits adopt structures that value the knowledge and skills of professionals more than those of poor families. The constant quest for grants also encourages narrow definitions of community problems and remedies.<sup>99</sup> These critiques call for partnerships that reshape ideas of the everyday practices of state institutions.

In Oakland, these partnerships helped to create market models. They consolidated a market of "consumers" who shop around and "choose" services.<sup>100</sup> An evaluation of the Oakland

d me. They had less time to apply for  
poor parents rarely have the time, skills,  
to volunteer to write the grants them-  
explain noteworthy inequalities in the  
schools with the lowest test scores got  
living school facilities than they should  
they on a first-come, first-served basis  
2006 study found that the East Oakland  
public after-school programs, with only  
d public school students.<sup>93</sup>

structure of the state services has shifted  
ate in other significant ways. State and  
e social services through block grants  
which have expanded rapidly since the  
programs in 1994 listed 160 organiza-  
tion sites.<sup>94</sup> And one study found that  
unched fifty-four new youth-serving  
between 2000 and 2005.<sup>95</sup> This growing  
ded an increasing proportion of social  
Michael Katz argues, in this increasingly  
clear “distinction between public and  
finally collapsed” in reality, if not in

of Color against Violence have been  
ships the Non-Profit Industrial Com-  
profits may constrain grass-roots activ-  
law “forbidden to advocate for systemic  
ionalize, they often create governance  
nd experience of middle-class profes-  
es or kids. Public-private partnerships  
often force nonprofits to embrace nar-  
ems and “program-specific categories  
r a more careful look at the ways non-  
e state, concepts of citizenship, and the

ped redefine “good government” along  
model of the state and citizens as “con-  
e” the best available public-private ser-  
Fund for Children and Youth (OFCY),

the city's major funding source for kindergarten Robert Bobb's favorite book, *Reinventing the Public* "a skillful buyer," shopping around for providers in order to "squeeze more bang for the buck" and "maximum flexibility to respond to changing circumstances." Partnerships helped local government agencies that oscillated between fiscal crises and the responsibility for the quality of services. OFCY insisted that "trying hard is not enough; you must show results to taxpayers and voters."<sup>104</sup> It rarely provided sufficient funds to cover the needs of nonprofit organizations or individual providers, but was accountable for demonstrating substantial results. It often responded to demands for more funding, but was often disappointed about the amount of grant money that was available. Profits for failing to reach young people.

Nonprofit youth programs were forced to create a standardized definition of what children needed. The Oakland Fund for Children and Youth used a variety of tools to measure increased skills and assets, such as improvements in educational levels and reduced rates of violence. "customer satisfaction" and calculated outcomes were used in order to maximize results from their investments. "Success" embraced a deeply individualized definition. A visual representation of youth risks showed two young people navigating a maze of obstacles, including gangs, guns, violence, and peers (See Figure 1).

The young person with low "protected assets" ends up at a "brick wall" representing a dead end. A person with full assets makes it quickly through the maze into a world of opportunity." With enough assets and a supportive community, "a youth learns to walk through the maze without stepping on the 'mines.'"<sup>105</sup>

Oakland parents, neighborhood activists, and city officials' investments in building up youth assets and resilience. The risk and resiliency model shifts accountability for youth outcomes. It effectively tries to explain how one person

ds, quoted extensively from city man-  
*venting Government: How the Entrepre-*  
*ic Sector*. Government had to become  
the most effective and efficient service  
“get the most bang out of every buck” and to preserve  
“changing circumstances.”<sup>101</sup> These flexible  
to adapt to the reality of budget cycles  
and budget surpluses. They also shifted  
onto private nonprofit organizations.  
“It’s good enough. We need to be able to  
<sup>102</sup> Even though city and state agencies  
cover the general operating expenses of  
youth programs, they held nonprofits  
“substantial results. The Oakland city council  
allocated resources for youth with arguments  
that they already spent. They blamed non-  
profits for the youth that needed services.

They refused to embrace a narrow and depoliti-  
cized approach as they tried to prove their “success.”  
Oakland youth developed an elaborate evaluation  
system of each child and to track improve-  
ments in juvenile crime. They measured  
the “cost per unit hour of services” in  
state grants.<sup>103</sup> But the ways OCFY defined  
its individualized model of youth development.<sup>104</sup>  
The report and resiliencies in one report portrays  
a list of risk factors, including truancy, drugs,  
(figure 8).

The “protective assets” gets lost in the maze and  
increasing antisocial behavior while the young  
navigate quickly through the maze to the “whole  
set of assets provided by family, school, and  
community through the ‘risk factor mine field’ with-

activists, and nonprofits argued for state  
intervention, but in significant ways, this popular  
model of vulnerability to individual kids. This model  
of risk for child growing up in a single-parent

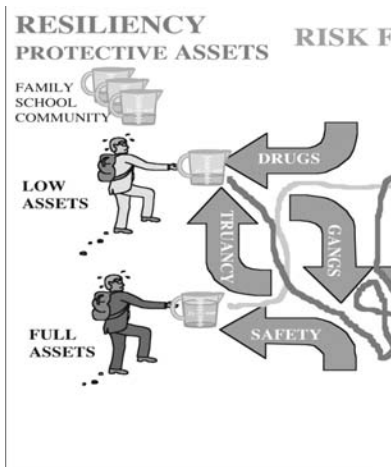


Figure 8. Resiliency in a maze of risks for children  
 (Image produced for Oakland Fund for Children)

household can successfully graduate and turns to a life of crime. Protective parenting or high expectations set by adults can certainly help children escape poverty, but research on how some kids “succeed against low odds” has led advocates and nonprofits to try to change the environment. This approach completely ignores systemic structural factors. If we create enough social services to offset structural exclusions won't matter. Poverty and Oakland's racialized geographies of opportunity. Instead, they are turned into parental failures, peer influences, and “crime in the streets.” This focus on individual assets reaffirms the “unbridled valorization of individualism” characteristic of neoliberalism.<sup>106</sup> Ultimately you are on your own.

After-school providers had to tailor their programs to constantly shifting funding priorities, from academic enrichment to crime or violence prevention, and obesity prevention. When the Department of Education began to implement California Proposition 49, nonprofit providers had to ensure schools meet strictly educational goals.

## FACTORS



contemporary youth.

Children and Youth by Peter Ellis)

high school while another drops out. These factors, like relationships with family members, schools, and communities, poverty, violence, and crime, but focusing on “changing odds” doesn’t encourage children to change the odds themselves. This model of individual barriers kids face and suggests that filling kids’ “cups” with assets, these deep structural factors like poverty, increasing economic inequality, and social exclusion are not even listed as risks. “Individual deficiencies, individual educational attainment in neighborhood.” This focus on youth “negotiation of individual agency” characterizes how youth must negotiate the maze of risks

for their goals and programs to meet their needs as they chased grants for education, housing, or pregnancy prevention. When the state began to supervise expanded funding under the program providers faced new pressures to help youth succeed.<sup>107</sup> The Bret Harte program had to

focus more on “academic intervention” doing so left them struggling to hold on. They felt alienated from school and thought they were in the wrong first place. Why should I come back here? This framing that advocates in California often focused on that marginalized, even undercut, class. Framing after-school programs as “crisis” was not only strategically strategic in the context of broader social and political powerful idea that youth were dangerous. It was also in the way of efforts to shift state spending away from incarceration, priorities that helped to shift spending for children’s education and care in other ways.

More problematic, advocates for after-school programs in California’s overall structural deficit, and the needs of voters who often voted for expanded social services and increases that might pay for them. This framing of after-school programs often came at the expense of core funding for children and families. While spending on school programs increased from \$200 to \$300 per child, welfare spending for families declined. While spending for childcare programs increased modestly, welfare policies often shift funding in this direction. The shift to professionally provided services. The tension between the virtuous and the vicious. The tension between kids and families as clients, not citizens. The tension of exacerbating the crises of low-income families. The development and social service agencies. The structural deficit also created an endless cycle of funding for children as funding for public schools, childcare, and social services for families would increase slightly in a recession and then again when the bust came.

Oakland kids, especially poor kids, needed more programs. They needed stable housing, paid sick leave, health care, schools that challenged and supported them. Neighborhoods that were caring, not frightened. It could be great, but not if policy makers have to cut funding for children health care, paying teachers, or other social services (like expanded low-income tax credits) that would help support kids and kids in poverty.



as,” but the coordinator explained that onto the “higher-risk kids,” who gener- ight, “I’m not having a good time in the re and do more?” Indeed, Garey argues used on education and crime in ways ms that children had a right to care.<sup>108</sup> me prevention programs,” while politi- fears of crime, also reified the already us. These fears of youth repeatedly got ding patterns away from policing and produce the consistent crisis in fund- California in the first place.

ter-school programs failed to confront which was created by politicians and l public services but resisted *any* tax s structural deficit meant that expand- at the expense of education or other s. While California funding for after- to \$750 million between 1996 and 2003, by more than one-third, and funding nestly or stayed flat.<sup>109</sup> Neoliberal wel- way from income or housing supports ese policies rely on moralizing distinc- undeserving poor. They reframe poor ns, and have the bizarre consequence ome families and then funding youth es to pick up the pieces. The structural f feast and famine for California’s chil- dren’s health care, and social services an economic boom, only to be slashed

, needed more than after-school pro- rents with jobs that paid a living wage, d encouraged all children, and neigh- ning places. After-school programs are choose between them and giving chil- creating tax and welfare policies (like t would reduce the number of families

## *Conclusion*

Geographer Cindi Katz has argued that state commitments to children (in terms of housing, health care, and income supports) are the entitlements of citizenship nor the responses that parents and activists respond to these commitments. The state of youth has the potential to reshape public policy. If parents rely on private strategies, like home schooling, strict, keeping kids inside, retreating to private schools, it will be very hard to build a unified national policy for children. Activism in the Laurel district of Oakland is a progressive politics of childhood. Black parents do not work only to ensure their own children's success, but to get them, into college, and into the professional workforce. They volunteer labor to campaign for expanded public supports for reproduction. Given the pervasive racial inequalities in our environments, volunteering in our own neighborhoods is not enough. But if middle-class parents in Oakland can do it, parents, as they did in the Laurel district, can do it. We can reconstruct the public supports for childhood and adolescence.

After-school programs provided a model for Oakland to reinvest in children. But neither the state nor profit providers, and funding streams are not enough. Thinking about the kinds of care and support that children need is an emerging idea that what kids needed more than ever was care and education in the after-school hours. In Oakland, neighborhood activists used their own flexible strategies to ensure that kids used time so that their kids and other kids could compete in a new economy. They brought their own resources to poor kids, which would help some of them to pull their way up the class ladder. The state's responsibility for children into the future is not limited by the previously limited local activists' visions of childhood.

Efforts to expand public responsibility for children are strained in significant ways by the decline of the state and local government. The investments in Oakland's after-school programs remained vulner-

l that in the current global economy, the form of adequate education, housing) have become voluntary, neither the responsibilities of the nation.<sup>110</sup> The way deep changes in the political economy politics at the local and national levels. e buying homes in the right school dis- private schools and recreation centers, movement to reinvest in all of our chil- offered hints of an alternate and more k, white, and Asian parent activists did dren's safe passage through school sys- onal middle class. They also used their anded public responsibility for social cial and class segregation in children's n kids' schools and neighborhoods is nts join with working-class and poor ict, there is at least some hope that we that can sustain a democratized child-

focus for local activist demands that w after-school policy networks, non- also helped to shape their understand- t children need. They consolidated the most was more structure, supervision, rs. Professional parents and neighbor- e work schedules to reshape the ways other people's kids would be prepared ough middle-class structured time to hese kids build the skills and capacities These new networks helped to extend e after-school hours but also simulta- of (and demands on) the state.

ility for children and youth were con- volved and decentralized structure of urel activists fought for in schools and erable, dependent on securing com-

petitive grants and the substantial investment. As long as state funding relies on the efforts of community groups, churches, and nonprofits, the infrastructure will not be built equally. Fundamentally these local efforts are left to succeed or fail on their own. In 2010, across Oakland, I talked to Pat Jackson, who worried that the budget for the Bret Hart Center would be cut. He said that they would just have to rely on volunteer assistance. Already the YMCA, one of the largest organizations of its staff and issued an open call in the district for people to become mentors, tutors, and coaches. The center's volunteers could temporarily mask, but not solve, the structural deficits that destabilize the learning environments in Oakland. Volunteer efforts can help reconstruct public schools for Oakland's children.

This new fiscal crisis and the state's withdrawal of funding threatened to undo much of the work that had been done. Volunteers had put into the elementary schools in the district to increase teacher pay and invest in infrastructure. But with enrollments and budget cuts during the recession, the school district into a \$50 million deficit. The Unified School District sent layoff notices to teachers and counselors over four hundred teachers and counselors. The layoffs were in art and music programs, teacher layoffs, and the loss of after-school programs that threatened the center's work had made in the Laurel district. Just as the center had new dynamic young African American teachers, they had received layoff notices. They had lost their only black male teacher as a role model and mentor. The school administration would have to close the center's classes. With the imminent departure of Robert, by another round of budget cuts, Robert would be out of the public schools, only two years old. He would attend the same small private school as her son. Although Robert and Liz believed in public schools, their son, Liz felt guilty to be leaving her son at the elementary school. She knew that Tanesha, Bob's mother, would be at the public schools even if they could not afford to send him to some private schools. The fragile coalition

vestment of volunteer time by parents. The entrepreneurial efforts of neighbors for America's youth will not develop. Endeavors, like too many children, are in 2003, as another budget crisis washed in World Ground café. She was worried the Collaborative would be cut, and she on volunteers to make up the difference. Her core partners, had to cut a quarter of the *Oakland Tribune* for volunteers to in their after-school programs.<sup>111</sup> Vol- not solve, the fundamental crises of care- ized efforts to reconstruct children's time would not be enough to recon- ldren.

The takeover of Oakland public schools Liz and Robert and other parent vol- school. Oakland public schools had tried a school infrastructure, but declining the recession of 2002-2004 had plunged shortfall. In March 2003, the Oakland ices to seven hundred staff, including selors.<sup>112</sup> The schools again faced cuts roffs, expansion of class sizes, and cuts ned much of progress parent activists as disturbing for Liz and Darryl, two n male teachers at Laurel Elementary looked forward to their son having a d thought their close relationship with e secured him a place in one of their of these teachers and the chaos created bert and Liz decided to pull their son ars after he had begun. The next year, ate school where Sandra Collins sent lieved this was the right decision for ehind their friends at Laurel Elemen- obbie, and Jean could not afford to flee get the partial scholarships available oalition of parents, renters, and hom-

eowners that they had built in order  
schools and build after-school program  
grow frustrated with the NCPC's focus  
really change things for kids in the nei  
meetings, and few middle-class paren  
to use the NCPC as part of a broader e

to bring new resources to the public  
ns would not last. Soon Tanesha would  
s on cosmetic changes and its failure to  
ghborhood. She stopped attending the  
ts followed in Liz and Robert's efforts  
ffort to transform the schools.

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## Protecting Children

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In January 2001, a white man drove down a tree-lined street to his home in the Oakland Hills. He saw a group of young people spray-painting a sign for Skyline High School. He immediately assumed they were vandals and shot them with a gun before driving off.

A few weeks later I sat with Dr. James Smith about the joys and struggles of raising three children in the Oakland Hills, including one son who was a member of the Black Panther Party. Though the incident at Skyline was widely publicized, they often heard the question, "Why did you explain, they often heard the question at schoolings or community meetings. If they had wondered, "imagine what our children would do at school. That was our concern about the

The Smiths lived in a beautiful home in the Oakland Hills below Skyline High School with wood-paneled walls and windows that offered stunning views of the hills. They had read in the newspapers, "Oakland is the most beautiful, increasing in value" when Dr. Smith joined a suburban community. Their realtor drove them down Highway 88 and saw that Oakland was "a beautiful, increasing in value"

The Smiths led very active political lives. Dr. Smith, a tall, scholarly-looking man, worked in a surgery practice in a nearby hospital. He had been during the tumultuous 1960s, "right off to work." His mother was a teacher and had been particularly engaged in civil rights

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## in the Hills

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in a Rolls Royce was driving up the Oakland hills when he saw some young Skyline High School. They were students on a project, but that is not what he saw. Instead of “youth criminality,” he saw a group of young men in baggy pants, holding spray paint, and he was afraid. He stopped his car and threatened

James Smith and his wife, Loraine, talking about their three black boys and one girl in the Oakland hills. One was then a junior at Skyline High School. It was very unusual, for the Smiths it high school. “As minorities in the hills,” Loraine said, “Where do you live?” at PTA meetings. “I had to deal with that as parents, Loraine said, “What are you facing, when our children walk to school with the gentleman with the gun.”

They were perched on the side of the steep hills with patios and decks and an indoor pool with window views of the bay. Because of all the negative stories about the hills, they initially “did not want to live in the hills.” They had a surgery practice in the East Bay. But as they drove through the Oakland hills, they were struck by a “credible, wonderful city.”

James lives fighting to improve Oakland public schools. A young man with small, round glasses, he grew up in a suburb. He had grown up in Detroit and lived down the street from where the riots were. His father was a dentist. They had not seen the struggles, but he began to read radi-



Figure 9. Map of Oakland, California, showing the location of Skyline High School. Source: Diana Sinton, University of California, Berkeley.

cal papers, and that activist consciousness. Dr. Smith, parent activism was basically in the 1960s, in Mississippi, where her mother was a teacher and involved in civil rights struggles, so she had “a lot of exposure to education. She participated in the PTA at Skyline High School, and worked with an African American organization to help black students to pursue higher education.”

The more involved Mrs. Smith became in the 1970s, when she saw the struggles of black students in Oakland. “The classes but were disproportionately successful in Oakland public schools were “dream killer” for many kids. Most kids would “live right down to the edge of the cliff.” The African American Education Task Force was formed by concerned Parents of African American Students.

Dr. Smith worried that Oakland Public Schools were “divided between the haves and the have-nots.” She was concerned where education was so important. K



Oakland Hills: The bucolic ideal  
in California. (Mark Kumler and  
John Redlands)

...ness “just kind of stuck.” For Loraine  
... a full-time job. She grew up in rural  
... teacher and her father a principal active  
... always been involved” in her children’s  
... , volunteered regularly at Skyline High  
... American women’s club to encourage  
... tion in the health professions.

...ame with the public schools, the more  
...nts, who were rarely in AP or gifted  
...suspended or expelled. Too often Oak-  
...s.” Teachers had low expectations, and  
...those expectations.” She helped found  
... Force and became president of Con-  
...tudents at Skyline High School.

...public Schools only made the divisions  
...s worse in an information economy  
...ids coming through overcrowded ele-

mentary schools in the flatlands have ‘teachers, poorer physical plants.’ Yet when we arrived up at Skyline, people compared and wondered, ‘Why they aren’t prepared for a permanent underclass. The walls are

Dr. and Mrs. Smith instilled high expectations. Their eldest son was already away at college, so they don’t get their education, they work against rampant materialism, refusing to let their sons so they would remember not to get focused on money with their sons the importance of a broader perspective, community and a responsibility ‘to try to

During our conversations they repeatedly emphasized to prepare and to protect their sons from the environment that endangered black boys across the city. She discouraged her kids from wearing baggy clothes, ‘more respectful.’ When she took her son to the bank with him, ‘Have your money in your hands, not in your pockets. Don’t wear any long coat.’ By the time they were to go, ‘We have to train our boys . . . to be responsible, not potential criminals. That’s very difficult. We want them to stay home.’

The Smiths had built a pool and a nice backyard, a nice and comfortable place for their kids to play. Their eldest son was a teenager in the mid-1970s, a time even worse than today, ‘the way that it was at that time. . . . We just wanted him home, to be with him. He always tells us, ‘Guys, you need to be home. We wouldn’t.’

But the incident at Skyline High School was a problem and a source of concern for neighbors in the Oakland hills. One neighbor on a street in the hills was standing out ‘right in front of his house, in front of his friends, when some police officers pulled him over. He had a pocket for his wallet, saying, ‘Wait, Wait, Wait.’ ‘You could be shot. Never make any sense out of it. Money you have, how much money you have, how much you are going to be pulled over. You have to be careful.’ ‘Every parent we know says the same thing.’

fewer resources, more uncredentialed when kids from these flatland schools led them to kids educated in the hills. “People are becoming now more and more growing even larger.”

expectations in their children. Their and the others would soon follow. “If I can’t be able to go anywhere.” They fought to buy their kids brand-name clothes and focused on possessions. And they shared broader engagement in Oakland’s black community to bring along others to also succeed.” They repeatedly returned to their efforts to break the stereotype of black youth crime across class lines in Oakland. Mrs. Smith bought baggy pants. “Pull them up. It’s a little tight on my eldest son shopping, she instructed her sons. Put what you’re going to buy in your cart. The time I finished, he said, ‘I don’t want to be that somebody is going to think they’re talking about.’ Most of the time we just tell them to

installed a pool table to create a safe space for them to hang out with friends. When their son was in the 1990s, they thought conditions were bad because they were going after black males at the time. I just wanted him where I could see him. ‘I never let me go to anything.’ That’s true.

School was a painful reminder that some people stigmatized the presence of black youth on the basis of a sign of criminal intent. Dr. Smith’s son was “taken to his own house” one day with a couple of friends. They were asked to see his ID. He reached in his pocket and said, “I don’t have it.” Afterwards, Mrs. Smith told him, “I don’t care how much money your parents have and how you look, you still have to watch yourself.” She explained, “It’s not about anything.”

The Smiths were incensed when the Force meeting and heard a neighborhood “wall” around the school. Mrs. Smith thought they could make the school “more private.” Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council. Different it seemed from neighborhood talking about the grants they had gotten.

The Smiths insisted they were never high school were “normal teenage stuff line,” Loraine Smith explained. “First ‘how are you doing? By my watch you she’d take them by the arm and lead them ple not looking at them and being in computer equipment in a classroom for at Skyline. “These kids who were such and wanted to learn about these computers that you cared about their well-being, these are still children. They aren’t even them away.” Mrs. Smith explained that everyone sees them as trouble, they start to own the kids.”



they attended their first Skyline Task  
propose “to build a wall, a concrete  
thought their “primary issue” was how  
son-like.” When she visited the Laurel  
ncil, she was surprised to see how dif-  
activism around Skyline. “They were  
en for the school.”

er afraid of kids. The problems at the  
f.” “I would walk up to any kid at Sky-  
I always look them in the eye and say,  
u were supposed to be in class.” Then  
em to class. “They are so used to peo-  
visible.” Dr. Smith was once installing  
ull of kids with disciplinary problems  
h troublemakers were also respectful  
uters. If you gave them the impression  
they were fine. Keep remembering that  
ven eighteen yet. You can’t just throw  
at because many kids feel as though  
art to withdraw from adults. “We have

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## Youth in a “Private E in the Oakland Hills

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In January 2001, five high school students presented at a Skyline Task Force meeting to present the Skyline High School. Youth Together, an organizing group, had been organizing high school students to address violence, especially interracial violence in the neighborhood. A long-time youth organizer, explained the number of students in AP classes, the need for more services and counseling. He carefully argued for the neighborhood as well as the school. In the end, the students, the Youth Center would raise money, provide a tutor, and build a “sense of responsibility.” After the students finished their brief presentation, the Youth Center members asked questions. “What hours would it operate?” “How late?” “Where would it be located?”

Neighbors worried that the Youth Center would be located on the Skyline campus, keep them in the area, and cause more problems. As one neighbor insisted, “This neighborhood is here and make a mess. At least now the Youth Center is at meetings, neighbors regularly complain about drug stops, fighting in the streets, and “invading” the neighborhood down private streets or coming onto private property. High School students for any theft or vandalism. The students invited Task Force members to discuss the plan for the Youth Center, but one neighbor insisted it needs to be put in a location to have a good view away from neighbors.”

Nate Miley, then a city council member, responded by convening the Skyline Task Force in

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state”

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school students came to the monthly Skyline. Their idea for creating a Youth Center at Skyline was to provide a safe space for multiracial youth leadership and organization. They wanted to give high school students a place to prevent youth violence in the public schools. Luis, a junior and Skyline member, said that the Youth Center would increase student self-esteem, offer tutoring, and provide health services. He argued that the center would benefit the community. By providing supervised activities for students, the center would improve student self-esteem, improve behavior, and increase safety to the community.” When the students and neighbors peppered them with questions, one neighbor asked, “How many days would it be open?” and another asked, “How long?”

The Youth Center would draw more youth to the area longer, and increase security problems. One neighbor said, “They may just give them more time to be up there until they leave at four o’ clock.” At Task Force Skyline’s meeting, neighbors complained about students littering at the bus stop and “graffiti tagging” the neighborhood by walking on private property. They blamed Skyline for the vandalism in the neighborhood. Students were invited to participate in a meeting to develop a plan. A neighbor said, “If you want my input now, I want to see minimal impact, as far as possible.”

By 1997, Skyline was a city council member and later a county supervisor, and he was elected in 1997 to bring city and county agen-

cies together to solve the wide range of issues as coming from Skyline High School. The Task Force worked to improve security around the school and parents from using the neighborhood bus service and food at the school. But some were skeptical of neighbors' interest in meeting. One member thought neighbors were only interested in getting off their private roads, remarking,

The Task Force met monthly in the library with staff facilitating, and often included Oakland police officers, guards, school representatives, Alameda County Sheriff's Office (responsible for bus security). Task Force meetings consisted of eight to ten adults, though some meetings had members to twenty or thirty. I was first invited to a meeting whose son was a junior and who described the school as "a movie." The Task Force meetings were held between people who introduced themselves as "parents" or "neighbors." Those who identified themselves as "parents" were older and white, while "neighbors" included the Smiths. "Parents" and "neighbors" were scattered around the library, though Thea told me that at the next meeting she expected to see "I think it will really shake them up. It will be interesting to have one of the homeowners just plop down."

Youth Together and the Task Force discussed the center over the next five months about where it would be, the hours it would have, and what programs it would offer. A series of emails and arranged meetings with board members, and Supervisor Nate Flores led to the center that one neighbor had called the major issue. The center worried neighbors that the center would be a place where students and members of society as a whole could go out, have dances, play sports and billiards. The center's kids reinforced some neighbors' fears about "bad kids." One white neighbor said that she had seen the Center at her homeowners' association meeting and thought "I have a mental ward up there."

of problems that neighbors identified. Over the next three years, the Task Force met with the school, to discourage students from using neighborhood's private streets, and to improve safety. Many students and parents remained skeptical about the school's understanding of student needs. One Youth Together member was interested in keeping youth on campus but was told, "They don't like us."

The meetings were held at the school library, with Nate Miley's presence, Oakland school police officers, security guards, Alameda County Transit officials, or sheriffs. The meetings were usually small gatherings. Sometimes a conflict would swell the numbers. One time, invited to the meetings by a white couple, a woman described the meetings as "better than a therapy session." The meetings were animated, often rippling with tension between those who identified themselves as "neighbors" and those who identified themselves as "parent advocates" as well as "neighbors." The "neighbors" as "neighbors" were all middle-aged and included white, Asian, and black parents. The "parent advocates" sat at different small tables. Teresa Thomas, one of the "neighbors," said she might "sit on the parents' side. . . . I don't think I will make some uncomfortable if they sit on my side. I will sit myself down at their table."

The meetings continued to meet, to plan, and to fight for the Youth Center would be built, what programs it would offer. People sent a flurry of letters to the superintendent of schools, school board members, and Nate Miley. Youth Together staff reported to the school board for foundation funding the Youth Center. There was a risk. Supervisor Nate Miley reassured the community that the Youth Center would focus on making kids into "better citizens" rather than "problem kids." He proposed to providing a place to hang out for kids rather than "problem kids." But his emphasis on reforming the Youth Center rather than that it would be a place for "problem kids" was a concern. When she first heard about the Youth Center, a woman said, "It sounded like they were going to

At a May 2001 Task Force meeting, to a boil. After ongoing complaints about the situation, Dr. Smith responded in frustration:

We've been dealing with this for three years. They're talking about ways to hide the kids. This isn't the juvenile authority. These are *our* kids. Youth Together has to educate you people. The consultants said we had to put it.

A few moments later, Joan Nelson repeated Dr. Smith's characterization: "It was wrong for Skyline students to be seen as violent. It was wrong for them to have statements like that made. That behavior generates certain perceptions in a city where the KKK burned the most people. That's what she was talking about."

The Skyline Task Force meetings were contentious. Parents who attended Task Force meetings described Skyline students as "violent." "Neighbors" complained that they could not afford to be labeled racists. These conflicts raised questions about the meaning of race, class, and generational difference. On a daily basis, neighbors, parents, and youth negotiated the complexities of race and class in Oakland's schools and neighborhoods. These conflicts were not reducible to race. But they offered a glimpse into the unequal childhoods and constructed divisions that shaped the neighborhood.

The history of Skyline High School is a story of this neighborhood and made conflicts around race and class charged. Today Skyline High School is a public school located in one of the city's wealthiest neighborhoods. In the 1960s and '70s, Skyline was a white school in the heart of the "de facto" segregation that characterized Oakland's cities.<sup>1</sup> The contested history of Skyline High School and public schools produced deep divides between neighbors.

Conflicts around Skyline High School were a retreat from public institutions often seen as a result of conservative politics of childhood. Neighbors

some of the percolating tensions came about the proposed Youth Center location,

the years. Some things have to be said. them. They are our kids, not outside. This isn't Santa Rita [the county jail]. as bent over backwards to accommodate this was the most cost-effective place

a, a white "neighbor," objected to Dr. g and provocative to say that we think. I state that for the record. It is upsetting. Mrs. Smith responded, "Certain s," and added that she was "from the crosses on people's lawns" so she knew

were often tense and explicitly racially force meetings complained that "neighborhoods, not as children, while white didn't talk about their concerns without enacted fundamental debates about nation in post-civil rights America. On youth confronted the glaring inequalities, divides that were racialized yet competing explanations for Oakland's divergent politics of youth.

l shaped the politics of childhood in in the Task Force particularly racially is a predominantly black and Asian thiest neighborhoods, but in the 1960s an all-white neighborhood, a symbol characterized many northern and western's integration and white flight from the between this school and its neighbors. school show how white, middle-class stands in the way of creating a progress-around Skyline High School lived on

private streets, rarely sent their children to be able to retreat from the city and “into the neighborhood. Retreating to their preferred boundaries of political community in the Laurel district. They rarely defined the neighborhood they framed Skyline students as outsiders from the flatlands who threatened to bring their problems into the hills. These defensive definitions were applied to Skyline students. Drawing on stereotypes of “neighbors” demanded more policing and they embraced the use of zero tolerance policies at the school and neighborhood.

Politics in this neighborhood offers a lesson. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva has called *Racism without Racism* and neighbors embraced a strict color-blind ideology. They avoided any talk about race, speaking instead of merit and culture. They saw their own success and the middle class as proof that there were no racial problems in the rights era and as disqualifying claims against the existing inequalities between the hills and the flatlands. “It’s just the way it is.” And they insisted that cultural differences between the hills and the flatlands were the cause. This left many white neighbors blind to the ways that race had entered into Oakland’s class structure, schools, and social institutions like schools served to reproduce inequality.

White neighbors’ color-blind commitment to meritocracy in the history of Oakland’s public schools. They blamed black activists and politicians for the problems of flatland youth and their faulty families for the problems of the city’s public schools. Similar narratives were used to justify public policy in California. They had a long history of public abandonment of schools in California. The inequalities seem like the natural product of individual choices. Politics in this neighborhood allowed parents and children to shrink public responsibility.

Parent advocates, like the Smiths, were part of a neighborhood that built on a long tradition of blaming the color-blind ideology of white neighbors for the problems that remained a racial image that posed a threat to the future.



en to public schools, and expected to  
ts problems” to their peaceful private  
vate estates, neighbors drew very dif-  
nity than we saw in Elmhurst or the  
kids at Skyline as “their kids.” Instead,  
ers in the hills, as kids from Oakland’s  
e problems of the flatlands with them  
ons of community posed real dangers  
eotypes of flatland youth as criminal,  
and surveillance of young people and  
olicies to exclude the “bad kids” from

s a clear case of what sociologist Edu-  
*without Racists*.<sup>2</sup> Most of the hills’ white  
ind liberalism. They actively resisted  
in terms of generation, class, or cul-  
l the rise of many black families into  
as equal opportunity in the post-civil  
that race still mattered. They framed  
hills and flatlands as natural, as “just the  
al differences explained ongoing racial  
atlands.<sup>3</sup> But this color-blind ideology  
ways racial inequalities had been built  
and neighborhoods and the ways state  
roduce those inequalities.

mitments led some of them to rewrite  
s and the history of the city itself. They  
or making race matter and argued that  
s were responsible for the poor state of  
atives have had wide-reaching effects  
ve helped produce and justify a broad  
ifornia and have made existing racial  
oducts of individual effort and family  
l shows how the stories we tell about  
ity for social reproduction.

created an alternate politics of child-  
black parent activism. They challenged  
highbors because the image of “bad kids”  
threat to their children both in school

and on the streets of the hills. Parents demanded that we claim all of Oakland and fought against the exclusion of black boys. This was a necessary precursor for the educational opportunities a reality.

### *A Bastion of Bigotry*

Perched on the top of Skyline Boulevard to the east, Skyline High School looks more like a campus than like most Oakland high schools. It is surrounded by concrete yards and walkways over forty acres of land with long, one-way walkways and small courtyards. Wooded areas lead down to football fields and worn tennis courts.

A chain-link fence separates the school from the neighborhood, but many neighbors testified that it was not enough or strong enough to protect the school from riotous white rioters. The riotous behavior allowed students and outside visitors to witness the riotous behavior. Neighbors were shocked by boisterous behavior, which the school and police officials said were not so different from those of the riotous behavior. The history of Skyline High School made the neighborhood very different from elsewhere in Oakland.

Skyline High School was built as a white school in 1961 to relieve overcrowding as black students moved to the hills in the 1950s and 1960s, and white hills residents successfully developed the hills instead of the Central City. The shift from precedent, Skyline's attendance boundaries included *only* hills communities, and its attendance boundaries cut across the city to include the hills. The boundaries stretched one mile wide from Skyline Boulevard and effectively created a white, wealthy school. As mobile black homeowners moved east to the hills, the hills became Elmhurst (See Figure 10).

In the 1960s, Oakland public schools experienced white resistance to integration and of Central City. Married couples with children formed the hills. Many were fleeing the flatlands. Historian Robert

nt advocates at Skyline High School  
d's public school kids as "our kids" and  
oys from the protections of childhood.  
ir fight to make equal access to educa-

levard, overlooking a canyon towards  
ore like a typical suburban California  
schools—typically three-story blocks  
worn grass fields. The school sprawls  
-story buildings connected by outdoor  
led paths covered in pine needles lead  
s courts.

sprawling school complex from the  
thought that this fence was not high  
them from the high school. Lax secu-  
ors to come on and off campus at will.  
us and sometimes disruptive student  
could not seem to control. Their com-  
e in other neighborhoods. But the his-  
politics of childhood in this neighbor-  
Oakland.

white-flight school. It was developed  
by boomers moved into their teenage  
fully lobbied to locate it in the rapidly  
l East Oakland flatlands.<sup>4</sup> In a radical  
ance boundaries were drawn so that  
unlike all existing high schools, whose  
clude the flatlands and hills. Skyline's  
or ten miles along the top of the hills  
y school in Oakland just as upwardly  
st and integrated neighborhoods like

ols found themselves at the center of  
Oakland's black civil rights movement.<sup>5</sup>  
d the vast majority of white residents  
Self suggests that their "experience of



Figure 10. Building a school district, 1961. (Source: Sinton, University of Redwood)

desegregation was mediated by children's clubs, schools and recreation centers." One East Bay interviewer of California interviewer, "I wouldn't take my kids to H.S. There are too many colored."<sup>6</sup> Interiors served as a retreat for white families fleeing Oakland.

Skyline High School became an important site to desegregate Oakland public schools. In 1961, Donald McCullum called Skyline the "most important" against this "private prep school paid for by taxpayers." Skyline finally admitted two hundred students through open enrollment, but the state resisted and allowing "parents more free choice." Some charged that this limited open enrollment perpetuated systems of segregation as white parents fled their students to Skyline and quickly fled schools. The state's efforts to change the boundaries of Skyline were actively resisted by some Skyline parents. The state's public pressure by state education officials was limited.



School for the hills: Skyline High School  
(Mark Kumler and Diana  
Flatlands)

en and the social spaces of childhood:  
ast Oakland resident told a University  
hink of sending my kids to Castlemont  
o the mid-1970s, Skyline High School  
eeing racial change in the flatlands.

important symbol for the movement to  
in the early 1960s. The NAACP and  
“bastion of bigotry” and led the charge  
for by public funds.”<sup>7</sup> In May of 1964,  
students from other areas of the city  
ted impetus was overcrowded schools  
ice,” not achieving racial integration.<sup>8</sup>  
enrollment actually exacerbated prob-  
in the flatlands transferred their stu-  
hools like Castlemont High.<sup>9</sup> Further  
Skyline to promote integration were  
nts.<sup>10</sup> In January 1965, under significant  
cials, the NAACP, and Oakland Fed-

eration of Teachers, the school board implemented open enrollment for Skyline High School, a predominantly African American middle school. However, the school board did not act to close double schools and the same year cut subsidies.

Tensions remained high between Skyline and flatland schools in the late sixties and early seventies, with fights at sports games. Several current Skyline students remembered their children getting beat up. Some teams went to play at other schools in the area. Between Skyline and Castlemont students, there was a student from the flatlands saying that he was not going to be frank about this. I was bitter. Skyline was not more like Orinda [a wealthy suburb]. There were fights with Castlemont students at the games. One student himself from "that beautiful school site" said that the faces of Castlemont students "expressed anger that transcended the circumstances of loss." The school board recommended that Skyline drop out of the Open Enrollment with private schools until "we solve the problems of this city and country."<sup>12</sup>

Skyline became more integrated as part of the school system, as more students took advantage of it. A growing black middle class moved in. Skyline was 20% minority, but only three years later it was 50% minority. This process of integration was not without fights or "riots" in 1976, when black students had organized a walk-out to protest a school celebration Day.<sup>13</sup>

The story of Skyline High School's integration is part of the long history of black parent activism for educational equality for black children. In the 1950s, parents on integrating public schools, as many in the surrounding neighborhoods, joined PTAs, and advocated for education in small-scale battles in individual schools. Educational activists no longer focused on school flight had made irrelevant in most Oakland schools. They criticized the underlying logic of desegregation and reduced assumptions of black inferiority.

plemented a plan to allow unlimited pool specifically for students from three middle schools in West and East Oakland. Actively recruit students from these middle schools for Skyline transportation.<sup>11</sup> Skyline students and students from flatland in the early seventies, often erupting in racial tension. Many white participants of the Task Force were shaken up when Skyline High School opened in Oakland. One article about a fight between students at a basketball game in 1969 quoted a white student after seeing the facility at Skyline, "I'll be getting better books, and it really looks like a school." Robert Pritchard, a teacher who sat on the Task Force, said that he began to feel excluded from the school by sitting up there on a hill." He saw in the expressions of intense hatred and envy that were evident during only a football game." He recommended that the Oakland public school league and play down the problem of racial and class hatred in

the early seventies white parents began to flee the public schools in search of the advantage of open enrollment, and as a result many moved to the East Oakland hills. In 1970 Skyline High School's enrollment had increased to 35% minority students. This was not without tension. There were racial incidents and some students tried to stop white students who were attending an optional assembly for Black Appreciation.

Integration highlights a small piece of the larger story of the struggle to expand educational access and opportunity. In the late '50s and early '60s, black parents focused on desegregation. Many bought homes in formerly white neighborhoods and advocated for their children's equal educational opportunities. By the mid-sixties, black parents shifted their focus on desegregation, which rapid white flight had created in Oakland neighborhoods. Many began to focus on desegregation efforts, which often represented a challenge to white supremacy.<sup>14</sup> Instead, activ-

ists focused on quality education, compared to Oakland schools. Skyline remained an area of focus for equity as well, as black community activists argued “all the money for quality education is

Political mobilizations in the 1960s and 1970s divided the flatlands a potent and lasting metropolitan divide. The hills remained the bastion of a political regime, which retained power through the 1980s as activists targeted the hills as symbols of inequality as they demanded increased investment in the hills. A political regime that came to power in the 1980s defined the flatlands as the center of a new metropolitan area of the city.<sup>16</sup> Decades later this history of political mobilization by community activists in the hills and flatlands continues to shape interests.

In 2000, the hills remained a central area of focus of the city, despite the emergence of a growing African and Asian population. One city staff member expressed a perception of the hills and its new reality: “It used to be white to be rich these days.” He described Skyline High School as one of “the most expensive schools in Oakland.” But he added, “It’s been a common Oakland stereotype that people up in the hills. That’s the perception that the hills is they are racists or they are very

The neighborhood around Skyline High School is whiter and richer than Oakland but with a diverse population. Tracts around Skyline High School vary from 45% black, and 5 and 15% Asian, with white populations on the private roads directly off Skyline High School. The larger white populations, while areas to the west and east had significantly higher African American populations. Racial gaps in wealth influenced these patterns within the hills. Since white, upper-income families are more likely to be able to afford the large

This hills-flatlands divide continues to shape the turn of the twenty-first century. In the hills, Skyline High School and cuts through the hills in Central East Oakland, incumbent



community control, and equity among  
an important symbol in this campaign  
y activists continued to complain that  
being spent in the hills.”<sup>15</sup>

s and ‘70s helped make the hills and  
phor for Oakland’s racial and class  
a of Oakland’s white Republican politi-  
ough the late seventies. Black political  
s of Oakland’s white power structure  
ents in Oakland’s flatlands. The black  
the seventies and eighties helped rede-  
y political community, as the heartland  
continued to shape the ways commu-  
s framed their political identities and

al metaphor for the white upper class  
a significant upper-middle-class black  
erson explained the divide between the  
lity. “They are rich and you don’t have  
described the Campus Drive area below  
st ethnically diverse in the entire city.”  
akland theme that there are white rich  
ption. . . . The other perception of the  
culturally insensitive.”

e High School remained significantly  
was far from a white enclave. Census  
ied between 50 and 70% white, 12 and  
very small Latino populations. Most of  
Boulevard in the Hillcrest Estates had  
farther off Skyline Boulevard and far-  
can American populations.<sup>17</sup> Persistent  
subtle racial patterns in housing, even  
income families have on average three  
the United States, white families were  
ger properties in Hillcrest estates.<sup>18</sup>

d to structure Oakland politics at the  
ne 1998 election, in District 6, which  
s straight across the hills and flatlands  
city council member Nate Miley won

every precinct below the 580 freeway. A political staff person told me that one day he said, “We just thought Nate was another one of those people in power for thirty years, African-American, who cared about us up here. We had Elihu Harris, who cared about us, and they ignored us up in the hills.” The city government was racist, and then realized it wasn’t. The hills often complained that their issues were ignored on the more visible problems of the flatlands. One of the flatland activists was that the city would not respond more quickly if they lived in the hills. The city addressed concerns of hills residents, in venues like Skyline, to overcome his earlier lackluster performance as county supervisor in 2000.

By the end of the twentieth century, Skyline was a black, Asian, and Latino school in a white neighborhood. White flight from the public schools of white families in Oakland sent their children to private schools. 11% of black families and 9% of Asian families sent their children to private schools. The student population in 2000 was 47% African American, 1% Pacific Islander, and only 12% white. Skyline School was no panacea for black children. The school was racially divided by race, and black students were more likely than white and Asian students. In 1994, only 10% of AP and honors classes compared to 8% of black students. There were still racial tensions among students. Fights between Asian and black students were common. Together to expand antiviolence efforts.

The history of this school and neighborhood was particularly racialized. White neighbors complained about the school and the city. School officials interpreted their fears as part of the opposition to Skyline’s integration. School officials were afraid of white “neighbors” and denied the school’s impact on the surrounding community. Skyline’s success was a standard-issue bureaucratic inertia, common in public schools. Officials, especially black school officials, were afraid that white neighbors were racially motivated. Skyline’s defenses of the innocence of Skyline’s success.

and lost every precinct above it.<sup>19</sup> A white woman in the hills explained, one of those Lionel Wilson, had been in the hills before the flatlanders and before that we had Lionel Wilson. The staff person first thought this comment might have been true. Residents in the hills were ignored as politicians focused on the flatlands, and a frequent refrain of flatlanders was that they would have addressed their problems much better. Nate Miley's careful attention to the hills, like the Skyline Task Force, helped him win election as mayor.

By 2000, Skyline High School was a majority white, though no longer entirely white, public school. As public schools accelerated so that 44% of parents sent their kids to private schools compared to 20% for white families.<sup>20</sup> Skyline High School's student body was 45% African American, 25% Asian, 15% Latino, and 15% white.<sup>21</sup> But gaining access to Skyline High School was difficult for black children. Skyline remained deeply interested in academic achievement lagged far behind that of other schools. Only 15% of blacks were tracked into advanced classes compared to 55% of whites and Asians.<sup>22</sup> And there were many parents, but not always along black-white lines. In 1999, a group of students helped propel Youth Voice into a major force at the school.

The neighborhood made the politics of youth voice especially charged. Whenever white neighbors complained about their students, black parents and school officials often resisted simple requests to address their claims that students posed any danger. Sometimes the school's resistance was common throughout the city, but school officials in the hills also harbored deep suspicions that white parents often exaggerated and responded with passionate demands for more resources for their students. White neighbors often inter-

preted this bureaucratic resistance through that Oakland's black urban regime was the hills community. This divide between the Skyline Task Force was exacerbated by the Skyline Task Force drew the boundaries

### *Defending Hillcrest Estate's Bucolic*

Early every weekday morning, a stream of buses flows from all over Oakland toward Skyline High School, bringing students to class at Skyline High on 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue past the Laurel district. The trees almost imperceptibly sprout second floors. The names of Oakland's main boulevards change. Thirty-fifth Avenue becomes Redwood Avenue, another marker of the fluid yet real boundary between the flatlands and the hills. Across Highway 13, up a long hillside, sidewalks no longer line the major roads. The major developments of large, single-family homes are on private roads or circular courts, some of which lead into the hillside. As buses turn onto Skyline, they enter an almost rural landscape where tall poplars line the road. The road is lit at night only by small lights. The hills of the entire Bay Area spread like a blanket.

Theresa Thomas lived quite close to Skyline High. With extensive gardens that extended over the hillside, she explained why she loved her home despite the problems she had described. She described the neighborhood as "the last vestige of privacy, with homes painted so that they look like horse stables, deer, foxes, squirrels, and birds. I love the area because of the trees. I'm not here because of the trees, we have a lot of green space in the community." Gesturing down to the flatlands, she said, "I have plants cleaning the air for you folks."

The housing development immediately surrounding Skyline High is quite distinctive. Opened to development in the 1960s, a series of private roads along a ridge line were built. An active homeowners' association pr

ough a racial lens as well, as evidence  
once again ignoring the needs of their  
the school and “neighbors” in the Sky-  
e narrow ways white neighbors in the  
es of their political community.

### *ic Ideal*

lameda County (AC) Transit buses  
rd the Central East Oakland hills to  
gh School. As buses drive up the hill  
t, modest one-story bungalow homes  
oors and yards grow to fill larger lots.  
yards change as one goes up the hill.  
d Road, and these name changes cre-  
l boundaries between the hills and the  
g, steep hill, rows of houses, yards, and  
ad but instead newer, suburban-style  
omes or condominiums cluster along  
times hidden behind gates or nestled  
Skyline Boulevard, they drive through  
ine trees grow in a wide center divide.  
ghts built into the pavement. The lights  
nket below the hills.

o the high school, in a rambling house  
ver an acre lot. As we sat at her kitchen  
neighborhood and didn't want to sell  
ad with students on her property. She  
ast stronghold of the estates,” a realm  
they faded into the trees, surrounded  
s, hawks, and hummingbirds. “People  
not particularly a tree hugger, but . . .  
good air. That benefits the whole com-  
ands, she added in playful tone, “We  
ks.”

ately around Skyline High School is  
ment in 1948, Hillcrest Estates includes  
e of the Central East Oakland hills.<sup>23</sup>  
rotected this distinctive identity in the

### *e Oakland Hills*

1990s by creating a new building code in the neighborhood being sold on less than a dozen lots, few streetlights, and no sidewalks. The private “estate” atmosphere that Theresa defined as “affluent country living.” Most of the time, except when walking their dogs along the ridge or in the many nearby parks. Many students from walking or parking in the neighborhood.

Oakland hills’ private rural estate atmosphere was a result of public investments throughout the twentieth century. Hillcrest Estates lie just adjacent to the city’s flatlands that run along the entire ridge of the hills. Hiking and horseback trails, lakes, and golf courses were developed and maintained by the East Bay Regional Park district developed by the Works Progress Administration. In the years ballot initiatives have helped the East Bay Regional Park district develop additional parks. Most of this investment went into more parks in the hills, both because the hills had underdeveloped white Republican political elite priorities. Many homeowners who were fleeing the rapid urbanization of the city. The city built two new golf courses in the hills, even as kids in Oakland’s flatlands still had to walk to school in.<sup>24</sup> Near Skyline High School, residents can go to explore thirty-eight miles of trails, fishing, and a swimming pool.<sup>25</sup>

Theresa loved her house and the neighborhood, but she frequently complained about the bus stop near her house threatened by the stories of catching kids going into her property, fires on her property, and smoking pot. The views she teased me for being naïve and from students. She told me about a young man with a gun when she asked him to leave. He was dealing drugs. He pulled back a gun and said, “You are telling me you are going to wreck. I could have been dead right there.” she said, “Girl, get a grip. I would have

designation that prohibited any house  
s than one acre. With this new regula-  
ks, neighbors fought to keep the pri-  
described and that another neighbor  
ost neighbors drive on and off the hill  
the dirt path along Skyline Boulevard  
reets are private and prohibit nonresi-  
neighborhood.

atmosphere was created by a series of  
entieth century. Skyline Boulevard and  
housands of acres of wilderness park-  
f the Oakland hills, with miles of hik-  
olf courses, most of which are owned  
onal Park district. The first parks were  
dministration in the 1930s, and over  
l the city of Oakland and the East Bay  
nal wilderness areas and parks. Much  
k space in the hills instead of the flat-  
eveloped space and because Oakland's  
ized the needs of Oakland's white hills  
dly integrating East Oakland flatlands.  
n the hills in the sixties and seventies,  
ruggled to find enough parks to play  
nts can walk in a small redwood forest,  
in a lake, and swim in a public heated

woody atmosphere of the neighbor-  
d about how Skyline students at the  
er home's bucolic ideal. She told me  
r garage, trying to steal things, setting  
t in her yard. Frequently in our inter-  
d not recognizing the dangers coming  
ung man who had once threatened her  
eave her driveway, where she thought  
his jacket and showed her that he had  
ou want me to move?" She asked him  
nd walked off to the house, a nervous  
here." I asked if she filed charges, but  
to identify him and his little gang. We

are unprotected most of the time from  
tried to hire a security agency, but ins  
the students. She thought the police wo

Theresa Thomas recently built an ei  
property so that she wouldn't feel scar  
had already damaged the fence several  
a fence with "steel bars close together  
with barbed wire." In community me  
vandalism, and crime multiplied and in  
extended these fears to many hills ho  
students.<sup>26</sup> Neighbors described litteri  
a post-9-11 moment, as "terrorism," b  
fears of student fights and much rarer t

Hillcrest Estates and Theresa Thoma  
example of a much broader middle-cla  
spaces in many cities. As documented b  
Brazil and Seta Low in the United Sta  
economic inequalities have led many upp  
symbolic walls and real gates around i  
Hillcrest Estates homeowners expecte  
quiet of their wealthy neighborhood,  
orderly flatlands, and they defended  
whether from real estate developers o  
through their private streets.

Skyline Task Force meetings often  
enacted a clear divide between "neigh  
the narrow political boundaries many  
estate in the hills. At one Skyline meeti  
the Youth Center, Shirley Casey, a Skyl  
self as a "parent" and a "neighbor." Joa  
live?" in a challenging tone, with a ve  
ley responded, "In the area," Joan aske  
responded, using the city's community  
in Beat 25 Y." This interaction was forma  
wearing forced smiles and speaking in t  
tent questioning suggested that Joan di  
and reinforced a clear distinction betwe

Theresa, Joan, and Bob Peterson  
described themselves as "neighbors."



any kind of retribution.” Theresa had insisted that they had quit out of fear of being “scared shitless.”

Eight-foot-tall cyclone fence around her yard, erected on her own property, but students had trespassed several times. She wished she could have built a higher fence, fifteen to twenty feet high, covered with barbed wire. Meetings talk about disrespectful youth, and the intensified fears of Skyline students and homeowners who rarely interacted with them, and loitering as crimes or even, in some cases, blurring these mundane concerns with more threatening encounters.

Shirley’s cyclone fence represent an extreme form of mass retreat from public institutions and spaces, as noted by anthropologists Theresa Caldeira in her work on gated communities, fears of crime and deepening economic inequality among middle-class homeowners to build increasingly privatized communities.<sup>27</sup> Shirley wanted to be able to retreat to the peace and quiet of her yard, far above the crime-ridden and distressed urban landscape. This bucolic ideal against any threat, whether it came from high school students roaming

the neighborhood began with introductions that ritually distinguished “neighbors” and “parents” and highlighted the differences. “Neighbors” drew around their private yards during the months of debate about the Skyline Task Force regular, introduced her to Shirley. Nelson asked Shirley, “Where do you live?” in a tone of aimless curiosity. When Shirley answered, “Where in the area?” Shirley explained the policing beat boundaries, “In the area, we’re all really cordial and polite, with both women being very nice, honeyed voices, but Joan’s persistence didn’t consider Shirley a “real” neighbor because she was between neighbors and parents.

Shirley had all regularly attended meetings and had been there. They served as conduits of informa-

tion (and sometimes mobilization) to be organized through the Hillcrest Estates. Their participation in the Hillcrest Estates aged some Task Force members to define its boundaries and “estates” identity—rather than other hills residents, like Shirley and her neighbors’ developments. At one meeting Joan Smith drew around her community, saying, “This is the school community.”

Like the Smiths, Shirley had two children and spent a lot of time at the school, and spoke particularly to black students. Shirley had been married to a white liberal. Shirley grew up in the hills with slight inflections of Oakland’s white culture. Her childhood sweetheart, an African American man, that sometimes people couldn’t place her. “You?” She would answer, “Today Hispanic, tomorrow Asian day.” Shirley’s playful comments reflected the complexity of education in Oakland, where families and communities and thwarted simple equations of political action. Women fought for black children as the “motherhood” ideals but because they “mothered” the human costs of racial stereotyping.

“Neighbors” would never accept appointments of the Skyline Task Force. Even Shirley was excluded from representing the “neighborhood” parent, who sometimes attended the Task Force. Shirley said, “It always seems to me that you’re a neighbor, but also a parent. You’re a neighbor, you’re definitely one of them. If you didn’t seem that there were very many schools.”

This binary distinction between “neighborhood” and “parent” presumed that hills residents did not see themselves as parents. The school’s changing racial demographics and the flight from public schools accelerated. By 2000, 25% of all Oakland’s school-age children were black, 10% higher than the state average.<sup>28</sup> Even

a broader network of hills residents  
s homeowners' association and NCPC.  
ates homeowners' association encour-  
ine their "neighborhood" primarily by  
narrow boundaries that excluded many  
the Smiths, who lived in other nearby  
made clear the narrow boundaries she  
by 'community' I mean neighbors, not

children at Skyline, spent an enormous  
ke as a forceful advocate for students,  
ad curly blond hair and clearly con-  
te neighbor guessed she was "a guilty  
Oakland flatlands, sometimes spoke  
working-class streets, and had married  
n American man. Shirley explained  
her race and so asked her, "What are  
panic. Ask me tomorrow, it will be my  
point to the fluidity of racial identifi-  
d individuals often crossed racial lines  
tics and identity. Some white or Asian  
their own, not because of abstract "lib-  
d" black children and had learned inti-  
otypes and hierarchies.

pointing "parents" as official represen-  
a "parents" who lived in the hills were  
neighborhood" and its interests. One Asian  
ask Force meetings but mostly observed  
to be us against them. It doesn't help if  
u are one of them. If you're not a neigh-  
ou're a student, you are one of them. It  
students who they would respect."

neighbors" and "parents" simply pre-  
nd their kids to Skyline High School.  
phics fed this sense among many white  
er a *neighborhood* school. Middle-class  
in the eighties and nineties, so that by  
ed students attended private schools,  
en though "neighbors" recognized the

existence of black middle-class home neighbors wouldn't send their kids to white parent and hills resident said the neighbors "were shocked" to find out didn't know that nice kids went to Skyline because of the way I looked and talked.

Neither "parents" nor "neighbors" represented the diversity of the school attended the Task Force meetings were who lived in the hills and lower hills, the parents of black children. Most parents lived very close to the school or the fence off the hill. Their concerns did not represent "opinion" about Skyline High School, as was of 366 households along Skyline corridor said that Skyline High School affected only to a limited degree.<sup>29</sup>

These neighbors drew fundamental public and the private than I found. We have seen how parents in the lower develop school-based programs to get spaces of school and home and off the worked best as a co-op, they blurred boundaries responsibility. These parents (like many volunteer labor to expand public investment) They defined students as their own kids integral part of the neighborhood.

In the hills, by contrast, neighborhood extended the boundaries of their property considered public use of the streets in and boisterous youth behavior or fighting their rights as property owners. Many neighborhood as a private space that had to city and its problems, which lay below homeowner and occasional Skyline Task

The people that are living up here are have not been living down in the slums

owners, they assumed these wealthy  
Oakland's "bad" public schools. One  
that when she attended the Task Force,  
that her kids went to Skyline. "They  
line. . . . They assumed I had nice kids  
."

in the Skyline Task Force accurately  
pool or neighborhood. "Parents" who  
almost all middle-class homeowners  
and the most vocal participants were  
participating "neighbors" were white and  
few private streets students used to get  
represent some general "hills public opin-  
ions made evident by a youth-led survey  
endor that found that 85.7% of residents  
their day-to-day life either not at all or

ally different boundaries between the  
in other neighborhoods in Oakland.  
er hills worked alongside neighbors to  
t children and preteens back into safe  
streets. Accepting that public schools  
boundaries between public and private  
y parents at Skyline) used their volun-  
ants in schools and spaces for children.  
kids and framed public schools as an

ood activists literally and figuratively  
perty into the privatized streets. They  
a front of their homes as unacceptable  
nts in the streets as a direct affront to  
neighbors defined their entire neigh-  
the *right* to remain separate from the  
the hills. Mrs. Tyler, a Hillcrest Estate  
ask Force participant, explained,

not used to that sort of thing. They  
ms of Oakland. Maybe some of them

did originally, I came pretty close. But to this and they feel they do not have. If you don't like our neighborhood, go

Neighbors insisted that the state private property. They demanded greater security at school events. Mrs. Tyler grounded her identity as a tax-paying homeowner with public services. "People up here pay extra in school. But we pay a tremendous amount of consideration."

The way white neighbors drew the boundaries had significant material effects. They excluded the community, defining them as dangerous spaces that called into question the safety of them. They defined all Skyline students as the presence of Asian, black, and white students who attended the public schools. They defined themselves as rich and resistant to the public school system, creating a clear equation of race, space, and class at the turn of the twenty-first century.<sup>30</sup> This posed a real problem for black parents. Neighbors defined black teenagers on the streets as a real intent. A Latino police officer told me about a white hills resident complaining, "They're in my neighborhood. What can I do to get them out? exactly am I supposed to do in response to this?" reproduced these exclusions. Black parents worried about how their boys were stopped and identified, or asked what they were doing.

Framing youth in the streets as dangerous had real effects when neighbors themselves created an exclusionary private community. Two weeks ago, a son as he walked in the neighborhood, a threatening manner that reminded him of a Rolls Royce threatened students with a "No School" sign, the Youth Together coordinator said, "students think there is someone up here

that they managed to work their way up  
to be put into that kind of problems.  
Let the hell out.

protect their expansive notion of pri-  
vate police presence after school and more  
founded this right to state action in her  
who paid a lot of money but did not use  
enough taxes. . . . Most don't have kids  
amount of money. That should be given

boundaries of political community had  
excluded public schools from this private  
order and inadequately controlled public  
safety and innocence of the youth within  
the hills as outsiders in the hills, erasing the  
students who both lived in the hills and  
defined the neighborhood not only as  
but also implicitly as white, reproduc-  
ing an identity that no longer held true at  
all. This narrow definition of community  
excluded parents and children. Some white hills resi-  
dents viewed the presence of black children  
in the neighborhood as a problem and a sign of crimi-  
nality. One parent told me he had received a message from  
the police: "There are black kids walking through  
the neighborhood. Get them removed?" He asked, "What  
is the response to that?" But other police officers  
and parents like the Smiths regularly told stories  
of children who were stopped by the police in the hills, asked for  
an explanation of what they were doing there.

White parents and dangerous outsiders had equally fright-  
ening experiences. One parent told me that when  
white men had approached Shirley's  
son, called him "boy," and spoke to him in  
the manner of the South. When the man in the  
neighborhood had a gun as they painted the Skyline High  
way, the coordinator told the Task Force "right now  
there are people who want to kill them."

## *Colorful Language and Color-Blindness*

Racial animosity pervaded Task Force debates over whether or not youth at the center. At one meeting, “neighbors” and “parents” argued over whether or not there had been “riots” in the neighborhood. Bob complained that the neighborhood had been “shut down” for three weeks by “roving gangs” and ordered to stay away from school. He asked for a schedule of after-school activities that would “at least have a chance.” The principal objected that she had never seen “a riot” in the neighborhood. “What you call a riot at the schools is just a bunch of kids.” It’s all subjective. If you look up the definition of a riot, it says a disturbance, but it doesn’t say there was a riot. It’s just semantics.”

White neighbors developed a complex relationship with the problem of urban youth.<sup>31</sup> Joan complained that she could not say what she wanted because certain words were regarded as inflammatory. She had to edit her speech because complaints about the neighborhood remained perilously close to the surface of the issue. The profound racial histories in America from the sixties and nineties, respectively, have shaped the alienation of youth of color would breed dangerous youth. Sociologist Steven Gregory has argued, “dangerous youth are ‘over-determined’ by their environment.”

Neighbors’ careful racial etiquette was often seen as cynical, nor “as proof” that whites were not racist. “Observation.”<sup>33</sup> But we do need to consider how color-blind ideology redefined race and identity. White neighbors, like many Americans, have hearts and minds, of hidden ideas and feelings, of white folks. One of the legacies of civil rights is to define racism as morally bad, and to imply that anyone who really be racist.<sup>35</sup> We talk about racism in terms of moralistic understanding of race. This moralistic understanding of race is one way to talk about race, racial inequality, and racism.

Calls for color-blindness have become a central theme in public policy debates, from Proposition 209 in California to public school admissions, to the Case



## *and Liberalism*

force meetings, frequently erupting in the school were dangerous or criminal. . . .” engaged in an extended argument . . .” after a basketball game at Skyline. . . .” had been terrorized the previous . . .” attempted “car-jacking” around the . . .” er-school events so that the neighbors . . .” principal, an African American woman, . . .” ot” at the school. And Shirley insisted, . . .” may have been a loud discussion. . . .” incident, it’s clear there was a distur- . . .” riot, R-I-O-T.” Joan responded, “That’s

plex racial etiquette for talk about prob- . . .” couldn’t even “speak English” anymore . . .” as racist. Nevertheless, she learned to . . .” about youth had racial undertones that . . .” ce. Fears of “riots” and of “gangs” have . . .” n cities. They are central metaphors . . .” ely, for fears that the collective rage or . . .” ak violently out of control. As anthro- . . .” “youth crime” and complaints about . . .” l by an ideology of black crime.”<sup>32</sup>

should not be interpreted as simply . . .” re “repressing or occulting racist moti- . . .” now the “central frames” of neighbors’ . . .” nd racism in a post-civil rights era.<sup>34</sup> . . .” s today, defined racism as a problem of . . .” l “intentions” embedded in the minds . . .” vil rights-era legal victories has been to . . .” mply the inverse, that good people can’t . . .” a in a language of sin, guilt, and inno- . . .” of racism left white neighbors with few . . .” ies, or racism in the past or present.

me quite common in politics and pub- . . .” 9, which prohibited affirmative action . . .” alifornia Civil Rights Initiative, which

## *the Oakland Hills*

voters rejected but which would have for any purpose at all. Anthropologist muteness” because “such actions seek course in an exceedingly race-conscious white neighbors in the Skyline Task Force racial inequalities in Oakland and fed that privatized responsibility for creati

When I asked Joan whether she thought race without divisiveness, she paused and stammered frequently as she spoke.

I am trying to remember when I was in the race. I don't think there was anything I was not trying to say that that proves me to be who lived next door to us were a black family mostly grown, and really I didn't think of them as a different race. They were one of very, very few where I grew up, and they had a grandfather I used to like to read a lot and my mother would go outside. [Laughs.] One day. . . . I went to play with their granddaughter. I went to see she was quite brown, and I said, “Well, at least you . . . to go outside and play.”

She laughed a bit uncomfortably and said that teaching kids respect for other people is the only rule about what it means to be human beings.” Joan's parable of childhood color blindness—seeing the color brown but not caring about it—race, it won't matter.

Neighbors never talked about the color of their skin except to deny that they were talking about it. “The kids are not all African American,” they would say. “I'm not trying to pick out African American kids.” Mr. and Mrs. Smith described white neighbors

Presumably they think that if it were possible, oftentimes it is—that it would be okay to talk about the littering, I happen to notice in

stopped the state from tracking race  
Mica Pollock calls these efforts “color-  
to erase race words from public dis-  
ous way.”<sup>36</sup> The color-blind ideology of  
orce both denied and reproduced deep  
a neoliberal turn in American politics  
ng equal opportunities for children.  
ought there was any way to talk about  
a long time before answering and hesi-

s a kid how my family talked about  
divisive about it, you know. And I’m  
to be a wonderful person. The people  
k judge and his wife. Their kids were  
k anything about them being a differ-  
g, very few black families in the town  
nddaughter who was around my age.  
mom was always trying to get me to  
was commanded to go outside and  
t outside and I looked at her, and she  
least your mother isn’t always telling

and added, “I believe that . . . teach-  
e way to talk about race. . . . Just basic  
n and to have regard for other human  
color-blindness, or, more importantly,  
s, serves to argue that if we just ignore

e race of students causing problems,  
only about black boys. Joan insisted,  
n. There are Caucasians, young ladies.  
merican students.” Joan was angry that  
ighbors as racist.

re white kids doing this—of course,  
ay with us. That’s just not true. A lot  
n the parking lot across from here is

one area where a bunch of Asian kids  
students and at least some of their pa  
of race. I have all the empirical evidence  
nothing to do with race.

White homeowners used their own  
of their black neighbors—to argue that  
barriers to equal opportunity. As Mrs.  
lands and obviously I am not acting like  
years old, but I had grandparents and  
can do it, they can bloody well do it to  
missed claims about the ongoing sign  
realize how many black families now  
They've moved up in the world and go  
yers, realtors, whatever, and they are ju

Neighbors sometimes couched their  
the broader national conversation about  
aftermath of Columbine. In one Task  
eral minutes about her fears that neither  
could protect her from students invading  
she was “glad her kids no longer went to  
that she had just painted a very grim picture  
that only in light of the recent campus s  
to school shootings several times in an  
irrational reaction” by many parents and  
officers from Oakland’s police department.  
“You can’t say that you are not going to  
Why court disaster? I find it kind of ironic  
don’t want to have police in the schools  
officer had recently shot and killed an un  
but Columbine is never invoked by those  
bine and school shootings raised a part  
youth that reframed fears of youth as r  
calls for increased security and surveillance.

Neighbors often insisted that they  
bad kids or were criminals and that o  
caused the problems. These “bad apple  
kids to 2%, 5%, or 10%, but all consist  
calculations. As Mrs. and Mr. Tyler, e

ls hang out in. Littering amongst the  
parents does not know any boundaries  
nce. It is so frustrating because it has

successful paths to the hills—and that  
at kids today faced no clear structural  
Tyler insisted, “I grew up in the flat-  
ke that. My dad left when I was twelve  
a place to be and a place to go. So if I  
oo. I’m not so special at all.”<sup>37</sup> She dis-  
ificance of race as “bullshit.” “Do you  
live in this particular neighborhood?  
tten jobs and they’re doctors and law-  
ust the same as everyone else.”

r local fears of youth in the context of  
ut school shootings, particularly in the  
Force meeting, Theresa talked for sev-  
r the police nor private security guards  
ng her property. After commenting that  
o Skyline,” she paused as if recognizing  
portrait of students, and added, “I say  
shootings.” Joan also referred explicitly  
interview. She complained about “the  
nd youth to a recent proposal to bring  
ment into the public schools, saying,  
to have proper security in the schools.  
ronic that when it comes to why they  
, Cincinnati is invoked [where a police  
narmed nineteen-year-old black man],  
se people.” These references to Colum-  
icular image of violent white suburban  
acially neutral and justified neighbors’  
ance in and around schools.

didn’t think all Skyline students were  
only a certain number of “bad apples”  
e” estimates ranged from one hundred  
tently erased race and class from the  
explained, “The majority of kids, they

are nice kids. They always are. It's the lems." Mr. Tyler insisted that the "bums" are on all walks of life. "It is true of doctors or lawyers or is always 10% of this group, whatever it is, and it is the same thing with students at Skyline High School." They reframed the United States as between "losers" and "winners" by race, class, or age. This analysis defended them because they were afraid of poor kids, black kids, Oakland, flatland kids. They identified a natural order, a natural "category of 'underclass' and objectively the 'scum' of any race"

White neighbors insisted that race or class was not the fault of mainly black activists, like the Smiths, "mainly

It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, and it's hard for me to understand. . . . The thing in those terms, what is it that turns them? It's nothing good. . . . What is the solution? Maybe they would like to see something happen? I don't know. Sometimes I get that sort of

For Joan, talk about race is divisive because of the specter of a riot in the hills.

White neighbors sometimes expanded on Oakland's recent history in a very racialized way that

the black community in Oakland, I am sure, in the sixties as a way of trying to shut up the white people. . . . say, it becomes you're prejudiced. Even the city of Oakland and damn near ruined. . . . had to be black. . . . The fact that the white people did not matter. . . . It took Jerry Brown to get it sorted out. It still has a long way to go. . . . track than we were before. We were going to

Sensing the ways that this comment was being interjected that Robert Bobb, Oakland's

the bummers that are causing the problems” or “the ten percenters” crossed over janitors or teachers or anyone. There is a group it is, that are going to be losers, in school. This is the problem we have created fundamental social divides in the “good guys,” not between categories of divided neighbors from the criticism that kids, or, in the geographical metaphor of “bad kids” as simply part of the natural order of things, people who are truly desirable’ people, people who are truly of their class.<sup>38</sup>

only mattered because “people,” implicitly made it matter.” Joan asserted,

self-verifying proposition. It makes people who are trying to put everything they really want? . . . What is driving it that they would really like to see every house in this area burn down? It is a part of feeling.

is, even dangerous, raising the bizarre

used this color-blind ideology to rewrite race-conscious way. Mrs. Tyler thought

am afraid, has used race ever since the white community. Everything you everybody shuts up. They took over the world. [Politicians and administrators] they knew what they were doing or not down to come in and try to get things done, but at least we are more on the right side of going down the tubes.

It might sound racist, Mr. Tyler quickly said. The city’s black city manager, was a “great guy”

and that this was not about race. “Yo Tyler’s use of color here makes race an connected from any meaningful social only inappropriately brought race into city itself at risk. This version of Oakland led to the city’s decline. If Oakland co hills residents insisted, the city would r unable to become the revitalized city th

This story erased all the ways in wh twentieth-century Oakland and built Bay’s economy, schools, and neighbor ent) shaped the contours of race, space U.S. cities and suburbs. Federal housing and the more informal actions of real built racial inequalities into Oakland’s sidized loans for white families to buy and suburbs, while excluding blacks fr history created the contours of curre unemployment, and poverty.<sup>39</sup> Terribl neighborhoods continued to reprodu race and trapped working-class black areas of the labor force. Oakland’s ge inequalities in the post-civil rights er Oakland’s geography in moral terms th

### *Busing, Borrowed Communities, the Decline of Skyline High School*

Neighbors often identified “kids on lems. Theresa Thomas explained that k worried her less, as did the kids who school police officer agreed, insisting be here. They bring problems with the of space and danger, they assumed kids brought the disorder of the flatlands in

Stereotypical images of Skyline stud from Oakland’s flatlands fed white nei Tyler drew on these stereotypes as she in Eastmont Mall, near Elmhurst, “do



u can be green, purple, or puce.” Mr. [redacted] an insignificant (even fanciful) trait dis- [redacted] categories. The black community not [redacted] city politics, but in so doing put the [redacted] and’s history suggests that black politics [redacted] could not “get beyond” race, these white [redacted] remain in the dysfunctional racial past, [redacted] that it could be.

which white people made race matter in [redacted] racial inequalities deep into the East [redacted] hoods. Public decisions (past and pres- [redacted], and wealth in Oakland, as in all other [redacted] g policies in the post–World War II era [redacted] estate agents and white homeowners [redacted] s class geography. These policies sub- [redacted] homes (and build capital) in the hills [redacted] rom similar opportunities. This recent [redacted] nt inequalities in education, income, [redacted] e public schools in Oakland’s flatland [redacted] ce unequal educational outcomes by [redacted] ks and Latinos in the most insecure [redacted] ography itself helped reproduce racial [redacted] ra. But homeowners often interpreted [redacted] that justified existing inequalities.

*and*  
*bl*

the buses” as the source of most prob- [redacted] ids in the “cars they got for Christmas” [redacted] se parents picked them up. A Skyline [redacted] that some kids at Skyline “should not [redacted] m.” Reproducing a common equation [redacted] s on the buses were “flatland kids” who [redacted] to the hills.

lents as poor, probably dangerous kids [redacted] ghbors’ fears of Skyline students. Mrs. [redacted] argued that the youth center should be [redacted] wn where the kids live.” Now “at least

*e Oakland Hills*

you get rid of them by about four o'clock to the latest drug den, or home, or where they didn't stop the trouble now, "we could do down in the flats." Her casual equanimity in the flatlands highlighted the role of geography of poor families and neighborhoods. "I know Springer and you'll see what people are

Oakland never had a formal busing program, but public buses allowed students to transcend geography in a quest for better education. Many of Skyline's students came from the flatlands since these are not stable sociological categories that could track. Skyline's catchment area included many students from Castlemont High School to Skyline, either for specific programs like magnet or their neighborhood school as academically gifted. Skyline High School had few very poor students in Oakland. In general, only the most affluent families from the flatlands had the social capital to navigate the bureaucratic process of applying for admission. Only 2.5% of Skyline student families resided in Castlemont High School.<sup>40</sup>

"Kids on buses" and "kids from the flatlands" served to mark class and race without explicitly naming either race or class as structures of exclusion. It reified structures of inequality so that the flatlands, like the underclass, that enabled white flight to be cast as "culture." This geography allowed residents to even while they relied on and reproduced the system of poor. Flatland youth and their faulty geography explained not only ongoing racial inequality but also Oakland's public schools.

Many older white residents blame Skyline's troubles and for the school's academic decline of Skyline as a "great," "clean" school when it was orderly and dirty campus today. These residents recall the school's long and contested racial tensions in the lower hills: "The year they integrated it was a brand new plant, but it was totally trashed in

ck. They are on their way somewhere, what have you.” She worried that if they fear for our lives up here just like they tion of drug dens and student homes f mass media in forging popular ideas “All you have to do is turn on Jerry e really like out there in the flatlands.” program to achieve racial integration, cut across Oakland’s racial and class ion. It is hard to estimate exactly how “the flatlands” compared to “the hills” categories that Oakland public schools now extends down into the flatlands, High School in Elmhurst transferred to like drama or simply because they saw ically limited or too dangerous. Still, or students compared to other schools stable working-class and middle-class ial capital and commitment to negoti- ng for intradistrict transfers. In 2000 received welfare compared to 57.9% at e flatlands” all served as subtle ways itly acknowledging the significance of clusion. Oakland’s geography natural- e “flatlands” became a moral category, neighbors to talk about race and class neighbors to avoid talking about race, luded racial stereotypes of the ghetto families became powerful forces that equalities but also historic changes in ed open enrollment and “busing” for apparent decline. Their fond memories vere juxtaposed with stories of the dis- e stories often dramatically condensed ransition, as did one woman from the Skyline High School, it had a brand- in a couple years. That is just reality.”

Meredith Clark, a white homeowner who lived in Redwood Heights, provided the Skyline’s integration led to its decline. . . . really changed it was when they allowed in schools. . . .” She described Skyline as “the biggest divisive things in the whole neighborhood. . . .” She said that if she was not in that district, they just thought “the school?” They did anything. They lied to me,” she explained,

It wasn’t an organized group, but just people who should have this nice new school. MacArthur had one of the best schools. They had more things to work with than any other school. . . . Immediately, they thought some magic thing about Skyline. It was a lovely school. But we went. We went to a basketball game. I have seen how they had let kids come in and be filthy. . . . There was total lack of authority.

Neighbors often fumbled with their words as “rhetorical incoherence” when they completely avoided talking about race. . . . explicitly who was “lying” to get into Skyline High School lay in the heart of history. . . . a deeply racial story of how open enrollment was pressed for further details, she added,

They had kids that came from all over the neighborhood. They took a bus at MacArthur. Kids who were from this neighborhood or pushed out of our neighborhood or I don’t know. I don’t really blame any parent or form because there are wonderful people from ethnic backgrounds, really close, and they call me mother. They are just kidding. It doesn’t mean, uh, it just means, uh, I’m a parent of the schools. It made the parents feel and such an address.

and former public school teacher who gave the most detailed description of the way things happened. “I think one of the *main* things that started the beginning of open enrollment was the High School’s boundaries as “one of the city.” “Immediately this group that I thought, ‘Well. Why do they get a new fire like fire to get into Skyline.’” Mrs. Clark

... must parents who thought their kids were better off at McClymonds High School at that time because of the excellent teachers and more material things at that school in the town. . . . Parents immediately thought that would happen if their child got to go to Skyline were up there a couple of years ago. I have never been so disgusted in my life to see something get ruined. . . . It was absolutely a tragedy.

... words, in what Bonilla-Silva describes as “white talk” tried to talk about race.<sup>41</sup> Mrs. Clark is the main character in this story. She hesitated to ever say anything about Skyline High School. But McClymonds is a historically black West Oakland, so this was not surprising. The enrollment led to Skyline’s decline. When I

... town. They came out of their neighborhood on Arthur and 35th . . . up to Skyline. . . . The neighborhood were like, “Heck, we’re being better off than anything decent.” . . . It’s just . . . I don’t see a particular race of people in any state because we’re all people. We have close friends of all races. I have two daughters. I call them daughters, but they’re as close to me as my own kids. So it’s not a guess [pause]. But that was the ruin of Skyline. Parents lie. They’d say they live at such

She later explained, “It’s not a thing of  
and education and . . . the . . . desire . . .

Meredith Clark was a Christian who  
talked about two black women as daughters.  
talking about race that she hesitated to  
acknowledge that struggles for open enrollment  
racial integration or equality. She denied  
without the racial explanation, she also  
meant. Ultimately, she recoded race as  
to a decent family life.

This story highlighted several important  
used the geography of the hills and flatlands  
Oakland. Suggesting that “people” who  
made Oakland’s neighborhood boundaries  
expressions of identity and community  
schools) had been made racially segregated  
ing white neighborhoods through the hills  
hills residents voted for Proposition 13,  
turned the state’s “open housing” law and  
person the right to rent or sell property.

Resources were vastly unequal across  
edith’s insistence that McClymonds was  
with “more materials to work with” than  
simply false. Even after decades of partnership  
McClymonds High School had no shortage  
shortage of books that students could  
Black activists called for open enrollment  
but rather to demand equal opportunities.

Neighbors constructed a moral geography  
divides into cultural and moral conflicts  
divides between the hills and flatlands  
cans because housing is cheaper. . . . Most  
housing are not Caucasians [but] primarily  
cans. There is the racial barrier alone in  
this divide in terms of culture and community.

I think there is a very different concep-  
tions of Oakland. . . . I think that some  
the have-nots. . . . If you do not inherit

of race in my opinion. It's a thing of class to have family that you're proud of."

A woman, critical of white flight, who has daughters (though she was so averse to say they were black). She refused to enroll at Skyline were demands for that this story was about race. But most couldn't explain what this story was about class, education, and a commitment

important ways in which white neighbors work to naturalize existing inequalities and would stay in "their own neighborhoods" and policies seem like natural and transparent policy. But Oakland's neighborhoods (and shaped by white investments in maintaining) in the 1960s. Indeed, in 1964, 70% of Oakland voters passed a California ballot initiative that overruled and prohibited the state from denying a vote to "any person he chooses."<sup>42</sup>

across Oakland's racial geography. Merced is one of Oakland's best public schools, and like other Oakland public schools, is the result of parental activism for equity, in the 1980s, science labs, no AP classes, and such a school can't take them home to read or study.<sup>43</sup> Her enrollment at Skyline not out of selfishness, but for her children.

geography that turned racial and class divisions into facts. Theresa acknowledged the material reality: "Below MacArthur are Afro-American. Most of the people who are in low-cost housing are primarily Latino, Asian, and Afro-American in economics." But later she explained the reality of the community:

... a lot of community among different socioeconomic groups. Some of it is probably the haves and have-nots. They don't really get the pride of keeping your

neighborhood together and being responsible. . . . The neighborhood stay clean, crime free, watch out for each other. . . . We don't have any respect when you come to school. . . . Where are the kids going to school? . . . The school tries to do what they can.

Theresa reframed the divide between the two groups as a “sense of community,” defined as an “ethic” and a “culture” tied to space.

Neighbors drew on popular theories of the underclass that blamed parents in Oakland's flatlands for the lack of a sense of community and respect.<sup>44</sup> The discourse about the underclass implicitly argues that parents do not properly raise young people in America because they are poor. As sociologist and black feminist scholar Patricia Hill Collins analyses implicitly “use race to explain social inequality to account for racial difference.”<sup>45</sup> The discourse chain, theories of the underclass “rationalize a faulty understanding of culture as static and unchangeable, ignoring material and economic realities. . . . The home is where we forge these commonsense links among people. . . . The home is the crucial site for reproduction of culture, attitudes, and behaviors necessary for the survival of the family. . . . The family remains the commonsense site for the reproduction of culture. . . . In cultural reproduction, talk about faulty parenting is tied to older biological notions of race. So the discourse of two commonsense ideas of family help to reproduce these instinctive ones.”<sup>47</sup>

This cultural analysis of Skyline Heights led to a focus on fixing what they considered the problem with the students. As Mrs. Tyler explained, “These kids are not bad. They have never learned any manner of respect. . . . It is not their fault, which is not their fault, but on the other hand, we have to teach common civility and concern for others. . . . We do and don't do in society.” Neighbors’ efforts to “teach” that would teach kids “manners” and “respect.” The focus on culture opened up the possibility of seeing flatland kids as threatening outsiders to their own neighborhood,” turned culture into a problem to be fixed.



responsible for helping your neighbor-  
out for your neighbors' kids, then you  
e up to a borrowed community to go  
g to learn a sense of community? The

en the haves and have-nots in terms of  
inherent set of values and a bounded

es about the urban underclass as they  
for failing to teach students the proper  
Most popular and academic writing  
that "aberrant" families have failed to  
ican ghettos, and this is why they are  
t theorist Patricia Collins argues, these  
n class disadvantage and gender devi-

Through this commonsense "causal"  
onalize black poverty."<sup>45</sup> They rely on a  
ic, inherited, and unaffected by chang-

The cultural category youth helped  
g race, class, and culture. The family  
f culture, instilling the correct mores,  
"civilized" society.<sup>46</sup> But since the fam-  
biological reproduction as well as cul-  
families maintains an ambiguous tie  
ciologist Paul Gilroy argues that these  
o to turn "social processes into natural,

High School encouraged neighbors to  
a cultural deficit among Skyline stu-  
e kids up here are a bunch of savages.  
s or any caring or anything at home,  
er hand the school is going to have to  
or others. There are certain things you  
s wanted to set up a "citizenship train-  
and "respect for private property." This  
lity that kids could be fixed. But defin-  
ers, as savages who belonged "in their  
nto something almost natural, some-

thing one inherently got or didn't get. This more "biologized" notion of culture led to suspend, expel, or arrest students if

This narrative defined youth problems as individual deficits and thus ignored many urgent social issues. Racial disparities in suspension and expulsion became not racial barriers but simple products of concentrated poverty and violence in the flatlands, a legacy of racism, or an effect of economic restructuring. The solution became to fix these problems in the neighborhood, but not to address the state or California's failure to invest in equal education.

White neighbors' privatized analysis of youth problems resembled the nostalgia of Elmhurst, but it had a different underlying logic. In the flatlands, from ideas of activist mothering—that parents should try to save—that served as important counterweight to the state's neglect of the flatlands. White hills activists' color-blind analysis offered a broad critique of the ways in which the state perpetuated racial inequalities.

The color-blind stories white neighbors told about youth problems had racial effects. They relied on, and reproduced, the idea of "ghetto youth" that have been central to the state's neglect of children and their families. Political scientist David Tyack, 13, California's taxpayer rebellion, was a white electorate unwilling to pay for services that were shared with the state's growing population of people of color. Antitax advocates defined "taxpayers," implicitly (and falsely) distinguished between those of public services who they often described as "taxpayers."

As American studies scholar Ruth Sidel wrote, "dangerous boys" and "teenage mothering" are dangerous and thus fundamentally unnaturalize state disinvestments in children and investments in systems of surveillance. One of Prop 13's authors, was asked about the initiative, he justified state funding cuts by saying "it doesn't bother me a damn bit . . . because I can't read."<sup>51</sup> As American studies scholar

t from one's neighborhood or family. They were encouraged zero-tolerance policies because they could not be "civilized."<sup>48</sup>

problems as essentially private, cultural, and moral. The predicaments youth faced at Skyline were not about graduation rates or in honors classes but about problems of morality or behavior. Contra the dominant narrative, the Oakland Hills became not a political crisis, a site of urban restructuring, but a problem of culture. It was about poor children, or to keep them out of the Hills, or about problems of poverty, racial inequality, and unequal opportunities for all young people.

This analysis of youth problems bore a striking resemblance to the work of first-generation urban reform activists for disciplined youth. But in the Oakland Hills, this analysis was disconnected from the reality that these were "our kids" we were trying to help. The shift from public to privatizing discourses in the Hills, and the color-blind commitments prohibited any critique of the neoliberal order reproduced existing

problems. The discourses propagated had broader political implications, deeply racially coded images of youth, and the push to efforts to shrink state spending for public services. As sociologist Peter Schrag argues that Proprietary cities caused by the resistance of an aging middle class to public services that were increasingly privatized. The focus on poor, youth, immigrants, and people of color defined themselves as "homeowners" and distinguished themselves from recipients of public services described as unworthy.<sup>49</sup>

As Gilmore has argued, stereotypes of "welfare recipients" frame black children as essentially unworthy. Images of dangerous youth and their parents' environments, while authorizing increased surveillance and control.<sup>50</sup> When Howard Jarvis, a conservative leader, fought libraries closing as a result of the budget cuts by drawing on these stereotypes: "It's not because most of the children they're for sale." As scholar Dan HoSang argues, these racial-

ized images produce a particular “truth” that poor bodies are a ‘required’ expenditure to ‘throw money at the problem.’”<sup>52</sup>

The ways white neighbors told the history of massive structural changes in Oakland undermined American ideals of equal opportunity and racial effects. In many ways, Oakland was a success story in California. It enabled older property owners to stay in their homes even as their homes escalated in value for subsequent generations to buy property. In 1970, before the passage of Proposition 13, Oakland was number one in school spending, but fell to number one hundred after the passage of investments substantially in the economy. Oakland ranked twenty-seventh in 2000. But recent years have eroded many of those gains. California's economy that was prior to the massive budget cuts.

Youth in Oakland public schools is a struggle for basic resources. Prop 13 cut most funding for schools in areas where growing numbers of children and voters lived in racially and class-segregated areas. Wealthy families could pay for private schools and private policing. California's taxpayer revolts and budget crises that decimated Oakland's economy, a declining and dirty Skyline campus, and the impact of these structural changes on Skyline High School. The simple effect of open enrollment or a failure to maintain the school used to employ sixteen landscapers in the entire Oakland public school district.

Declining state investments decimated Oakland. In the 2000 census, Oakland was the poorest city in the country, with 34.3% of adults without a college degree. But the city has basically imported wealth and attracted a growing number of college graduates from the Bay Area high-tech economic boom.<sup>55</sup> But youth in Oakland faced a deeply troubled public education system with a massive high school dropout rate. Over 20% of students drop out of Oakland schools. Skyline school had only 8.6% of students dropping out.<sup>56</sup> But even in the best schools in the district, only one

h'—that prisons for brown, black, and  
are but schools for those same bodies  
history of Skyline High School ignored  
d's schools and economy that threat-  
unity. Proposition 13 had both genera-  
it mortgaged the future of all children  
owners to pay very low property taxes  
, at the same time as it made it harder  
property or to get a decent public edu-  
Prop 13, California was ranked num-  
forty-first in 1996. The state increased  
mic boom of the late 1990s, so the state  
peated budget crises in the early 2000s  
fell back to thirty-fourth in 2005, and  
cuts that would follow.<sup>53</sup>  
were left with schools that struggled  
significantly into the resources of cit-  
ren of color lived. Increasingly, white  
gated suburbs or neighborhoods, and  
schools, extracurricular activities, even  
rebellion created an endless cycle of  
s public schools. When neighbors saw  
they were seeing one small measure of  
gh School's physical plant, not the sim-  
re to teach children manners. Skyline  
in addition to several janitors. By 2001,  
ict had only sixteen landscapers.<sup>54</sup>  
ted equal educational opportunities in  
l was ranked the eighth most educated  
t residents having graduated from col-  
ted this educated workforce. The city  
e-educated people as part of the Bay  
young people who grew up in Oakland  
on system with poor test scores and a  
r a four-year period, 21.8% of students  
students fared significantly better, with  
But even at Skyline High School, one of  
ne-third of students in 2000 graduated

with the course requirements to go to Oakland public school students were jobs. As Cindi Katz argues, in an increasingly globalized world, students no longer have to reproduce their own labor.

White neighbors' color-blind commitment to the ladder of opportunity into the hills of Oakland pushed many poor Black people in Oakland's public schools under the ladder. One student, an African American girl from the hills, expressed longing and despair as she looked at the hills and the glimpses of the good life she saw from the hills. "When I come up into this neighborhood, I see the good life, but I don't know how to live up here, but I don't know how to go down."

### *Reclaiming Childhood for Black Children*

Parent advocates went to the Skyline High School ready to challenge "neighbors" every time they saw a Black student. Black parents were told that the ideology of white neighbors and pointed out the ways in which they saw the real effects of pervasive racism in their children's daily lives. Talk of racism at Skyline High School implicitly defined the Black student as dangerous and potentially criminal. These racial images and exclusions have a tendency to represent and treat black children as "other," as sociologist Ann Ferguson documents in *Schools and the Making of Black Masculinities*. Black children have been "constituted differently by law, social policy and visual imagery." Black children are seen as "dangerous thugs" or as "an endangered species" of violence or educational failure, unlike the white child. "The soul searching in America. It is expected that Black children will be 'selves,' as natural (or maybe cultural) beings." These racial images and exclusions from the public school, blind ideology, foster pernicious public images that affected black families across class lines.

Black parents worried that the images of Black children formed public schools, naturalizing Black children as black students as in need of control, not as individuals. Black parents at Skyline had to confront the

a California public university.<sup>57</sup> Most were not being prepared for professional life in a globalized economy, cities no longer had the labor force to ensure economic growth.<sup>58</sup> Their commitments left them unable to see that their schools had many missing rungs. But young people understood the significant barriers they faced. A young African American girl from Oakland's flatlands described the chasm she saw standing between her life and the life she saw in the hills. "Every time I go to the houses. It's nice up here. I wish I could get there."

## Children

At the Task Force meetings girded for battle, at a time they even hinted that Skyline students actively resisted the color-blind ideal, they put every race-coded comment because of stereotypes of black boys as dangerous, violent, car-jacking, and crime around Skyline school itself and its students as dangerous. These images reproduced a broader societal view of children, especially boys, as "not children." In her book *Bad Boys: Public Schools in the Inner City*, Ferguson documents in her book *Bad Boys: Public Schools in the Inner City*. According to Ferguson, black youth are often treated differently through economic practices, the way they are treated. An ensemble of images of black boys as a "dangerous species" means that black youth are treated differently than that of white youth, prompts little respect, and are seen as "inherent in the kids themselves." These expressions of black racial difference.<sup>59</sup> From childhood, combined with color-coded policies and institutional practices that define lines in Oakland.

The perception of black youth criminality had transformed into black educational failure and defining the lack of education. Even upper-middle-class parents expressed troubling racial contours about who

was defined as gifted or a troublemaker. Dr. Smith's first son arrived at Skyline with a 3.83 grade point average and recommendations from counselors for honors classes, but when he was in no honors classes. Mrs. Smith was the principal. Her son was quickly tracked into honors classes. For black parents confronting the same problem, the schools were full.<sup>61</sup> Dr. Smith said, "We had to fight to get our son into Skyline High School in liberal, progressive areas."

African American parents at Skyline High School reported that honors classes at Skyline were 85% white. The average grade point averages were routinely not offered to black students. Schools gave for these inequalities drew on the cultural deficiency of black families and the colorism of the principal. The principal explained to a local newspaper that the percentage of students in honors classes were low because the schools were not in college-going populations.<sup>63</sup> This colorism reproduced inequalities in college attendance. The patterns were expressions of student capacity and achievement.

Racial and class inequalities were based on geography. As part of an organizing effort in the flatlands, Oakland Community Organizers highlights the stark educational inequalities (see Figure 11). Elementary schools in the flatlands had more experienced and credentialed teachers than schools in the hills.<sup>64</sup> Teachers in the hills earned on average ten thousand dollars more than teachers in the flatlands. Over the course of six years of elementary school, a student in a flatlands elementary school classroom earned approximately sixty thousand dollars more than in a classroom in the hills. Civil rights groups launched a landmark class action lawsuit in *California*, documenting pernicious racial inequalities. Despite decades of activism, money and resources continued "to follow white children."<sup>66</sup> The lawsuit guaranteed that all students should have the same other instructional materials, schools should be equally funded, and it pledged almost \$1 billion toward creating equitable learning environments.<sup>67</sup>



er in school.<sup>60</sup> When Mrs. Smith and High School in 1994, he came in with recommendations from his middle school when they received his class schedule, Smith was furious and instantly met with transferred into honors classes, but other problem were told that the honors classes fight to get our kids into honors classesressive Oakland. It was shocking.”

he gathered data and learned that hon- e or Asian. Black students with over red honors classes.<sup>62</sup> The explanation ew on common stereotypes about the cultural deprivation of black students. spaper that the numbers of minorities ey are traditionally underrepresented circular logic denied the ways schools ndance by assuming that existing pat- acity and predictions of future student

uilt into Oakland’s schools through its campaign on overcrowded schools in organization created a map that high- ties across Oakland’s landscape (See hills were smaller, had nicer physical tialled teachers, and higher test scores s in hills elementary schools were paid per year than teachers in the flatlands. tary school, this means the state spent more to educate kids in a hills elemen- room in the flatlands.<sup>65</sup> In 2000 civil ass action lawsuit, *Williams v. State of* acial and class inequities in education. d resources in Oakland and the nation <sup>65</sup> The state legislature, in a 2004 settle- ould have the basic right to books and in good repair, and qualified teachers, rds creating more equity in children’s

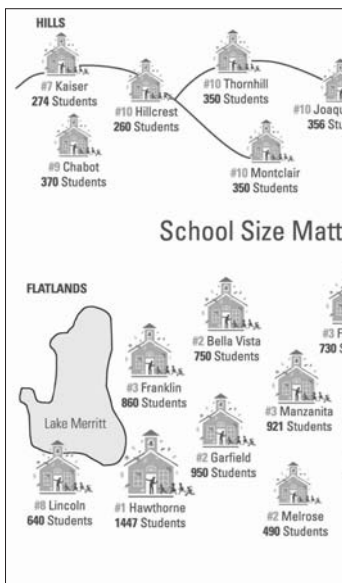
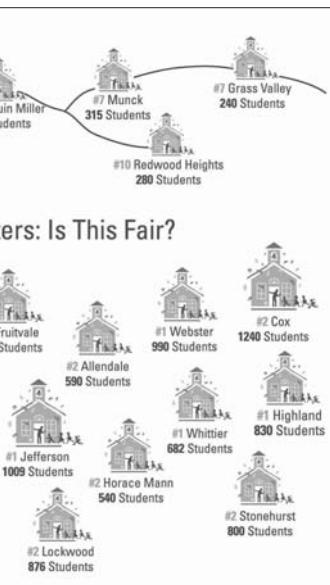


Figure 11. Unequal educations across  
(Map produced by Oakland Commu

School systems in California do not  
They “distribute opportunities along  
effects.<sup>68</sup> In what anthropologist Mich  
choreography,” school districts and i  
race in districts throughout America.  
from hills elementary schools were  
made whiteness (and now maybe some  
naturally or normally “meritocratic” v  
“deficient.”<sup>69</sup> In California, white chil  
the state’s highest-performing schools,  
times, and Latino students seven times  
forming schools.<sup>70</sup> In 2001, only 16% o  
Latino students met state proficiency  
of white students. On language arts te  
students met the standard, while 67%  
asked in bold letters, “Is it fair?”<sup>71</sup>

Ferguson documents the ways scho  
duce the social identities gifted, at-risk



the Flatlands and the Hills.  
(Community Organization)

not just mirror preexisting inequalities. “racial lines” and produce stark racial inequalities. Belle Fine describes as “an institutionalized system where individual schools track students by ability and socioeconomic status. As mostly white and Asian students are tracked into honors classes, schools serving mostly Black and Latino students (and some Asians, as model minorities) appear to be underperforming. While being Black or Brown appeared to be a disadvantage, children are much more likely to attend high-performing schools, while Black students are almost three times more likely to attend the lowest-performing schools. 17% of Oakland’s Black students and 17% of students in math, compared to 60% of white students did. The OCO map

schools act “as sorting systems” that produce good kids, and bad kids. Even in ele-

mentary school, teachers often give wh interpret their misbehavior as “boys be labeled as “willfully bad.”<sup>72</sup> Instead of se to be molded and shaped over time,” dren’s behavior as adult-like, as “evid order.” Consequently, schools often p and exclusion rather than through pe with white boys.<sup>73</sup> Ferguson demonstr own identities “in relation to these exp misbehave, reciprocate in kind, displa stereotype of dangerous youth.”<sup>74</sup>

The image of black teenagers as da to massive racial disparities in suspen ous offenses like “defiance of author during the 1990s as schools nationall that expel students for bringing any sometimes Tylenol or fingernail clippe 65% between 1991 and 1996. Black and suspended and expelled. Boys repres youth comprised 50% of public school sions. Latino suspension rose fivefold i the significant growth in Oakland’s Lat to increase for black boys nationally i stakes testing and zero-tolerance polic

Black parent advocates knew that categories that retained deep racial cor at risk as long as disproportionate nu lic schools were tracked into lower-lev Shirley Casey’s biracial son experience a “good” to a “bad” kid. She explained “what he was” or where he fit in Oak was always very polite and used to be to grow small dreads, and he suddenl treating him as a “good boy.” His teach didn’t call on him in class because of “t of his rough and tumble appearance. I When Shirley asked her son, “Do you they don’t perceive you as a sweet little who I am, at least for now.”

white boys “masculine dispensation” and “cool boys,” while black boys are quickly seeing children’s behavior as “something” schools often interpreted black children’s sense of their future place in the social hierarchy punished black boys “through example and persuasion and edification,” as they did. This illustrates how black boys construct their expectations.” They sometimes “threaten, wielding a power that reproduces the very

dangerous and potentially criminal led to suspensions in Oakland, often for ambiguity.” These disparities only increased as schools embraced “zero tolerance policies” for drug or weapon to school (including cell phones).<sup>75</sup> Oakland school suspensions rose sharply and Latino boys were disproportionately suspended. Black students received 80% of suspended students. Black students, but received 70% of suspensions in the same time period, far outpacing the Latino population.<sup>76</sup> Dropout rates began to rise in the 1990s as a combination of high-stakes tests pushed some out of school.<sup>77</sup>

“bad kids” and “flatland youth” were common annotations. So their children remained members of black kids in Oakland public school classes and identified as “bad kids.” He knew how easily he could slip from being “good” to “bad” that people weren’t always clear about Oakland’s racial and class landscape. He was clean cut. But recently he had started to realize he found that teachers were no longer as patient. A teacher at Skyline had explained that she was nervous about the energy that surrounds him because she “wouldn’t be able to control my class.” “Do you want to cut your hair now because you’re a white boy?” he answered, “No, this is

White parents often defended Skyline. Many white neighbors, they often assumed, were between “good kids” and “bad kids.” A parent active in the PTA, explained that Skyline had “good” kids despite popular perception. “They don’t want to destruct or tend to take it out on friends. We want them to do. We want them to go to college. Christine didn’t challenge the ways by which Skyline locally defined as bad kids, tracked into lower performing schools that they disappeared from this hills school. Parents and school officials, like white neighbors, saw this as normal, as transparent expressions of differences or as expressions of differences in parenting styles in different communities.

Dr. and Mrs. Smith helped formed a parent group at Skyline to fight against these kind of practices. They pressured the school to create more honors classes and Advanced Placement courses. They argued that simply reproduce racial stereotypes of white students. Concerned Parents of African American Skyline parents to be more effective advocates for their children to get to college. Another African American parent said that “African Americans can’t just drop out. They’ll get the same education as Caucasians. We have lower expectations of these kids. We’re not concerned that you’re not concerned.”<sup>78</sup>

Mrs. Smith defined her work in the context of black activist mothering and parent activism. She saw it as part of her job as a parent. A parent explained that once Skyline administrator was a doctor and they lived in a big house. They felt, as if they were thinking, “You’re not black.” “Did I stop being black?” The principal said to Mrs. Smith. “We’ll take good care of your son. You didn’t have to worry about the other kids. You’re being one of the few black kids in the school. We’ll take care for my child and for the other kids.”

Motivated by this broader mission, Mrs. Smith joined African American Students at Skyline (AASAS).

ine High School's reputation, but like  
umed that there was a clear distinction  
Christine Rollinson, a white mother  
ine was a safe school for middle-class  
e bad boys and girls tend to just self-  
nds. . . . They go away. That's what we  
o away and stay away from our kids."  
black and Latino kids were systemati-  
lower-level courses, and disciplined so  
school. Many middle-class white par-  
ighbors, accepted those inequalities as  
Oakland's racial and class inequalities  
nting and culture in Oakland's flatland

Concerned African American Parents  
s of institutionalized racism. Parents  
formal criteria for admission to hon-  
ourses so that schools would not sim-  
ho was "gifted." Monthly meetings of  
an Students at Skyline educated black  
and counselors to help their children  
can parent advocate at Skyline insisted  
p their kids off at school and assume  
asian kids. Many of the teachers really  
And if you're not there, it's perceived

e schools as part of a long tradition of  
tivism for racial equality in education.  
t to worry about all black children. She  
ators and parents learned her husband  
use in the hills, they treated her differ-  
one of us now." Mrs. Smith wondered,  
pal said, "Don't worry, Dr. and Mrs.  
n." The implicit message was that they  
ds. But she refused to settle for her son  
AP classes. "I want the best education

of racial uplift, Concerned Parents of  
High School joined with Oscar Wright,

an Oakland civil engineer and long-time public schools, to push Oakland to sign a voluntary resolution of Education's Office of Civil Rights. The voluntary resolution required the schools to review textbooks, Advanced Placement classes, and grade-level standards in Oakland's major schools.

Black parent activism in the hills was strikingly different when compared to the flatlands in Oakland. Middle-class parents in the hills teetered actively in the public schools, trying to get their children through fraying public school systems that worked to insulate their children from the institutionalized racism that too often led to lower educational achievement.

Many scholars have documented the stark divide between the middle class and the black poor in the hills. Children in the hills benefited in many ways from their parents' wealth. Their kids automatically went to Oakland's best schools, and so came to Skyline with better resources. Middle-class parents could afford to send their children to the suburbs, and many did. The hills provided children from Oakland's most dangerous neighborhoods with parents who could offer their children in the hills with cars, and home computers wired to the internet. Middle-class privileges did not fully insulate the hills from the threat of black youth criminality. This "contagion" link the fates of black parents and children in Oakland.<sup>79</sup> National campaigns by the Children's Defense Fund against the "segregation pipelines" indicate the political power of the hills.

The polarized racial politics around the hills led parent activists to engage in different spaces in Oakland. In the flatlands and lower hills, neighborhood activists embraced efforts to improve schools for their own good." Black parents in the hills tried to protect their children, but they also often defended their children. They did this not only to protect their children from "outsiders from the flatlands" in front of their schools, but to challenge the implicit equation of race, class, and geography. Black middle-class families from the hills tried to protect their children from the



to advocate for black children in the public-  
voluntary resolution with the U.S. Depart-  
ment to monitor Oakland Public Schools.  
The school district to provide more access to  
resources, trained teachers, and classes taught at  
priority-black schools in the flatlands.

This illustrates interesting similarities and  
connections to such activism in other neighbor-  
hoods in the hills and lower hills volun-  
teering to secure a safe passage for their  
children. As in the Laurel district, they also  
highlighted the damaging effects of institutional-  
ized expectations for black students.

The increasing divides between the black  
community in the post-civil rights era. Black families  
from Oakland's geography of inequality.  
The city's best public elementary and middle  
schools built-in educational privileges. Upper-  
middle-class parents moved their kids to private school or move  
themselves physically insulated their  
homes on quiet streets, as did the privileges wealthy  
families in the form of large homes, yards, cell phones,  
and the internet. But these private spaces and  
resources shielded their children from the pervasive image  
of a "controlling image" continued to partially  
define black children across class and geographic lines.  
The NAACP Legal Defense Fund and the  
"school to prison" or "cradle to prison"  
highlighted these fears for black children.<sup>80</sup>

At Skyline High School led black par-  
ticipated in politics in the hills than elsewhere.  
In the hills, many black parents and neigh-  
bors cleared youth off the streets "for their  
safety" often kept their kids at home to pro-  
tect young people's rights to public space.  
They protected their own children from being identified as  
part of their own homes but also to chal-  
lenge the class, and space that erased the presence  
of black youth in the hills.



fundamental debates about the meaning of the post-civil rights era. White neighbors' well intentioned, were premature and ineffective in California. Fifty years after *Brown* we are far from attaining racial equality in education. If we cannot talk about race, we cannot see how to reproduce racial inequalities.<sup>81</sup> We will not see individual young people or youth cultures that have significant structural impact. As Park argues, kids in multiracial California are not "color blind" but "when it comes to inequality," too

concerned over why these racial inequalities exist. These debates boil down to three central questions: Are inequalities a function of values or structure (economic or spatial)? Is the legacy of past racism or does racism still work? Do individuals control their own destiny or do social forces and shape our life paths? These debates are ongoing, in part because they misunderstand the nature of culture. Culture is not a stable set of beliefs that define the world. Culture is always contested, and our daily engagements with the world constantly shape that world. Individual choices are always shaped by the contexts (ideological, economic, and social) in which we live, and raise children.

Confronted face-to-face with the city's obvious failures, we see the exclusion of children. These kinds of exclusions of children from idealized relationships between generations and the order of childhood, with its attendant social norms and practices. We have a significant commitment to the idea that children can become adults through education. Adults either must engage with the world or to bolster ideologies of equal opportunity.

Life-cycle concerns focused on children and the idea that people of all races "share a common future" and that politicians want effective

tive policing, good schools, and recreation. The terrain of local politics is particularly interesting in the public sphere. In Queens, he found that the boundaries of community change were defined by the arrival of Black and Latin American immigrants, beginning in the 1960s. We saw a similar phenomenon in the public school students as “our kids” leaving the Oakland Hills, most upper-middle-class. The “common fate” with the working class or lower class adults bemoaned the state of public schools and their in improving the schools. Hills residents complained about the limited resources available in public schools and city services for their neighborhood, demanding that they always simply pay for private services. This retreat into their private streets and into their private lives. This distance from a common fate with the working class hills residents to construct a defensive posture around their right to remain distinctly separate.

This middle-class retreat was certainly not unique to the neighborhood, nor was it evidence of an upper-class retreat. Part of these white neighbors. Retreat into the private sphere increasingly characterizes the middle class in cities.<sup>85</sup> What was remarkable about the private High School prevented what most of the public schools granted, its effective isolation from public life in the city. Retreating into the private sphere of the school, neighbors around the school from the public sphere couldn't escape the real effects of mass poverty, whether the effects of youth poverty, whether the effects of youth poverty, whether the effects of youth poverty, as claims to the private spaces of neighborhood. Proximity often fed efforts to erect defenses around the neighborhood, but it could offer real possibilities for progressive politics of childhood.

There were some incipient moves toward a more inclusive the Skyline Task Force. As “neighbors” around the Youth Center, white homeowners began to understand some student needs and the effects of surveillance and policing. They joined in demanding better food in the cafeteria, better bus service,

tion facilities.<sup>83</sup> Sanjek argues that the  
y important for creating a multiracial  
that the definition of “our people” and  
d as black residents, and later Korean  
an to participate in community poli-  
in the Laurel district, where defining  
d to an inclusive civic politics.<sup>84</sup> But in  
e-class neighbors didn’t share a “com-  
wer middle class. While many wealthy  
chools, they rarely personally invested  
ents often didn’t even understand the  
schools. While they demanded better  
during times of budget cuts they could  
They could retreat in their private cars  
luxurious homes and private schools.  
h other citizens in the city encouraged  
e community and to argue that it was  
e from the rest of the city.

inly not unique to the Skyline neigh-  
unusual racial or class hostility on the  
ing from a disorderly and truly pub-  
the way the upper middle class lives  
at this neighborhood was that Skyline  
he urban upper middle class takes for  
oblems that may affect the rest of the  
e simply could not fully isolate these  
problems youth face in Oakland. They  
sive state disinvestments in youth and  
manifested as violence among youth,  
ighbors, or as a dirty campus. This prox-  
ive walls between the school and the  
possibilities for developing a more pro-

towards a politics of inclusion within  
” met with students and parents plan-  
ners without children in public schools  
eds and to move beyond calls for more  
with parents and students to demand  
service, and alternatives to suspension.

Neighbors learned, and expressed she should have a full-time school nurse or counselor to address health needs. One white neighbor was shocked to hear a young woman's most basic requirements for a room. When Task Force members found the administration, instead of on students, they reached an agreement with parents. The Task Force built the Youth Center, built exactly where the school was, and the students reassured neighbors.

Shirley Jackson told a story that captures the politics might look like and why it is important to act like bad boys—as our own. One day she was sitting at the bus stop and something happened. She confronted the students, full of street talk. “What the mother-fuckin’ stuff at my car?” She demanded they take responsibility. The kids got pissed. “What the bitch?” Soon the police came and had to take them. When the police asked, she said, “Yes, press charges.” The police asked, “What are they doing now?” Shirley paused and, reminded of how often she had seen men as criminals, she turned to the boy who was having a family conflict. There’s no problem with that man. “Sorry I came at you like that. What’s your name?” From the boy’s “stone cold” expression, his eyes.” They drove back up to Skyline. Shirley talked to the boy’s mom, who gave them permission to take the child. Shirley made the young man write a report card, and make dinner that night. “That boy. That child is my heart.”

lock, that Skyline High School didn't  
counselors to address the students' mental  
s horrified at a Task Force meeting to  
quest for toilet paper in the girl's bath-  
cused their frustration on the school  
they could occasionally find points of  
ce neighbors finally agreed to support  
the students wanted it from the begin-  
bors about security plans.

aptured what a more inclusionary pol-  
important to treat all kids—even those  
e day about a dozen kids were throw-  
ning hit and damaged her car. Shirley  
t language and attitude: "Who threw  
She demanded that they step up and  
l off and called back, "What are you, a  
one kid in the back of the car. When  
charges." But then a white man came by  
? Did they break into your car?" Shir-  
n white neighbors defined black young  
man, saying, "My son and I are hav-  
m." Then she apologized to the young  
My name is Shirley Jackson. What's  
old face," she saw "tears welling up in  
ne High School with the police to call  
ission to do anything, including spank  
n call her Auntie Shirley, show her his  
ght for her. Now they are close: "I love

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## Cruising down the B

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One spring day in 2003, as I traveled toward in the Laurel district, a fifteen-year-old girl asked me what I was doing. When I told her I was walking toward the corner of 35th and MacArthur. She said, "I don't want youth in this neighborhood." At noon, a trickle of students wearing backpacks turned into a flood, filling the bus stops along the hill from Skyline High School to Skyline School. Others waited to transfer buses to East Oakland. Black, Tongan, Chinese, and Vietnamese, the sidewalks, sometimes spilled into the street. I walked toward in search of food and fun. Some kids were quiet; others were more boisterous, playing hopscotch, nutshells, or tossing insults and shouting. On occasion, the crowd gathered in a circle. Two Oakland police cars often sat near the corner for signs of trouble—accidents, fights, or other Oakland street scene.

Two years earlier, on a clear, cold day, I walked toward the boulevard with Jackie Patterson, an African American, 50-year-old and the neighborhood service center director. An older white woman who served as the chair of the Laurel Neighborhood Crime Prevention Committee. She pointed off this commercial corridor starting in the 1980s. She had more police, hired private security, tried to create and open after-school programs to keep kids off the street. She identified individual businesses that either had failed or they pointed to World Ground café and other businesses as signs of neighborhood revitalization.

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## Boulevard

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took pictures along MacArthur Boulevard. A thirteen-year-old African American girl asked me if I was writing a book about youth in Oakland. We were trying to move the bus stops from the sidewalk. She added in a matter-of-fact voice, "They don't want to." Every school day at 2:30 in the afternoon, kids with backpacks and holding bus passes turned out onto the MacArthur corridor. Some came from school or from nearby Bret Harte Middle School as they trekked home to North or South Oakland. Latino, and some white students filled the streets, or roamed down the boulevard. Some kids listened quietly to music on headphones, some were fighting with their friends, throwing punches, or shouting across the streets to friends. On the sidewalk, people came to watch the excitement of a fight. Kids waited at busy bus stops casually monitoring the street, accepted as a natural, normal part of the neighborhood.

One day in January 2001, I walked down the boulevard with an African American mother of a thirteen-year-old, a neighborhood coordinator, and Pat Jackson, a spry and energetic NCPC youth coordinator. The Laundromat Council led a broad effort to clear kids off the street in the late 1990s. They campaigned for the removal of bus stops, and developed programs to get kids off the street. As we walked, they discussed whether they helped or hurt the neighborhood. The mother mentioned Farmer Joe's organic marketplace and how it had helped, but complained that one Chinese

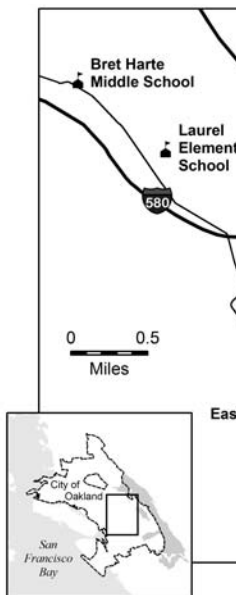


Figure 12. Map of MacArthur Boulevard area in Oakland, California, by Robert Kumler and Diana Sintor.

restaurant needed to be closed because of the presence of hand-written signs advertising one-dollar stores, liquor stores, and beauty salons. Pat Jackman, who said that students had been “warned to stay away from here, or they were told to go straight home, or they were told to leave here. They can’t loiter.” Pat Jackman explained to the owner of a restaurant and shop here if there are crazy kids in the way of the fragile revitalization of the area, she struggled for decades as waves of urban

The history of MacArthur Boulevard is an incomplete, transformation from a land of consumption—and the contradictory process. Moving east along MacArthur Boulevard into Elmhurst, you can see the ways the area was made and remade by successive redevelopment districts with art deco storefronts and a



MacArthur Boulevard. (Mark  
n, University of Redlands)

se it drew crowds after school with its  
llar meals. We stopped at small grocery  
s where Jackie explained to merchants  
ay away from here after school. They  
don't have to go home, but they have  
kson most clearly framed the problem  
nail salon, "People don't want to come  
everywhere." Youth seemed to stand in  
f this commercial corridor, which had  
n restructuring washed over the city.  
d traces Oakland's fitful, and certainly  
andscape of production to a landscape of  
role young people have played in the  
r Boulevard through the Laurel district  
Oakland's urban landscape has been  
velopment efforts. Small commercial  
abandoned movie theaters dot MacAr-

thur Boulevard, evidence of the village streetcar routes in the 1920s and '30s to the suburban suburbs that had sprouted up in East Oakland. Motels, hot dog stands, burger drive-throughs, and abandoned gas stations mark the street's decline as the main highway which led an influx of population to the heart of downtown Oakland. The motels highlight Oakland's deepening economic divide. "no loitering signs" and the logos of private informal low-income housing and home-sharing. Prostitutes, and drug addicts live wearily at the cost of an apartment's security deposit.

The empty storefronts that dot MacArthur Boulevard tell a poignant story. Civic boosters in the 1950s promoted Oakland as an "all-American city." Concerned by a *Tribune*, run by the politically powerful Mayor, a policy forbidding the use of the term "ghetto" in Oakland neighborhood.<sup>1</sup> City leaders invested in creating a new network of freeways and a transit system, which they hoped would help Oakland compete with San Francisco. These freeways displaced Oakland's neighborhoods, displacing the Black community, facilitating white flight to the suburbs. Traffic away from Oakland's commercial district. A music shop in the heart of the Laurel district. The MacArthur Freeway was completed in the early 1950s, the heart of the neighborhoods. There was a

The Eastmont Mall, located on MacArthur Boulevard in the Elmhurst neighborhood, provides an example of how to reinvent itself in the wake of decline. From the 1920s through the '50s, a Chamber of Commerce in the East Oakland flatlands that provided blue-collar jobs. But by the early 1950s, it closed. In its place, Hahn and Company introduced their pioneering concept of the mall as a "one-stop shop" from the suburbs to the city.<sup>4</sup> In the 1980s, when black teenagers and multiracial youth, theater, ate in the food court, and shopping centers, department stores and small boutiques, as well

centers built up along the Key System to serve the expanding industrial gar- East Oakland's lower hills and flatlands. throughs, auto-repair shops, and aban- development in the 1940s and early '50s reasingly mobile and car-loving popu- and San Francisco. Now rundown economic inequalities. Covered with private security companies, they serve as homeless shelters where a mix of families, k to week when they can't afford the

Arthur Boulevard tell another impor- worked to reshape and promote Oak- ned about the city's image, the *Oakland* ful Knowland family, had an editorial "slum" or "ghetto" to describe any Oak- ted in a regional development strategy, and the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) o Oakland's city center better compete and BART carved deep divides into many in West Oakland's historic black the emerging suburbs, and redirecting al corridors. The long-time owner of a istrict, explained that after the MacAr- ly 1960s, it "just killed" the commercial "no more traffic on the street."<sup>2</sup>

Arthur Boulevard at the edge of the apt symbol of the city's troubled efforts industrialization and suburbanization.<sup>3</sup> evrolet plant was one of many facto- provided well-paying and often union- ixties, this plant and most others were any built the Eastmont Mall, bringing as "a cool place to hang out as well as The mall was briefly successful in the iracial families hung out at the movie pped at a full complement of depart- ell as the grocery store, drug store, and

library, which met basic neighborhood needs. Penney's and Mervyn's left the mall in ruins, tied out. Walking through the mall, one could see the extent of Oakland's flatlands in the early 1970s, bouncing off undecorated walls and empty storefronts. In a frenzy, the mall as entertainment, the place

These changes along the boulevard shaped Oakland's youth. Movie theaters closed, as did the rink in East Oakland that had provided a space for deindustrialization and white flight. In the 1970s, to reclaim the semi-abandoned commercial space, teenagers and young adults gathered in the parking lot to play music, dance, and socialize. Mustangs with gold rims. Slowly they created a hop-influenced car culture and form of social interaction. People blasted music from open car doors, performed cars through slow acrobatic dances, swerves, wheelies, "dipping" by alternately hitting the ground and sometimes "ghost-riding" as they drove themselves, demonstrating their

Many former participants, and even those who were in those early years as relatively peaceful observers, recall "It was just black folks and cars everywhere. Everybody was walking around just talking, but the police looked at us as if we were a threat. [It] was more about you see us. Now get out of the car and dance." As hip-hop artists, the Sideshow grew larger and more popular. Revelers from all over the Bay Area. The city's sweeps in the late 1990s pushed Sideshow out of other large commercial parking lots. A party that unexpectedly cropped up throughout the corridors in East Oakland, even downtown. It was an increasingly expensive and sometimes violent event. Even Chief Word acknowledged that it was a mistake, by pushing them out of the parking lots in the neighborhoods."<sup>8</sup> Sideshows literally left behind circular black tire skid marks that intimidated neighbors that the city had not provided a safe and too often dangerous place.



ood needs. But after anchor tenants JC  
the early 1990s, the mall slowly emp-  
ne feels and hears the retail abandon-  
shoes of footsteps and isolated voices  
empty stores. The bustle and consumer  
palace of consumer goods is gone.

l left gaping holes in spaces for Oak-  
did a major bowling alley and a roller  
ided spaces for young people before  
In the late 1980s young people began  
nmercial spaces of East Oakland. Black  
on weekend nights in the Eastmont  
show off candy-painted Corvettes and  
y invented an Oakland original: a hip  
of cruising called the Sideshow. Young  
doors and windows as they pushed their  
winging their cars in donuts and figure  
brakes and gas in time with the music,  
danced on top of or around cars that  
driving skill and courage.<sup>5</sup>

n some observers, describe Sideshows  
ful. Yakpasua Zazaboi fondly recalled,  
where. It filled up the whole lot . . . peo-  
having fun. . . . People weren't looking  
ore like a welcoming thing, like, 'Man,  
d be with us.'"<sup>6</sup> Promoted by local hip  
and began to draw black and Latino  
But new city regulations and police  
shows out of the Eastmont Mall and  
As a result, it became a roving, rowdy  
throughout residential and commercial  
town, as the police and drivers played  
nes dangerous game of cat and mouse.  
Oakland Police Department "made a  
parking lot of Eastmont Mall and into  
ally marked the MacArthur corridor  
served as a constant reminder to frus-  
yet overcome its image as a disorderly



Figure 13. The Sideshow's spectacular classic car show  
(Image courtesy of Yakpasua Zazaboi, Syracuse University)

Eastmont Mall tried to reinvent itself in its first century. Its “innovative solution” included social service providers and government offices, a computer training center, a library, a senior center, health department offices interspersed with retail stores like Young’s Wigs, beauty supply stores, a car wash, a hair salon, All African Imports, a Black Museum, and a Value Plus with threadbare industrial globe lights and fluorescent lights, and big signs advertising local businesses. The efficiency center was the most stylish office building. The mall found a new anchor tenant when the police department moved its Oakland headquarters in the empty Mall building. This new tenant provided, a new grocery store (the neighborhood) finally moved into the mall.

Linda Jackson, the black homeowner, described her hope that a redevelopment would make her Elmhurst neighborhood look more like Rockridge, one of the most solidly gentrified neighborhoods. She wanted to be able to walk down to Market Street to a fitness center and boutique dress shop.



imits to public space.

(dewayz)

lf once again at the turn of the twenty-  
to retail” was to replace stores with  
ent agencies. A large security office, a  
enior citizen activity center, and public  
sed among the few remaining stores—  
ell phone provider, Fashions for Dolo-  
slim Bakery, and a dingy store called  
gray carpet, partly burned-out fluores-  
ow interest rates. The welfare self-suffi-  
ce in the mall. Finally, in 2000 the mall  
police department located its new East  
Mervyn’s store. With the secure image  
ery store (one of few in the neighbor-

er activist whom we met in chapter 1,  
ed MacArthur Boulevard could make  
re like the Laurel district, or even like  
trified walking districts in the city. She  
cArthur to go to a Starbucks, to visit a  
s, and to sit at a restaurant with tables

and chairs outside. She hated the Sides without hearing all these cars, loud moving down the street polite, without pa foul language, nobody hanging on th and throwing it out in the street whe out along MacArthur Boulevard—and corners—captured community activis redevelopment had not yet reached Oa reified an image many neighborhoods to escape. As Mrs. Jackson complained Oakland as a space for investment: “U we’re so poor that we can’t afford anyth

show. “I want to be able to walk down  
music.” She wanted to see “kids walk-  
ants hanging down to their knees and  
e corners with a bottle in their hand  
a they’re done.” Young people hanging  
d the black marks from donuts on the  
ts’ worries that the promise of urban  
kland’s far-flung neighborhoods. They  
like Elmhurst were desperately trying  
d, many investors refused to see East  
nfortunately people have this idea that  
ning.”

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# Potential Thugs and

## *Youth and the Spatial Politics of Urban Redevelopment*

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On February 25, 2003, Oakland passed a new ordinance that would “prohibit minors from engaging in illegal drug activity.” The ordinance targeted drug dealing, not kids hanging out on the streets. The hearing was almost entirely about how the ordinance would affect youth. Oakland’s multiracial youth testified that this law would increase the problems they already faced on Oakland’s streets. As a young man explained, “People think we’re thugs. We wear a beanie and a pea coat. And I’m

Bill Clay, the black community organizer, was frustrated by these claims that the law targeted youth. He cate both supporters and opponents of the ordinance about kids. The many African American youth who spoke in favor of the new law hoped it would protect all young people in the city, particularly those with graying cornrows and a Raiders jacket. He said the idea that it’s okay to be on the corner was not what he wanted. He hoped, “This law would . . . give us an opportunity to applauding here tonight the opportunity to live in the city.”

This hearing demonstrated the perception of youth in Oakland’s neighborhoods: that “youth are the cause of crime and disorder in the city.”<sup>9</sup> It also demonstrated how young people used urban space and how racial and spatial cleavages in Oakland’s politics.

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# Gangsters

## *Politics of*

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and City Council held a public hearing about loitering in public for the purpose of this law was narrowly crafted to target the street, but the debate at the hearing about whether the law would or should affect Oakland's activist organizations had mobilized several parents and grandparents to protest racial profiling and harassment youth. One nineteen-year-old African American man said, "I'm on the block dealing because I'm waiting for the bus."

Police activist in Elmhurst, was frustrated by young people, but he had to educate the community that the antiloitering law wasn't just for African adults and senior citizens who would positively affect the behavior of young black kids. James Collins, wearing a sign that said "We don't want to endorse the police. It's not okay." Rev. Henry Chesnut said, "Some of these young people that are here today are here to learn how people are supposed

to live. The pervasive idea that we have seen across the country that young people were responsible for most of the crime is a myth. The highlighted conflicting views over the issue of loitering are a deep and profound race, class, and generational divide. Black, Latino, and Asian youth activ-

ists, city officials, and older African Americans debated the meaning of “kids on the corner.” Were these kids on the fast track to criminality?

Community meetings in Oakland discussed the “kids on the corner” landscape.<sup>10</sup> Proposals for youth curfew and loitering ordinances popped up every few years, but they often fell in an endless loop.<sup>11</sup> Supporters argued that curfews would encourage young people to use public spaces in the city. Curfew laws served as metaphors for many dangers in the city. “Kids on the corner” became the most common metaphor in Oakland’s working-class flatland neighborhoods. Neighbors from Elmhurst worried that the streets were filled with drug dealers. As Jean Taylor explained, “Kids on the corner are drug dealers. . . . It hasn’t failed me yet. You know what they begin to do. They have no business the streets. They’re on the corner who are good kids.” Because of the challenges of coming of age in the disintegrating neighborhood, these black elders often led efforts to get the streets cleaned up.

But efforts to clear youth off the streets often failed. The flatlands into the city’s commercial corridors. In the 1990s, a wide range of efforts to change the way the streets were cleaned up, from police sweeps and proposed curfews to community programs. These divergent efforts relied on different understandings of organization of childhood and youth—often seen as “matter out of place.”<sup>12</sup> Teaching youth to “fit in the city” seemed to hold the key to Oakland’s future. Youth had to be taught not to be a problem. Youth could make a successful transition to a new life in a fragile commercial redevelopment effort.

Oakland city government under Mayor Ron Dellums pursued a liberal urban development model. They tried to create “distinctive places of consumption” and “an entertainment venue.” Urban redevelopment critics have argued that these “urban redevelopment” efforts were a “virtual privatization of urban space,” with the streets cleaned up by cappuccino.<sup>13</sup> Cities like Oakland were trying to create an image in order to compete for increased investment. Oakland’s carefully crafted image was often undermined by the struggle to make itself “safe for gentrification.”



Americans at this meeting struggled over  
Were they kids waiting for the bus? Or

often produced “a moral vocabulary of  
laws, antiloitering laws, and anticruis-  
ears in Oakland politics, as if replaying  
that there were right and wrong ways for  
the city. The “corner” and “the streets”  
trous turns on the path to adulthood.  
t common shorthand for drug dealing  
neighborhoods. Black homeowner activ-  
streets literally turned “kids” into drug  
s don’t need to be out there with those  
ng boys hanging around watching . . .  
ere. I just don’t see kids hanging on the  
f their urgent fears about black youth  
environments of Oakland’s flatlands,  
et kids off the street.

et extended far beyond Oakland’s flat-  
dors and even downtown. We’ve seen  
way youth used space across Oakland:  
urfews to expanded after-school pro-  
on and reproduced a particular spatial  
—one that defined youth on the streets  
ung people the proper way to “live in  
akland’s future in two interconnected  
o hang out on the streets so that they  
adulthood—but also so that Oakland’s  
ort could succeed.

Mayor Jerry Brown embraced a neolib-  
ried to create the vibrant public spaces  
n” that would make Oakland “a desti-  
ne for the middle classes.” Many crit-  
velopment efforts have often led to the  
that Sharon Zukin calls “domestication  
faced new pressures to manage their  
singly mobile capital investments. But  
built on shaky ground. The city strug-  
on” in the context of deep class divides,

crime, and recurrent budget crises.<sup>14</sup> Oakland city government intensified its efforts to expand government regulation of traditional regimes of governance, as anthropologist Robert Lyman called it the “logic of zoning”: they “manage oppositional behavior” itself. Antiloitering laws, curfew, and “broken windows” policing—based on the “broken windows” theory—aim to produce public order instead of traffic. Cities like Oakland have increasingly expanded government regulation because they have had to. The city hoped that redesigned streets, street cleaning, and street sweeps to regulate the use of space, would create more public spaces needed for the city to reach its goals.

The literature on urban redevelopment often mention young people only in passing. Youth of color—are increasingly defined by their space.<sup>18</sup> But they have not sufficiently been included in and youth play in urban restructuring. Efforts to produce changes in urban spaces began in the late nineteenth century, new ideals of urban space that the private space of “home” was a result of industrial capitalism and an emerging public sphere shaped urban planning and encouraged the development of garden suburbs with their small houses. Repeated attempts over the last century to create a clean, non-polluting public sphere. Sociologists have written about the dangers of the corners in the streets. Whyte’s *Street Corner Society* and Clifford Geertz’s *Boy’s Story*. They made the familiar and the unknown. Lured kids into crime, and they create a new space (playgrounds or youth canteens) that would be a part of “childhood” and youth.”<sup>20</sup> But these efforts have produced new ideas and contours of public space.

Changes in childhood, and efforts to create a new public space, are totally reshaping urban space in twenty-first century cities. Children, and neighborhood activities, are changing childhood (and landscapes of consumption). These changes respond to deepening divides in childhood. Children are experiencing an extended

Responding to these pressures, Oaklanders try to make public space feel safe by the ways people use space.<sup>15</sup> These spatial strategies, as geographer Sally Merry explains, apply the opportunities for behavior rather than the constraints of laws, stay-away orders, and “quality-in-windows thesis”—all regulate spaces by trying to reform individual offenders.<sup>16</sup> Oaklanders have turned to these spatial strategies of “govern more while spending less.”<sup>17</sup> These strategies, along with new laws and police tactics, could create the appearance of order and help Oakland realize its redevelopment dreams. Oakland’s government largely ignores youth. Scholars studying the city and note that youth—especially those labeled as “undesirable occupants” of public space—have explored the important role children play in the city. Changes in childhood have helped shape the city both in the past and in the present. In the early years of childhood helped produce the idea of a “haven from the heartless world” of the early commercial culture.<sup>19</sup> These ideals led to the creation of Oakland’s industrial parks and private backyards. They also fed into the desire to segregate children from a potentially dangerous world. Sociologists and reformers wrote extensively about the early twentieth century, as in William I. Thomas and Dorothy Swaine Thomas’s *Childhood and Family* and Clifford Shaw’s *Jack Roller: A Delinquent Boy’s Story*. The argument that hanging out on corners and in public spaces led to delinquency and the need for separate age-segregated spaces (like playgrounds) were integral to defining the categories of childhood. Changes in childhood also helped produce the idea of public and private space in urban America. Efforts to save children, are again fundamental to the early twentieth-century neoliberal cities. Parkways and parks are producing new landscapes of urban space (and suburban space) in Oakland as they struggle to address the needs of childhood and youth. Many middle-class parents worry about their adolescent children, but as we have seen,

some kids, particularly African American children, in their childhood. In response to urgent concerns (and the problems they imagined), neighborhood activists, parents, and others always kids live in the city. Explicit struggles over public space—like the loitering hearing—have shaped the politics of public space in Oakland. But so have the ways children use space in their daily lives.

These new landscapes have removed old meanings and set in motion new meanings of public space. Activists increasingly identified kids on the streets as present or future members of Oakland's future. The streets were marked as black and crossed racial lines. The streets became a potent symbol of the city's neighborhoods across the city. Oakland's streets were equivalents of the many "broken windows" and "blighted corridors," evidence of the deeper disinvestment in Oakland's redevelopment dreams.

Geographer Don Mitchell asks, "What are the politics of spaces—and to what degree are we willing to make the effort to control 'undesirables' who are excluded from political activists?"<sup>22</sup> Most adults at the time gave the same answer: youth did *not* have a right to the streets. This attempt to erase youth from Oakland's streets by white, middle-class adults demonizing young people as criminals in Oakland were a vital part of the city's redevelopment regime and reconstructing urban space. The struggle to address fundamental inequalities in childhood was fought with after-school programs in order to provide a safe space for all of Oakland's kids. This geographic fight was a struggle against consumption that increasingly privatized public space, also threatened to define young people as criminals who could be excluded from the city.

### *Chasing the Dream of Urban Redevelopment*

In 1998, newly elected Mayor Jerry Brown gave the opening in a community meeting: "We want to drive through." His inaugural address was about crime, to revitalize downtown, to improve

American boys, face real exclusions from concerns about coming of age (real and parents, and children have changed the struggles over appropriate uses of public space reshaped the contours and boundaries. There have been changes in the ways parents and

and many young people from city streets “kids on the corner.”<sup>21</sup> Neighborhoods on the street as potential gangsters, as the city’s underclass, an underclass that both blurred and reinforced class lines. This is why young people on the streets of the present and future class status of Oakland’s young people became the living “scars” that marred the city’s commercial landscape and the borders that stood in the way of Oakland’s

development. Who has the right to the city and its public space? The struggle to shrink public space in an ongoing process. Whether they be teenagers, homeless or jobless, the antiloitering hearing converged on the streets of Oakland and its public places. But the problem of Oakland’s streets was not the simple result of “too many” black kids. Black activists and politicians were actively constructing Oakland’s neoliberal urban landscape. They tried to create a “geographic fix” for the city—combining intensified policing and surveillance to secure a safe passage to adulthood for young people. The police helped consolidate new landscapes of privatized and securitized urban space. But it was the young people who remained on the streets as criminalized and unprotected category and protections of childhood.

## *Development*

Alvin Brown described his vision for the city of Oakland. He wanted to make Oakland a drive to instead of a walk. He laid out four main goals: to decrease crime, to improve public education by creating char-

ter schools, and to create “centers for” goals together encapsulated Brown’s d as what many have called a “theme p sional managerial class to experience t

Oakland worked hard to reshape its high-tech boom that was transforming two primary negative images: that it wa as Gertrude Stein insisted, “There’s no ous city. Oakland launched an advertis stations and bus stops in San Francisco land’s warmer weather and the fact tha than much of San Francisco. For sever Francisco to Oakland, I passed a large ritt and Oakland’s skyline and the capt paign captured the hopes of the city d residents. But many worried that Oakl ghetto itself—stood in the way of its rec

Mayor Brown crafted a neoliberal adopted market-oriented growth strate to compete “to be more attractive than put their money. He acknowledged th generated substantial inequalities, bu any burdens on private investors, “no resisted efforts to mandate low-incom ment projects or to pass living-wage an that Oakland had “to create an invest government” so the “private market” Oakland.”<sup>26</sup> This description of the “m an almost blind faith that the benefit to lift all boats in Oakland.<sup>27</sup> As histor embraced these kinds of pro-growth ur Since little help was forthcoming from tried to develop their way out of comp

Mayor Brown’s urban regime embr redevelopment strategy.<sup>29</sup> He launched sand new residents into downtown and place where residents could “live, wor sity.”<sup>30</sup> He formed close relationships tracked many downtown housing and

art and creativity” in Oakland. These dreams that he could reinvent Oakland as a “park city” that would lure the professionals and the excitement of urban life.<sup>23</sup>

As Oakland tried to catch the wave of the new urbanism in the Bay Area, Oakland fought against being seen as simply a bedroom community—that, “there, there”—and that it was a danger zone. A marketing campaign with ads posted at BART stations, pointing out the advantages of Oakland, argued that Oakland was closer to San Francisco than San Jose. In the months, whenever I drove from San Francisco, I saw a billboard with a picture of Lake Merced and the slogan “Oakland. It’s Time.” This ad campaign was run by the city’s development office and many Oakland residents criticized the city’s image as a poor black city—as a city that had no development dreams.

The city’s development regime that aggressively pursued new development strategies.<sup>24</sup> He explained that Oakland had “learned from other cities where developers could not get a deal because the global high-tech economy had moved on” and insisted that the city couldn’t place blame on the market, “no matter how well intentioned.”<sup>25</sup> Brown argued that the housing set-asides in new development and tenant-rights legislation, explaining that the city’s market- and development-oriented city government could “work its magic in the City of Oakland.” The “magic” of the private market expressed by the city’s government would “trickle down” to the rest of the city. As historian Michael Katz argues, many cities in the United States adopted urban development policies in the 1990s. In California, state and federal governments, cities and developers all contributed to a complex urban fiscal and social crises.<sup>28</sup>

Oakland placed gentrification as its central urban development strategy. It had an ambitious plan to bring ten thousand new jobs to the city and promoted a vision of downtown as a “new urbanism” park, and play in ‘a spirit of elegant density.’ The city worked with Bay Area developers and fast-growing tech companies to promote upscale retail developments. Political

scientist Owen Kirkpatrick quotes one of the city's most successful businesses—a desirable business—like software corporation Oracle—as having a strong interest in investing in the city, Oakland. “Oracle is a business leader, an ‘innovative packaging’ company,” he says. “The city offered tax breaks, public-private partnerships, fiber optic cables and used its powers of eminent domain for investment and residential development.” He also responds to critics’ concerns that low-income residents were being displaced. He said, “I’m not ashamed to know capital is coming to Oakland.”<sup>32</sup> One “pro-business” advocacy group, the Oakland Economic Development Foundation, with major successes in luring “quality” businesses to the city.

Jerry Brown’s transformation from a liberal Democrat to a conservative city leader received accolades in neoliberal circles. In 2001, the free-market think tank Manhattan Institute awarded him the “Innovator Award.” The institute praised Brown, both the mayor and City Manager Robert Bobb, for “encrusted city government,” leaving behind a “legacy of ‘shaking off the failed orthodoxies of the past.’” Brown’s recognition of the city’s “basic economic reality” and his commitment “to beat down the forces of stagnation” were cited as key factors.

There were significant social costs associated with the city’s development regime, which critics and community groups documented a massive 300% increase in housing costs in the first eighteen months of Brown’s first term. In the East Oakland neighborhoods and black tenants displaced by the city’s development, a one bedroom apartment in Oakland cost \$1,200 a month, despite a city law that capped increases at 3%. “Two out of five Oakland families were displaced by rising housing costs,” and prices continued to rise. The city’s launch of a renewed wave of affordable housing in the early 2000s and youth activism in Oakland. People were asking, “Who are we redeveloping the city for? And who would benefit?”

Oakland’s economic development strategy was designed to feel safe to businesses and middle-class residents. As we have seen, adopted the “broken window” theory of economic development. In one interview Robert Bobb referred to the city’s strategy. “In community meetings, I asked people, ‘Would you put your hamburger wrapper on the ground?’”



Brown advisor who said that whenever communications and biotech—expressed would act like a “good venture capital— of goodies to dangle in front of com- public subsidies, and publicly maintained of eminent domain to promote private nt, especially downtown.<sup>31</sup> Responding sidents might be displaced, the mayor lists. . . . We need more capital in Oak- group credited his two terms in office jobs, retail and housing.”<sup>33</sup>

n icon of the liberal 1970s to a pragmatic liberal policy circles and the press. The itute awarded Mayor Brown an “Urban e’s magazine *City Journal* reported that ert Bobb were “cleaning up a barnacle- ehind “decades of racial politics,” and ne Great Society.” The article celebrated c needs for order and private develop- wn all opposition to achieve them.”<sup>34</sup>

and a growing opposition to this pro- alled “Jerrification.” Tenant advocacy ncrease in no-cause evictions in the term. These evictions hit low-income proportionately. The average rent for d soared 17% in the same time period es at 3%.<sup>35</sup> A study in 2000 found that e already experiencing problems with to soar.<sup>36</sup> The median cost of a home in 2003.<sup>37</sup> These rapid changes helped housing activism, union organizing, e began to ask, Who was Jerry Brown ould be displaced in the process?<sup>38</sup>

strategy focused on making city spaces ss residents. The city manager, as we ws thesis” into his mantra for the city. ed to Disneyland as a model for this k people who’s been to Disneyland and appers on the street there. ‘If you lit-

ter,' I tell them, 'it says it's okay to come where the "broken windows" theory was advanced. It says it's okay to use aggressive policing practices to reduce "quality of life" crimes like public drinking, gambling, drug dealing, prostitution, and so on. It says it's okay to regulate the ways "risky" people used space. It says it's okay to use things like parole, creating intensified supervision, and installing video cameras in high-crime areas.' He explained that Oakland did not implement this in part because it didn't have the large police force to maintain a New York-style crackdown.

Oakland's commercial revitalization focused on streetscapes, not just securing safe streets but also creating a public retreat to privatized space that characterized the private estates in the hills.<sup>41</sup> Oakland mirrored that of many other U.S. cities by creating an uptown arts district and mixed-use projects along the estuary harbor and around the downtown. An upscale food emporium modeled on Seattle's Pike Place Market was one of the plans included small parks and open spaces, pedestrian paths, and open plazas with café and retail. As geographer Neil Smith argues, retaking the city was about more than gentrified housing." It required creating a "recreation, consumption, production" economy. The city's efforts to lure department stores downtown were seen as eroding "downtown's sense of place and character." The city hoped to give the part-time shopper an authentic alternative to the hills. A Development Agency study found that the city could raise a million in retail sales tax because residents would spend more. By revitalizing downtown, the city hoped to lure hills residents to spend their money in

### *A Benetton Ad, Not a Poor Black*

Despite Jerry Brown's efforts and the success of the late twentieth century, Oakland was far from a model city. Oakland's commercial districts were not always so inviting and lively landscapes for citizens. Public spaces would attract "disorderly" people. At the heart of these struggles, but the city's re-

mit crime.”<sup>39</sup> Oakland, like New York, as created, embraced many zero-tolerance-of-life crimes” like public drinking, and cruising.<sup>40</sup> The city also tried to regulate, implementing curfews for people on the streets for serious youth offenders, and placards. Neighborhood activists often commented these strategies consistently enough, the numbers of police officers required to respond to quality-of-life offenses.

A strategy also relied on creating vibrant public spaces. This strategy rejected the wholesale replication of suburban gated communities or San Francisco’s downtown development efforts in the early twenty-first century: creating mixed-use waterfront redevelopment projects and Jack London Square, where a new Seattle’s Pike Market was planned. These projects included outdoor cafe space, pedestrian walkways and bike lanes, and restaurant seating outside.<sup>42</sup> As geography for the middle classes involved “more about constructing entirely new landscapes of consumption and pleasure.”<sup>43</sup> The city abandoned its focus on downtown and focused instead on market-oriented development, which could “offer the leisure experience to the mall.”<sup>44</sup> An Oakland’s Economic Development Office at Oakland was losing up to \$9.5 million a year as residents often had to leave the city to shop.<sup>45</sup> The city hoped to lure middle-class hills and lower income residents back to the city.<sup>46</sup>

## *City*

The real estate boom at the end of the century was not a fully gentrified or “theme park” development. Developers were torn between their efforts to create a new consumption and fears that these public spaces would be dominated by low-income participants. Young people were at the center of the response can only fully be understood

by looking at the intersections of race and space. Geographer Loretta Lees points to “diversity” within neoliberal urban redevelopment as a genuine public culture on the streets. “efforts to secure urban space stifle it.” Oakland touted the city’s diverse immigrant economic development site that Oakland “United States” according to the *USA Today*. Young people embodied this marketable, unregulated crowds of predominantly Black signs of “disorder” in Oakland’s communities.

Young “hipsters” were sometimes celebrated in vibrant public spaces and landscapes of articles published in 2007 in *San Francisco Turn*,” celebrated the “youthful hipness” in art scene, hipster bars, and restaurants as “the epitome of Oakland cool.” “hang out here to swap stories about their hangovers past, present and future.” “risk and hedonism” that geographer S. only of new consumer cultures but also work, most visible in the startups of Silicon. dick argues that “youth, youthful bodies have become the defining ideal of contemporary older adults “are increasingly encouraged ‘youthful’ in their ability to retool intellectual paths and—even in cultures of the body to appear younger, fitter and more energetic.”

The youthful energy, “hip consumer art scene promised to bring vibrant spaces would help the city complete its success of production to a landscape of consumption the diversity of the new uptown bar scene an uptown bar as “so perfectly multi-cultural ton ad.”<sup>53</sup> The meaning of diversity was the position of the emerging uptown scene young white artists and professionals with cultural capital, if not always the incorporation engine of redevelopment. This race and

and class in Oakland's diverse public spaces to "an underlying ambivalence about development efforts. City efforts to "foster often subvert that very goal" as their policies celebrated diversity and vitality."<sup>47</sup> The magazine, proudly proclaiming on its cover that Oakland was one of "most diverse cities in the world today" "diversity index."<sup>48</sup> But only some people had the ideal of diversity. Others, especially young black youth, represented the prime commercial districts.

It was also described as a key force in recreating the culture of consumption in Oakland. A series of articles in *San Francisco Magazine*, called "It's Oakland's new look" and "diversity" of the city's burgeoning arts scene. The author described these new artists as "The young and the nicotine-addicted" who brought their art, their tats, their day jobs, and their attitude."<sup>49</sup> This description celebrates the new culture that Susan Ruddick describes as typical not only of new entrepreneurial cultures of Silicon Valley and San Francisco.<sup>50</sup> Ruddick describes this as "youthful energy and creativity" and "temporary Western culture." Young and ambitious people are urged to actively construct themselves as "intellectually, to embrace uncertain career paths, to dress and discipline their bodies as a form of self-expression."<sup>51</sup>

This "new look" and diversity in Uptown's gritty street life to downtown Oakland that marked a successful transformation from a landscape of neglect to one of consumption.<sup>52</sup> News coverage emphasized the "mix" in the neighborhood; one article described "the mix" in the neighborhood as ethnic it seems like the set of a Benetton advertisement shaped by the racial and class composition of the neighborhood. The "Benetton" mix included many people of all races, many of whom had the same characteristics, that led many to define them as an "urban" mix and class mix marked the uptown scene

as distinct from other, more segregated youth cultures. The uptown scene did not have the same racial and class mix, but it also helped replace the uptown scene with a more benign and marketable identity.

Predominantly black clubs downtown Oakland's more youthful and gritty venues, establish strict dress codes that often forced clubs to close or change their format to respond to the changing demographics. The scene was often defined as a potentially dangerous and volatile environment. As one news article reported, "hip-hop clubs are drawing more violence prone crowds," crowds that are "predominantly African-American patrons."<sup>54</sup> Strict curfew laws and a licensing process, which assessed higher "insurance" fees, reduced the number of hip-hop events in Oakland.<sup>55</sup> When asked why the scene was going now, one club owner responded to a reporter. Journalist Davey D criticized the city's "lack of vision" for downtown nightlife, saying that Oakland's "nightlife scene"; "they just don't want black people downtown."

Oakland has a long history of ambivalent attitudes toward gatherings of black youth, as do many other cities. In the 1970s, Merritt became a popular hangout and a place where black youth would gather outside of the police zone. The practice of cruising from East Oakland into downtown Oakland spaces, "the Jewel of the City."<sup>58</sup> This cruising practice was controversial among many neighbors as well as community leaders. Adults at a 1996 City Council hearing criticized the practice as "out of Oakland."<sup>59</sup> The city council implemented an ordinance that prohibited passing between 10:00 p.m. and 4:00 a.m. in four hours. Heavy policing at the police zone led to an outright *mêlée* between the police and the youth. The organizers first moved, then abandoned the practice. Cruising continued in East Oakland, and the city spent over a thousand dollars a year on police overtime from the late 1990s and early 2000s.<sup>61</sup>

By 2001, Sideshows had made Oakland a hot spot for twenty-somethings from around the Bay Area. The hours excitement. As a police captain said, "Sideshows is a police study estimated that 38% of Sideshows attendees are from the Bay Area."

ated, working-class black and Latino  
l capture part of Oakland's real racial  
ace an image of dangerous black city  
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own were not permitted to celebrate  
elements. Several had to close their  
t prohibited "street" or hip hop styles,  
worryes about violence. Hip hop itself  
gerous and criminal black youth cul-  
p hop oriented clubs" attract "younger,  
they explained full of "young, mostly  
ode enforcement and a new permit-  
safety costs" for police, security, and  
acilities that held youth-oriented hip  
where the younger hip hop crowd was  
ed, "Maybe San Francisco."<sup>56</sup> Hip hop  
divergent responses to different kinds  
kland wants "a vibrant attractive night-  
folks to be a part of it."<sup>57</sup>

ivalent responses to unregulated gath-  
er U.S. cities. In the early 1990s, Lake  
d cruising spot, where crowds of black  
popular Festival of the Lake, extend-  
one of the city's most desirable public  
cruising generated profound discomfort  
ncerns, expressed by black and white  
, that it would "chase all the business  
lemented police sweeps and passed an  
ween two designated checkpoints twice  
popular Festival of the Lake escalated  
police and black young men in 1994.<sup>60</sup>  
doned the popular festival in 1997, but  
nd the city spent roughly five hundred  
time to control Sideshows throughout

kland a destination for teenagers and  
Bay Area who were looking for after-  
aid, "It's becoming the place to be." One  
eshow drivers came from surrounding

suburbs.<sup>62</sup> Images of Sideshows appeared in national and local production companies released *Gone Wild* and *Sydewayz* that documented the wild and almost ritualized conflicts with the police in a new site of conflict that spring. With the closure of the city and safe open spaces, Jack London Square after public space for young people to gather. When they gathered, drivers would sometimes shout obscenities, tires, or do donuts. Sideshows began to grow as caravans of cars spilled into East Oakland.

This was not the kind of destination that Governor Jerry Brown made eliminating Sideshows a priority again in his second term in 2005, as Attorney General California's attorney general.<sup>63</sup> The police increased officers and intensified patrols of East Oakland. The city and state legislature passed new laws to seize the car of anyone participating in a sideshow. Another law that allowed police to ticket anyone who gave a thousand traffic citations and towed someone's car for seven months of 2005.<sup>65</sup> "Sideshow" became a large youth gathering, street disorder, and a source of

Heavy police actions in Jack London Square. The NAACP and African American downtown community were "living with our sons," explained Dorothy King at a Barbecue, a prominent Jack London Square event. "The police mess with your son to really unbalance you. The police had impounded her eighteen-year-old son. A police officer determined that he was participating in a sideshow. The officer threatened to arrest King's daughter when she stopped her car outside the fast-food restaurant at the end night. Her daughter explained, "African American people, they come down hard." Dorothy King went outside to tell the police to stop harassing her son. At an NAACP hearing, King demanded that the police can American children alone. They just

Many black neighborhood activists organized protests against Sideshows, which had turned into a popular outdoor party venue. But they also organized programs for many black kids and young adults who



red in several popular hip hop videos, eased videos with titles like *Oakland* depicted the wild street parties, car tricks, and confrontations with the police. Jack London Square became one of the only multiplex theaters in Oakland. Jack London Square provided a much-sought-after destination to gather on weekend nights. As crowds gathered, they would honk their horns, blow off, play loud music, squeal their tires, and break out as nearby clubs closed, and the streets of Oakland.

Jack London Square in Oakland wanted to become a priority, first in 2001, and then in 2002. He prepared his campaign to become a priority. The police department doubled the number of patrols on Oakland's streets on weekend nights. In 2002, new laws were passed that allowed the police to patrol in the Sideshow, and then in 2005 to allow for street spectators.<sup>64</sup> The patrols issued five hundred and seventeen vehicles in the first year. The term "Sideshow" became a label quickly applied to any area of disorder or violence in the city.<sup>66</sup>

Jack London Square prompted complaints by the surrounding town business owners. "They're messing up my business," Dorothy King, the owner of Everett and Jones Square restaurant, said. "You have to have the ability to understand how it hurts you inside." The police impounded her son's car for thirty days after a complaint about playing his car stereo too loud. Another woman was fined for not driving off immediately after a complaint. Dorothy King's Broadway restaurant one week later. Dorothy King began to take a bullhorn to the streets, telling young people in front of her restaurant that the police "leave the African American people to do like the white children."<sup>67</sup>

Jack London Square in Elmhurst campaigned actively to turn their residential neighborhood into a destination. Dorothy King, who was not recognized, like Dorothy King, that she was only looking for access to some

public space. At one meeting with the Johnson, an African American mother of the neighborhood, insisted that Oakland lack parks, or movie theaters, as it had had. She wondered if instead of spending so much money could actually build something for young people that can be seen." A 21-year-old African American woman at the Sideshow held for young people no

We would meet up at Jack London Square, get out of the police, and get on the freeway to East Oakland. We would get in the car and walk around, then people would be talking off other driving skills. . . . I can honestly say that Oakland youth in a city where you are surrounded by people that don't understand you and there is no one with the power to make your life miserable. The

City council member Desley Brooks was instrumental in building support for a plan to create a large parking lot, where licensed and insured cars could be parked during racing crowds. Some police officers agreed that the suppression effort had caused as many problems as it solved. Members of this effort noted that San Diego had several legitimate drag racing courses, where cars could be driven and race, sometimes against the police. The city council rejected the plan. The Council member who opposed the lot; a white business owner in Elmhurst said that the lot "would have a bad impact on business." The city council's attempts to create unstructured space for young people was based on two presumptions: that Oakland was a crime-ridden city and that young people should be kept out of public space.

Black youth socializing in Oakland's public spaces are signifiers of Oakland's ghetto past that have been left behind. Their uses of public space serve as a reminder of the transition to a more gentrified landscape. In 2001, the city council voted to vote on a new Sideshow ordinance and a council member explained her support: "I'm tired of this." And council member Larry Reid said that the Sideshow would attract retailers to the MacArthur center.

Elmhurst police captain in 2001, Mayor in her forties who had grown up in and needed more bowling alleys, roller and when she was growing up. Bill Claych money on policing Sideshows, they youth: “Kids just want to go where they American woman explained the appeal not yet old enough to go to clubs:

square, wait till everyone was cleared by Oakland. So you’d dance and get out of would start doing “donuts” and show mostly say the sideshows are a haven for e constantly being harassed by police s a mayor who does everything in his e result is youth rebellion.<sup>68</sup>

ks tried in 2001, and again in 2005, to legitimate Sideshow in Oakland Coli-nsured drivers could perform for pay-nd, frustrated that their twenty-year-old y problems as it had solved.<sup>69</sup> Support-and Sonoma had successfully created young people paid to show off their police. But the mayor and most of the oliseum declined to open its parking rst thought that even legal Sideshows s.” These proposals, like so many other s for young people, foundered on the and’s hip hop street culture was itself d not be hanging out in the streets.

s commercial corridors became prime at many city leaders wanted to leave ved as a sign of Oakland’s incomplete ape of consumption. As they prepared n 2005, council member Pat Kernihan e negative press the city is getting on added that the ordinance would “help orridor.”<sup>70</sup>

## *Hanging Out on the Boulevard*

Neighborhood activists also wanted nations, to lure middle-class residents tracts. The city spent millions of econo the city's streetscapes to create distinct. In the Laurel district, the city built tv decorated with metal laurel leaves to d district. Matching dark green decora ioned lampposts with colorful laurel le cotta flower pots created a sense of ne along the walking district. Even in El was spent on infrastructure projects t look good, such as placing electrical w improvement projects.

Community groups in the Laurel d create a “pedestrian friendly,” comme bors and business owners worked toge Project (LCAP) and later the Laurel V nesses like liquor stores and bars, whi erties, and to replace them with more hosted village music festivals to crea Improvement District to pay for extr to make the streets feel safe. The LCAP owners to “become part of this exciting They lovingly described the neighborl lines and human scale” of the 1920s br the “streamlined pizzazz of the 1930s marketing strategy proclaimed the n become the next Rockridge or Piedm small specialty boutiques, upscale res flight retail outlets.”<sup>71</sup>

This careful marketing effort demon ment has extended to the neighborho not just cities—now compete with e attract businesses and professional Goode and Jeff Maskovsky have argu in this competitive context, often emb attractive” to investment by purging “

their neighborhoods to become destinations to shop in revitalized commercial districts. Economic development dollars to redesign five neighborhood commercial centers. Two huge, green, wrought iron arches, demarcate the heart of the commercial district. Benches, garbage cans, old-fashioned banners, and large, decorative terra cotta tiles—neighborhood identity—even a brand—were used. In 2008, much redevelopment money was spent that aimed to make the neighborhood more vibrant. The funding façade

district actively promoted this effort to create a commercially vibrant neighborhood. Neighbors met together in the Laurel Community Action Village Association to get rid of businesses which many identified as problem properties. They wanted upscale restaurants and shops. They wanted a lively street life and a Business Improvement District. A private security and street cleaning website urged merchants and homeowners to support the "new, up-and-coming district in Oakland." The neighborhood's historic buildings—the "simple brick two-story buildings, accented with art deco" and "some 1950s glitz." This neighborhood was perfectly poised to become a gentrified neighborhood full of restaurants, bookstores, cafés, and "top-

illustrates that neoliberal urban development is not a good level. Individual neighborhoods—each other and market themselves to workers. As anthropologists Judith S. S. and others argued, neighborhood activists, working class and poor, have made repeated calls to make themselves "more visible" and "out of their ranks of the undeserving poor."

This often seemed to be “the only op and development.”<sup>72</sup> Clearing youth of the Laurel district tried to make itself

Neighborhood activists and business people as impediments to commercial the Laurel district. When I asked Jackie in the neighborhood, she said that the to get up out of here. If they are in the otherwise they have to get out of the told me about a man who had opened on the 4400 block of MacArthur. He because kids were using [the restaurant that the same thing had happened at the next to it. Many convenience stores put or three kids in at a time. For almost a activists, the Taco Bell on the corner of between 3:30 and 6:00 except for its could not gather inside. Kids coming had also “been told to stay out of the something positive to the community.” went to the two karate schools, which provided supervised and structured activities youth normally did not contribute to the of the NCPC helped to ensure that youers in the Laurel district.

Youth in Oakland’s commercial district of the economic order. Instead they were disorders that might disrupt the safety consumption.<sup>73</sup> This position echoes consumers throughout the United States embraced bizarre techniques to keep ing classical music and high-pitched n “Mosquito: Stop Teen Loitering.”<sup>74</sup> Adults youth in commercial spaces and city s of well-ordered consumption” that inc complaints about kids in Oakland’s pu recognize adult middle-class ideals of They “hung out” and “loitered” in larg ing smoothly through the streets.<sup>76</sup>

tion for neighborhood improvement of the streets was one of the major ways more attractive to investment.

Business owners frequently framed youth and redevelopment along MacArthur in the Patterson where teenagers spent time they didn't anymore. "They've been told the after-school program, that's fine but the area because the area's off-limits." She had a restaurant with pinball machines that was "shut down by the community . . . [and] as a hangout spot." She mentioned the ¼ Pound Burger and the car wash posted no loitering signs and let only two people a year, at the insistence of neighborhood residents. The intersection of 35<sup>th</sup> and MacArthur closed for service to a drive-through so that crowds of youth would not flow down the hill from Skyline High School into the area . . . unless they're contributing to the neighborhood. Patterson later offered that some kids would not participate in programs, projects, but her basic assumption was that youth would not become major consum-

ers. These districts were not defined as integral parts of the neighborhood but were framed as the source of potential disorder and discomfort of adult landscapes of youth. There was a broad ambivalence about youth as consumers in these districts, where some retail outlets have signs that discourage youth from congregating, like play areas where only teens can hear, marketed as youth-friendly. Adults and business owners often defined these streets as challenging "the moral code that increasingly defines public space."<sup>75</sup> Many public spaces highlighted their refusal to encourage youth social interaction and consumption. Youth groups instead of shopping or mov-

Positioning youth as barriers to consumption given the economic power of the young, young adults constitute one of the most desirable targets for a wide range of marketing. Hip hop, once simply defined by white, middle-class youth, is now especially black kids, increasingly producing and consuming clothes, and culture as hip hop has become a dominant culture. Author Naomi Klein documents the process of commoditization and criminalization that extends easily to youth cultures: “When youth become a commodity in advertising culture, street culture becomes a commodity.”

Businesses and neighborhood activists often worry that adult consumers would avoid the Laurel district if it were filled with teenagers. Many neighborhood activists recall teenagers that gathered on the sidewalk on MacArthur. As Jenny Chin explained, “I remember when she found herself having to wade through them. She wouldn’t move aside, she was scared. A white man in the Laurel district recalled arriving one day on MacArthur where a “big knot” of twenty to thirty kids were hanging out in front of the Taco Bell. He found himself thinking, “There’s something happening there. But I don’t know what. Thirty white kids standing on the corner. Is this a gang? Is this a piece of my own neighborhood? But he had seen that kind of gathering before, so he was also “aware of the potential for violence.”

Neighborhood activists often hesitate to voice their fears of youth on MacArthur Boulevard because of the racial fears of others—either their own or the generation of neighborhood residents who grew up in this multiracial city. One white activist, who was more radical in her old age, complained to me on the hill “in Redwood Heights won’t share your fears.” When I asked why, she pointed to the large population around the buses.” Some people are afraid of the American social patterns.” Richard “Mac” recalled neighborhood shopping” but afraid that “we’ll run into violence on MacArthur Boulevard.” Racism, he explained, is “on the surface.” As the Laurel district tried to



Commercial revitalization is deeply ironic youth market. Preteens, teenagers, and most desirable consumer markets and are making efforts. This youth market is no longer mass suburban kids. Urban youth, especially and define "the popular" in music, become the dominant force in popular culture. It presents the strange tension between "the street" of street cultures, an argument that when the street has become the hottest market culture itself is under siege."<sup>77</sup>

Activists were afraid that more lucrative Laurel commercial district if the streets and neighbors were intimidated by the crowds of kids, at bus stops, or in front of Taco Bell. One day, "a sidewalk can only hold three," so I went through a crowd of twenty kids who were talking to a school vice principal who lived in the neighborhood at the corner of 35<sup>th</sup> and MacArthur. The kids were waiting at the corner in front of the store thinking, "This is a gang. This is a riot. That's what I caught myself. . . . I said, if this was my neighborhood would you be thinking this is a riot, or is it just my own racism coming up? It probably is." One day the kids on the corner "explode" into fights with the potential for violence there."

Thomas wanted to talk explicitly about race and class in the boulevard. But they did sometimes mention the white hills residents or the older generation who represented the more racist past of the neighborhood. Thomas, who described herself as becoming more progressive, noted that many people from further up the hill moved to the Laurel because they say they were disappointed to the "rough, boisterous youth culture." She said people were "not accustomed" to "African American culture." Thomas was committed to "neighborhood revitalization" and never have it while people are afraid of change. She explained, was "surprisingly close to the market to compete with other neighborhoods

in what seemed like a zero-sum game. Neighborhood activists worried that youth of color would be the collateral damage of commercial revitalization.

### *Thuggish-Looking Kids*

Jackie Haley, an African American board member of her homeowners' association, worked with "at-risk kids" in Oakland's professional Redwood Heights neighborhood. In another neighborhood, Mrs. Haley said,

There was a time when it seemed like . . . and I saw these kids with their pants down. . . . It's like they're ghetto, ghetto, ghetto, ghetto, ghetto kids. And I'm black, and I thought, I very much identify with the issue. . . . I think when it came down to the value of money, it was thugs . . . thuggish-looking kids. . . .

Jackie Haley's description of these "thuggish-looking kids" is a complicated conflation of youth style and race. It was used by many neighborhood activists to describe "ghetto youth." We cannot necessarily interpret "thuggish-looking pants" and "minority kids" as a coded reference to race. Adults couldn't always tell the difference between a criminal category, and black, Latinx, or poor. They often happened to be on the corner waiting for drug dealers. But they could just as well be middle-class school kids dressed in the newest fashions from school with their friends. Oakland's history is diverse for blackness to be equated with crime. It is difficult to define youth as a problem.

Talk of thuggish kids may indicate something about race and class in the post-civil rights era. It is possible, despite their deep inscription in popular culture, that they are always in process. Anthropologist Virgínia Kuper suggests that pragmatics in the long run determine the ways we talk about race (and use racial categories) over time.<sup>78</sup> Race re-

for commercial investment, neighborhood color on the streets could stand in the

n lawyer with grown children, was a association and did a lot of volunteer atlands. She lived in the solidly profes- od. As we talked about changes in her

e Laurel was creeping up. . . . I looked down to their butt—a lot more minor- t, “Oh no.” I’m just being honest. And s and recognize discrimination, but ny house, I didn’t want to see a lot of

“thuggish-looking kids” reveals a very es, race, class, gender, and space that ivists as they tried to describe “prob- rpret Jackie Haley’s reference to baggy way to talk about black youth alone. ce between “kids on the corner,” itself o, or Southeast Asian kids who hap- r the bus. Kids on the street could be well be black, Asian, or white middle- hip hop styles leisurely walking home and’s neighborhoods were simply too with poverty or for blackness alone to

significant changes in the way we think ights era. Racial categories are not sta- material hierarchies. Rather, they are ginia Dominguez’s work on race sug- determines semantics—in other words, racial labels) can change the meanings remained significant in Oakland, but its

meanings shifted with the rise of the b  
tion, and deepening poverty for far to  
Asian and Latino children. Race and c  
space, but more flexibly and less cate  
movement. These changes made race a

At least since the late nineteenth ce  
ings between the language used to des  
describe racial others and the lower c  
lescence as a distinctive stage of life,  
tral metaphor for youth, describing “a  
as a civilizing process.<sup>79</sup> Hall and oth  
borrowed racial stereotypes of native  
while in turn “natives” and blacks wer  
the late twentieth century we saw a res  
1990s criminologists described violent  
youth to primitive tribes and to anima  
A panicky media often described you  
reasoning and impulse control, all in  
exclusions of African Americans.<sup>80</sup>

Youth has become an almost racia  
deep structures of exclusion in conten  
often hopelessly conflated in Oakland  
most adults to distinguish between  
Latino, and Asian homeowners “fit” pe  
the “estate atmosphere” of the Oakland  
class position was securely marked by  
ers found them unremarkable and un  
ferent matter. Young people’s future cla  
and insecure. They must attain the edu  
to become or stay securely middle clas  
racial (and class) fears in the city.

Adults in Oakland struggled to disc  
right or wrong developmental path. Th  
pants for evidence of defiance. They lo  
school engagement. They distinguishe  
parents picked them up—at least a ma  
ily’s class status. They tried to read you  
of “hardness” or sophistication that m  
children. But they also looked careful

black middle class, increased immigration to many black kids, but also too many white kids. Race and class remained linked, as did race and class more categorically than before the civil rights movement. Race and age intersect in new ways.

In the twenty-first century there have been curious cross-pollinations between youth and the language used to describe them across classes. One of the first to define adolescence was G. Stanley Hall used race as his categories, “adolescent races” and raising children across them. Later early-twentieth-century reformers used animal metaphors to describe children and youth, and they were frequently described as childlike. In the twenty-first century there is an urgency of this traffic in images. In the twenty-first century youth are “super-predators,” compared to animals, and labeled gangs as “wolf packs.” Youth are “present-oriented,” without moral compass. Images previously used to justify the

category that marks the flexible but temporary America. Race and class were always important in politics, but it was relatively easy for middle-class and poor adults. Black, white, and Hispanic youth were perfectly well in the Laurel district or in the hills near Skyline High School. Their parents were home owners, so white homeownership was not threatening. Young people were a difficult status is always somewhat unknown. Education, postgraduate degrees, and jobs were important. So youth became the focus of many

concerns. Whether young people were on the street or in school, they looked to body posture and baggy clothing. They looked to backpacks as an indicator of class. They looked to kids on the bus from those whose parents were a mark of a “good” family, if not of a family. They looked at people’s faces for more subtle signs of class. They might mark them as “thugs” instead of “kids.” They looked at how young people used space in

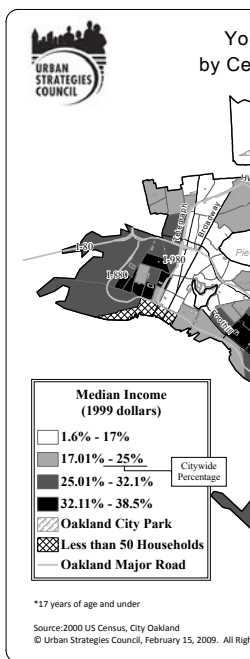


Figure 14. Oakland’s geography is divided, and young people are concentrated in the flatlands. (Copyright Urban Strategies Council)

the city—reading signs of young people they moved through the city.

Oakland’s deep racial and class divisions created unequal landscapes of childhood in the city. The street as “the Laurel creeping up,” the geography of the hills and flatlands was also a geography of youth. Children and teenagers were concentrated in the flatlands, and there were fewer children and teenagers in the hills. Across Oakland’s divided geography, children went to schools, safe parks, and recreation facilities. These mobile kids blurred the boundaries between wealthy and poor neighborhoods in ways that frustrated Oakland’s redevelopment efforts.

Many adults used the public expression of a child as a sign that a young person was

Youth in Oakland  
Census Tract (2000)



ny of youth. Kids under eighteen  
nds, especially in far East Oakland.  
(Council, All Rights Reserved)

le's class status and trajectories by how  
rides were perhaps most visible in the  
e city. When Jackie described kids on  
ne pointed to the ways Oakland's geog-  
so a generational geography. Children  
lower-income minority flatlands, and  
s in the hills. But young people moved  
as they took buses in search of better  
ilities and places to hang out with their  
porous boundaries between Oakland's  
ays that highlighted the insecure status

sion of hip hop style as a sign of trou-  
on the wrong path. Performance stud-

ies scholar Nicole Fleetwood has argued, a primary “signifier of racialized adolescence.” Shirley’s son began to grow dreads—a hairstyle rappers—his teacher began to define his appearance.” In the teacher’s mind, his hairstyle became a marker of a young person, as the particular kind of black young man’s style became a marker of a young person, a statement of what historian Robin Kelley

Jenny Chin described how race, age, and a troublesome kind of masculinity threatened to see kids, maybe it’s just the way that they know there are Asian gangs, black gangs, not strong.” She described the style: “the way down, a lot of shirts hanging out, hip hop–influenced style, especially with a gang.” She knew it was “a fashion style nephews enjoyed, and thought, ‘I probably found herself doing it, ‘especially if they souped-up cars. Chin acknowledged that stops in the Laurel district, so some of them also pointed to the ways these fears could have had adopted “ghettocentric” styles.

The ways young people used public spaces, distinguishing between “good kids” and “thugs” across racial lines, were often defined because of broad changes in the landscape. Parents and neighborhood activists in Oakland worried about children coming of age by not having independent access to public spaces. In areas where drug markets operate openly, many parents try to keep them safe from dangerous streets. But the ways parents guide kids through structured and supervised spaces have reshaped the ways kids use space.

Parents and neighborhood activists describe a childhood that fundamentally removed them from the middle-class kids in the Oakland suburbs. They have a big old yard and tree house. . . . They don’t play in the street. Or they go to urban escapes. It’s those places you pay



ued that fashion has become the pri-  
nce.”<sup>81</sup> As we saw in chapter 3, when  
hip hop style popularized by Bay Area  
him as having a “rough and tumble  
style marked him not just as black but  
man that would be disruptive. Hip hop  
on’s affiliation with Oakland’s streets—  
elley calls “ghettocentricity.”<sup>82</sup>

, and hip hop style became a proxy for  
at invoked fear in Oakland. “When I  
ey’re dressed now, I get really scared. I  
gs, Cambodian, even Mien gangs. I’m  
the head bands, the jackets that hang  
, the baggy pants.” When she saw this  
with kids all the same race, “It feels like  
statement,” one that some of her own  
obably shouldn’t be judging.” But she  
ey have their boom box blasting” and  
that black kids predominated at the bus  
f this was a fear of black kids, but she  
uld extend to other racialized kids who

c space itself became a way of distin-  
nugs.” Kids hanging out on the street,  
ed as threatening “underclass” kids  
scapes of childhood in Oakland. Par-  
kland had responded to broad anxiet-  
radically restricting children’s free and  
n neighborhoods like Elmhurst, where  
parents kept their kids inside to keep  
middle-class efforts to “cultivate” their  
ed activities in the hills also radically

s had produced the new landscapes of  
d kids from the streets. Robert Walker  
kland hills as “yard kids—maybe they  
. Their parents take them everywhere.  
y go to Gymboree. I call those places  
y to go in to play. It automatically elim-

inates the low-income.” Robert points to middle-class urban life: private space, the ability to purchase private spaces of leisure and the changes in the landscapes of middle-class neighborhoods that increasingly become what sociologist Barrie Thorne

These changes in childhood helped shape consumption and specific ideas about safety. As Sandra Collins explained, she let her son have “freedom” to enjoy walking and riding his bike on himself. But she insisted that he had to be supervised around the streets. There has to be a balance between not spaces for socializing, hanging out, and a pleasurable stroll to a private destination. Kids might still pass through, but not linger. Parents or from structured and supervised activities. They tried to make the streets safe for youth by installing “Safe Passage” monitors and private security corridors, to bring the public space of the streets to adults during the after-school hours. They tried to secure young people’s safe movement by installing gates to symbolically secure the safety of travel.

Landscapes of childhood were shaped by these changes. Geographer Sharon Zukin described a new kind of “gated” neighborhood.<sup>84</sup> Middle-class youth lived in neighborhoods with more vibrant landscapes. They always drive and pay for access to streets and public spaces throughout the city. Working-class neighborhoods with far more limited access. Parents like Tanesha and Bobbie Taylor searched for safer neighborhoods and paid for the new commodified landscapes to keep their kids inside to keep them safe. But they moved people from public space to create safe spaces. They created very different kinds of gated childhoods.

These new gated childhoods have changed the street. Now the very presence of unsupervised youth on the streets raises questions about safety. Potentially dangerous members of the street. People assumed youth on the streets

s to several defining characteristics of private transportation, and the money and pleasure. He also highlights broad class childhood, which have increased Thorne calls “gated childhoods.”<sup>83</sup> They produce new urban landscapes of the proper use of urban public spaces. Her thirteen-year-old son have “some of his bike in the Laurel district by himself in a specific place. He’s not roaming for a specific destination.” The streets were not for loitering but instead spaces for a destination, a café, a store, or a friend’s house. They linger on, the streets as they moved to other activities. Activists in the Laurel district wanted to use in this circumscribed way, hire private security to patrol the commercial streets under the watchful eyes of monitors. These “Safe Passage” monitors worked their way through the streets, but also served as transitions to adulthood.

They are divided in Oakland between what Thorne calls “landscapes of consumption and development” in homes with more private space and “landscapes of consumption. They could be structured and supervised leisure activities and poor kids were concentrated in public and private spaces. Even when they moved to the Laurel district, in a public schools, they rarely had the money to have the types of childhood. They often just kept their children in both of these strategies removed young people from safe transitions to adulthood, but they created gated childhoods.

They changed the meaning of kids in the city. They supervised young people hanging out in public spaces. Their class status and defines them as the urban underclass. By this I mean two things. First, they simply came from poor families, and

that their parents were not adequately concerned about the faulty families of the underclass we have seen. But they also assumed that no matter what their class of origin, white children become members of the underclass because of structure, supervision, and educational requirements for access to the middle class (public schools) became a suspect, racialized, and seemed to slip down the class ladder in the process.

These new landscapes of childhood were not “really” or “normally” an adult space. As a result, children no longer “produce the street” through performative acts of play, the street had become a space where children and youth are defined as “out of place.” The streets were more and more often seen as a threat to the moral order of neighborhoods.<sup>8</sup> The street became mobile “broken windows” that reflected the city’s stalled progress in constructing a moral order. They served as signs of deeper disorder and a lack of supervision or socialization that threatened to be “cleaned up” off the streets or fixed in place. Only then would economic development follow them. Only then would economic

### *Saving Youth with a Geographic Imagination*

The Laurel NCPC conducted an assembly in January 2001 that highlighted the connection between crime and the efforts to restructure space in the city. Walker spearheaded this effort to characterize the outrageous behavior of young people as a public health issue. He had distributed fliers to all middle schools in the city. The flier announced “WARNING: The city is monitoring the activity of youth” and would be taking action if committed any violations. A list followed: “defiance of authority,” minor offenses like truancy, and more serious criminal acts like sexual assault and drug dealing. The flier echoed the common belief that these were signs of more serious crime or violence.

supervising them. Popular discourses of the underclass were prevalent in Oakland, as were the ideas that kids who hung out on the streets, especially those who were likely to “grow up too soon” and who were not getting the kinds of education that were increasingly defined as “college-bound,” were entering the underclass. Youth on the streets (and also in the home) had become a racialized category because of how easy it was to slip into the underclass.

They have redefined public spaces as “natural playgrounds.” As geographer Gill Valentine argues, since the 1970s the street has become a “children’s space” through their use. The street has increasingly become a place where “the social life of place.”<sup>85</sup> Youth who continued to use the street were seen as “bad kids” who were a “menace to the neighborhood.”<sup>86</sup> Groups of children and youth on the streets became a central issue in Oakland politics. They represented vibrant landscapes of consumption and leisure—as evidence of failed parental supervision and economic development. And they had become a focus so that crime and disorder would not impede economic development take hold.

## *Fix*

Assembly at the local middle school in January 1985 was a continuation between the efforts to save youth in Oakland. Jackie Patterson and Robert Loeber presented what they saw as the increasingly serious problem of youth on the streets near the school. Jackie Patterson showed school students and sent fliers home to parents. The fliers said “STOP” in big letters, explaining that school officials, police, and neighbors would be “monitored” and would take “appropriate action” if students were seen. The fliers listed violations that blurred distinctions between minor offenses, such as jaywalking or littering, and more serious offenses, such as assault, concealing weapons, and drug possession. The fliers made the assumption that small violations could lead to more serious offenses to come. But this strange list also

implicitly redefined all children's mischief. This flier included three clip art cartoons as a symbolic representation of the vision of the campaign. In the upper right hand corner a child with big eyes runs carelessly down a city street, falling over her on the ground. In the left corner a child stands behind the bench and stares down at a dog. At the bottom of the page stands a police dog with its mouth open, barking an order with such force that the flier says that all adults will be watching them alone watches and speaks in these pictures is written in a highlighted box: "Don't leave the area when school lets out!!!"

Throughout this assembly in front of the school, Bert and Jackie tried to draw clear lines between what belonged—home and school—and the spaces between and corners. They explained that the police were watching and that any misbehavior (from throwing trash and drug dealing) could lead to arrest. At the end of their point, saying, "Seriously speaking, I'm not saying all of you are on that corner," Jackie said, "I'm at City Hall everyday convicting kids." The school was full of potential thugs, potential gang members, and students laughed, several raised their hands, and Jackie asked out his question, "What corner?" Robert tried to be disruptive (and he may have), but the school's definition of the corner as a space that was watched by the police. Students at this assembly understood the school as "corners." But for them, the corner was a space that was and a relatively safe place to relax in a school. There were not many such spaces in the school. Jackie repeatedly stood in the way of efforts to create supervised spaces for youth.

Later in this assembly Jackie and Robert used the message to define the street corner as a space that could potentially turn children into adults. Jackie said, "I recently passed 'Proposition 20—' School Number 14." Several students called out "Fourteen and over raise their hands. What's the deal?"

behavior on these corners as criminal. The pictures that provide an interesting contrast of law and order implicit in this campaign are of a young woman with blond hair and a street dropping pieces of paper behind her. A judge, complete with wig and gavel, looks down sternly through wire-rim glasses. A police officer, fists clenched, mouth wide open, looks on as if that his whole body shakes. Although the pictures show catching youth, the criminal justice system is not the pictures. The order to youth implicit in the highlighted box below: “The best thing to do is to stay in school.”

Of three hundred eighth graders Robert spoke between the spaces where students gathered and the spaces where they didn't—the streets and corners where police would be monitoring the corners for throwing eggs and “spit balls” to fighting youth. Robert Walker tried to drive home the message. “When you're out on that corner. . . . Stay in school. I believe most kids here are good people. I'm convincing people that this is not a school for thugs and gangsters.” As Robert spoke, many students raised their hands and one African American boy shouted out. Robert thought he asked this question to gauge the question fundamentally rejected the idea that the system turned children into thugs and gangsters. He understood the symbolic weight of “kids on the corner” as both a practical necessity (a bus stop) and a social space in an unstructured way with friends after school. These spaces in Oakland. Indeed, fears of youth violence led to the creation of unstructured and minimally

Robert used Proposition 21's recent passage as a starting point that could literally and metaphorically be used to ask students if they knew about the proposition. Many hesitated, trying to recall the exact text of Proposition 21.” Jackie had all the kids raise their hands. With about half the hands in the room

raised, she announced, “You are now committing a crime.” Here Jackie exaggerates what it allowed fourteen-year-olds to be charged with as felonies,” it stopped short of redefining

Robert went even further as he tried to pay attention. “Did you hear what she said in the state of California, you’re an adult. I’m not going to let that comment pass. Students were talking about what they should then be able to do in her hand determinedly and said, “If you can’t drive or drink?” The whole room burst into laughter at her point. “If you commit a crime—then you don’t go home and say you can do what you want in the real world—only if you commit a crime.”

This interesting distinction between “the real world” and the criminal justice system was what he was trying to make real a world in which children were not in the street and school. If, however, youth step out of the street on the corners, “Three strikes—you’re out of the neighborhood.” An increasingly punitive state treats these legal and symbolic exclusions from the street as if they were made these efforts to keep kids off the street. We were not suggesting that African Americans were treated as adults or as criminals, but that their class status or where they lived.

At the end of the assembly, an African American woman had “the right to beat us down?” Robert was trying to bring yourself under control. If you can’t control yourself to use any force because to them, you’re a criminal. She got out of the assembly, several young people were talking to her. A woman asked, “Why do you want us to be violent?” Robert didn’t want her to go to jail. He was saying that self-restraint was an absolute necessity for people who had to overcome both the image of a criminal and the accompanying harsh forms of social control. The expanded police presence in terms of the number of officers, meaning that a few years before, the police were using a liberal use of pepper spray and handcuffs. They were outnumbered because a scared cop is



considered adults by California if you  
ted the effects of Proposition 21. While  
arged as adults for “serious and violent  
g all youth criminals as adults.

ed to get an increasingly restless room  
she said? If you are fourteen years old  
lt.” No room full of eighth graders was  
nts laughed and began debating loudly  
o do. An African American girl raised  
you consider us adults, why can’t we  
st into applause. Jackie tried to clarify  
ree strikes—you are an adult. But . . .  
tever you want. You are not an adult in  
crime.”

en the status of children in “the real  
highlights Robert and Jackie’s attempt  
en are confined to the safety of home  
tside of this “real world” to misbehave  
an adult.” This was not simply a meta-  
eated at least some kids as adults. And  
om childhood, especially of black boys,  
streets more urgent. Robert and Jackie  
frican children in the streets should be  
at they would be, no matter what their

frican American boy asked if the police  
ert effectively answered yes. “You have  
u don’t, the police have the authority  
u’re out of control.”<sup>87</sup> As students filed  
ple went to talk to Robert. One young  
to go to jail instead of get an educa-  
jail, as he explained, but he did think  
necessity for black kids—especially boys—  
e of black youth criminality and the  
ontrol. Robert justified the need for an  
his fears about police power, explain-  
e had broken up a student fight with  
cuffs. “We don’t want the cops to feel  
a dangerous cop.” By threatening stu-

dents with police surveillance (even violence) “to scare kids straight” and thus to save them from the anger and exclusion that had intensified in the city.

Many black parents across Oakland were angry at never being given the tools they needed to raise their children in a law-and-order state. Robert thought that the discipline for black young men had been disrupted. “I think we can just let our kids go. . . . I see it now. Five years ago in Oakland you could not let your kids go. The police would pick them up. Now they don’t pick them up. Now they worry about other black males.” But he tried to instill the discipline necessary for survival. “You can’t say, ‘You can do everything you want to do,’ three times the rate of white people. You have to learn that very early on. What you learn in Europe is right—in America is not. The sooner you learn to adjust—and not be angry your whole life—the better.”

Dr. Smith and Mrs. Tucker thought that the city had made the significance of race opaque for their children. “That they’re in wonderful liberal California is not what it is. That’s sad. We had a generation of parents who gave us armor to handle things. They were in the middle of things—the civil rights movement. That’s what they did our parents teach us, but we could not handle it. I’m seeing news tonight. These kids don’t know what’s going on. They don’t know them, they have no idea.” The Smiths could not understand the innocence in which children should be raised in a free world. Even as they tried to keep their children safe at school, they insisted that black parents teach their children to make it in a world where race still shaped opportunity.

Linda Jackson in Elmhurst, Robert Tucker in the hills, Dr. and Mrs. Smith in the hills all gave their children the same advice: “young people today have too many choices. They were simply baffled by youth activists’ behavior. They were at the loitering hearing. As Robert expressed:

Kids need structure. I don’t know that’s what they need. There’s nothing there. They need discipline. They’re not being kids. They don’t need to be loitering.



hand, it's not their right to hang out or getting you to Cal or getting you a de

The streets posed two connected c with successful transitions to adulthood stopped kids from “being kids” since “ as being “in programs.”

Robert and Jackie's presentation rec way that posed a real problem for the and reinforced a “protectionist appro dent, innocent, and vulnerable.<sup>88</sup> But t found on the street made it easy to de good. They became not innocent “ang protections of childhood.<sup>89</sup> Youth on th “matter out of place.” As anthropologi which must not be included if a patter streets had to be excluded either from t the foundational links between public told me that “on the street, it's a differ one was “obligated to teach” young pe were “on their own in the streets.” In the streets became “criminal” instead o ger responsible for their care and educ tendency to exclude from childhood a hood innocence.<sup>92</sup> By excluding youth childhood, adults secure the sanctity a

Black homeowner activists through both for more money for after-school surveillance of the streets. Local geo participation shaped these demands a Elmhurst flatlands, homeowner activi police to keep young people off the st activists used their own volunteer lab that would offer poor kids the same s opportunities increasingly characteris these efforts consolidated the definiti place. Young people who remained in stops, hanging out with friends, or dea fied police sweeps and private security

n the corner. Being on a corner is not  
gree from Yale.

dangers for teenagers: they interfered  
ood (getting into college), but they also  
normal” childhood has been redefined

defined kids on the streets as adults in  
their efforts to save kids. They drew on  
each” that framed children as depen-  
the assumption that good kids are not  
efine any kid on the street as up to no  
ngels” but folk “devils” ineligible for the  
ne street became symbolically “dirt” or  
st Mary Douglas explains, “dirt is that  
n is to be maintained.”<sup>90</sup> Youth on the  
the streets *or* from childhood to secure  
e and private/adult and child.<sup>91</sup> Robert  
rent rule of law.” Unlike in school, no  
ople or “get on their case,” so students  
this analysis, student misbehavior on  
of “delinquent” and adults were no lon-  
ation. This is an example of a growing  
nyone who challenges ideals of child-  
on the streets from the protections of  
nd purity of childhood as an ideal.<sup>93</sup>  
hout the city consistently campaigned  
programs and for more policing and  
graphy and structures of community  
nd the way the city responded. In the  
sts often focused on demanding more  
streets, while in the Laurel community  
oor to build new spaces for children  
structured and supervised educational  
stic of middle-class childhoods. Both  
ion of youth on the streets as out of  
public spaces, whether waiting at bus  
aling drugs, were subjected to intensi-  
surveillance.

At a community meeting in the spring, the success of their effort to get kids off the streets by 3:30 or 4:00 kids are basically gone.” A “kid sitting on his porch” had seen a police officer. “So there’s been a big improvement.” While the loss of both childhood and public space, we suspect. The streets became a no man’s land.

Oakland’s neighborhood activists sought a “geographic fix” for the massive racial and economic inequality in the city. As Don Mitchell describes, they were looking for what is a social—and a political—emergency: to get youth off the streets as a way to save the city in the context of a retreating welfare state and a state response to urban problems. This geographic fix was appealing in the context of a broader social and economic crisis for young people—that, following Michel Foucault, is the technologies of governance.<sup>95</sup> Many of the schools, and the juvenile justice system, were a discipline in children. In place of disciplinary power, schools and even the juvenile justice system had “tolerance policies” that simply punished Black homeowner activists regularly. The lack of discipline in young people had helped produce the crisis. They supported youth programs that were a response in the context of increasingly insecure state and local government. Youth off the streets could at least help them make a safe transition to adulthood safely when the state was increasingly punitive.

### *Nowhere to Go*

There was a pervasive sense among young people of “nowhere to go” and “nothing to do.” Oakland policy makers and adult community leaders significantly increased its investments in public programs in the late 1990s. At a community meeting in 1998, Spees complained that with Kids First Oakland is spending thirty-seven million dollars a year. He wondered “where the money is going when it’s not on the streets.”

ing of 2001, Jackie Patterson described  
off the street in the Laurel district: “By  
as an example of progress, she said, “A  
police officer pass by and gone inside.  
We see here a deeply privatized vision  
where even a kid’s use of his porch is  
land for children.

were essentially looking for a “geo-  
class inequalities in childhood in the  
were creating “a geographical solution  
economic—problem.”<sup>94</sup> They fought to  
ve children and reconstruct childhood  
ate and an increasingly law-and-order  
graphic fix may have been particularly  
state abandonment of efforts to reform  
l Foucault, we might call disciplinary  
black activists worried that parents,  
n no longer adequately instilled disci-  
ry technologies that aim to retrain the  
ice system increasingly relied on “zero  
d or excluded youth for misbehavior.<sup>96</sup>  
complained that state disinvestments  
the disorder on Oakland’s streets, and  
would instill self-discipline. But in the  
commitments, they hoped that getting  
p young people negotiate the precipi-  
tile protecting youth from an increas-

ong Oakland’s youth that they had  
<sup>97</sup> These complaints frustrated many  
community activists. Oakland had signifi-  
programs for children and youth since  
ng in 2001, city council member Dick  
t and other programs, “now Oakland  
ars for children’s services.” He won-  
en kids are still telling us there’s noth-

ing to do.” Councilman Spees’ quandary over Oakland’s expanded infrastructure for nonprofit youth services often left youth unsure about existing programs. But there was a gap that mostly came from *teenagers*, who didn’t see the city was funding.

Oakland had built up its infrastructure for youth programs, which helped fill urgent gaps in services. But many older teens didn’t want to stay in school programs. Few programs targeted activities at night and on the weekends. “I’m too old for the Boys and Girls Clubs,” said a teen-based program, especially kids who were disengaged because school was not a positive or supportive space. “School are rarely spaces where young people can be themselves and where they can freely express their opinions. We considered most “at risk”—those who were struggling with low test scores—were only 25% of our program’s participants.<sup>100</sup> Tanesha Miller’s three sons were doing a lot at school and were frequently suspended from school program at Bret Harte. She expressed a desire to get school any longer than they have to.”

Public spaces may be particularly important in the process of forging independence and self-identities.<sup>101</sup> The need is urgent for politicians and urban observers: “Many seek leisure outdoors because they do not have basements, backyards, or places to use; the streets are their chief recreational space.” Studies scholars Hall et al. identified a need for programs “provide a place for youth to go” like the city’s after-school programs “may provide a safe space for expression and the exploration of identity.” The need to corral young people, containing and channeling their energy leads to a recurring cycle in which once they search for autonomous spaces, youth advocates and makers wonder why teens still think that way.

Youth wanted safe and cool places to fix their educational, social, or cultural issues. In interviews, young Oaklanders asked for information on how to get involved in the city’s youth programs.



ary points to several shortcomings in  
r youth. The fragmented structure of  
ng people with insufficient knowledge  
as a bigger problem. These complaints  
t necessarily want the kind of services

ture of school-based after-school pro-  
care and supervision for younger kids.  
ay in structured and supervised after-  
eted teens and virtually none funded  
.98 As one 19-year-old told me, she was  
” Many didn’t want to stay in school-  
were struggling as they came of age,  
upportive environment. Public schools  
are recognized as full human beings  
eir needs and desires.99 Students con-  
ere suspended, frequently absent, and  
f participants in Oakland’s after-school  
s in the Laurel district, who got teased  
pended, didn’t participate in the after-  
plained, “My kids don’t want to stay in

important for youth, who are in the  
d crafting both individual and social  
or youth, as legal scholar Regina Aus-  
ide their homes and in public places  
backyards, or other safe private spaces  
ation and socializing venues.”102 Youth  
pervasive problem with local efforts to  
those in Oakland. Many youth centers  
le much valued space for association,  
ntity,” but they “simultaneously serve  
nd supervising their activities.” This  
lder teens leave structured settings as  
unger kids take their place, and policy  
here’s nothing to do.103

of belonging, not programs designed  
tural deficits.104 In surveys and inter-  
ormal spaces where they could social-

ize with peers, play sports, and explore schools. They wanted lounges where play pool and arcade games. They wanted staffed by teens, have youth-led conflicts, youth-designed publicity.<sup>105</sup> This need for poor youth growing up in the East mapped public schools, parks, and recreation and found stark differences between the found “abundant, safe, and usable” facilities where they exist at all, are dilapidated.”

Young people also wanted to participate, be seen, to enjoy the pleasures of wind, socializing with friends in public. They wanted in kids’ spaces. Youth I spoke with often “to have real fun.” They went “to Berkeley hang out with friends in arcades, in shops adults hang out too.” There were too few in Oakland, and the shopping malls “and Jack London Square was the only place popular movies. Otherwise they had fair, Southland, or South Shore. “There late enough for teens to hang out together they could exercise autonomy but also adult behavior. In focus groups at both students complained that they were excluded of all, they wanted a “club to go dancing Saturday nights. Luis, a Castlemont student home at midnight. Some youth have as much as possible.”

The spaces young people wanted were makers and neighborhood activists had Oakland’s Youth Commission tried to would have live music, dances, and parental concerns about safety, drugs, and teen club.” Spaces that became informal levard were targeted and closed by conservative High School Nate Miley insisted place to “hang out” but would provide citizens—services that would “fix” kids

re creative arts no longer available in  
they could watch TV and movies, or  
nvisioned teen centers that would be  
ict mediation, and employ aggressive,  
d for space was particularly urgent  
ast Oakland flatlands. Youth activists  
reation centers throughout Oakland—  
he hills and flatlands. In the hills, they  
ilities, while in the flatlands “facilities,  
P106

icipate in the life of the city, to see and  
ow shopping, going to the movies, and  
y often did not want to be segregated  
en said that they had to leave Oakland  
keley, Richmond, or San Francisco to  
hopping malls, or public places where  
few movie theaters, fairs, and festivals  
re run-down or there’s nothing to buy.”  
ce in Oakland where they could go to  
to travel to suburban malls like Bay-  
e’s no place in Oakland that stays open  
her.”<sup>107</sup> Teenagers wanted spaces where  
where they could play safely at young  
Skyline and Castlemont High School,  
cluded from many adult things. Most  
ng” that might be open late Friday and  
senior, said, “Not all youth got to go  
late curfew, and they want to use it up

were the very spaces that adult policy  
ve been the most hesitant to provide.  
o develop a teen center in 2000 that  
oetry slams, but they ran into peren-  
l sex, which shut down the idea of “a  
al youth hangouts on MacArthur Bou-  
mmunity activists. We saw how at Sky-  
that the Youth Center would *not* be a  
services that would make youth better  
s. In contrast, when Skyline Task Force



Figure 15. Dance battles at Youth UpRising (Yoram Savion, Youth UpRising)

youth described their vision for a youth center as “just a place where you could go . . . you don’t wanna go home after school.”

Youth UpRising, a publicly funded center, was a kind of cool hangout when it opened in 1997. Planned by young people, including Yoram Savion, UpRising’s architecture and programming drew on youth cultures. It has provided a valuable space for Oakland’s indigenous hip hop culture, including dance battles for young people to demonstrate their skills to up to four hundred mostly black teenagers sitting in the amphitheater.

But Youth UpRising (YU) also drew on the idea of building these kinds of cool places. The center was not street-affiliated youth, but the center served as a space for more formal classes and programming. The center’s culture—which remains marked as “a hip hop culture” across racial lines—also made it hard to categorize as a neighborhood that was half Latino, half



ng. (Dancer: D-real, photo courtesy of

h center, they often talked about want-  
. . hang out with your friends. Like if  
»

d youth center, promised to be this  
in the East Oakland flatlands in 2005.  
members of Youth Together, Youth  
ming embraced Oakland's streets and  
able venue for public performances of  
hosting popular and usually peaceful  
monstrate their skills to an audience of  
agers and young adults in its outdoor

emonstrates significant dilemmas of  
The dance battles helped attract more  
sometimes found it hard to keep them  
s. Grounding the center in hip hop  
authentically" black despite its appeal  
to create a multiracial youth space. In  
YU attracted mostly black kids. Youth

UpRising was also publicly attacked for working with local hip hop artists. And at levels that allowed it to stay open late

### *Conclusion*

Changes in childhood, and these changes reshape urban space and emerging forms of the twenty-first century. Parents and children's childhood, and the daily movements through cityscapes invested new meanings in Oakland. These efforts helped produce new landscapes of community as proper use of public space in the city. Youth does not just add details to our urban planning. Neoliberal urban redevelopment is remade through local struggles over youth.

Black homeowners and activists in Oakland are constructing Oakland's neoliberal urban landscape about the safety and security of children. These efforts to reshape the way young people negotiate an increasingly precipitous urban landscape is an irony is that many black activists support the surveillance of youth in order to protect black youth in an increasingly repressive state. In the process of creating the heavily policed and privatized space of Oakland. These efforts risked exacerbating Oakland's

Oakland's deeply unequal childhood. These programs, truancy programs, or loitering laws. The effectiveness of those programs might be. "Creating safe spaces for children cannot replace progressive policies that provide affordable health care, stable housing, equal education, and food for children, youth and their families." These vast inequalities—but defining youth as a problem do not get in the way of efforts to do so. As these programs can easily be substituted for concerted public policy to solve social problems and to expand the city's geographic fix may even bolster the city's economic growth that has produced such deep divides in Oakland. We may stop asking why young people are

or promoting “thug culture” because it  
l even Youth UpRising was not staffed  
e into the evening and weekends.<sup>108</sup>

ampaigns to save children, have helped  
orms of governance at the turn of the  
ren have produced new landscapes of  
of young people through these land-  
land’s public and private spaces. They  
assumption that redefined what counted  
ty. Paying attention to childhood and  
r understanding of neoliberal restruc-  
ent was fought out and fundamentally  
outh and social reproduction.

Oakland have been a vital part of con-  
regime. They were deeply concerned  
dren. And they supported intensified  
le used space in the city to help youth  
transition to adulthood. The terrible  
orted expanded policing and surveil-  
ck kids from being criminalized by an  
cess, black activists helped to construct  
aces characteristic of neoliberal cities.  
and’s geographies of exclusion.<sup>109</sup>

ods cannot be solved by after-school  
ng laws, no matter how valuable some  
g proper urban geographies” for chil-  
s that provide living-wage jobs, afford-  
educational opportunities, and healthy  
lies. Oakland alone cannot solve these  
on the streets as broken windows may  
Mitchell argues, “regulating space can  
rogressive policies designed to attack  
content of urban social justice.”<sup>110</sup> The  
current political and economic order  
n the landscapes of childhood. Adults  
e hanging out on the corner, insisting

instead that they do not have the right potential thugs, a dangerous image that exclude youth instead of to care for the

We see here a deep problem with the especially as it applied to youth in Oakland and many other scholars, have argued not actually reduce crime. Harcourt police also comes with “a big price tag police, significant increases in civilian of the police in communities of color.” ing crime statistics and producing public between the police and youth of color. ist Boots Riley of The Coup explained police crackdowns targeted Oakland’s criminals” and made them “feel unwel

Young people were not silent in the space in Oakland. At the loitering hear city’s streets, young people repeatedly lic space. Students at the assembly and the definition of street corners as space gangsters. At the assembly students and Robert threatened punishments order. This kind of disruptive behavior training in public etiquette”; it was a “r and a way in which students conveyed adult world.”<sup>113</sup> Students broke out laugh tial thugs or gangsters” and began shout when they were threatened with being edly challenged the schizophrenic wa States: as children with limited rights responsible and accountable for their a

Youth in Oakland fought to claim v the right to the city—access to public sphere. Many kids were trapped outscapes of consumption. Their struggle sometimes erupted into violence. It i place to hang out with friends after school as they struggled to find a place in the ple often resisted adult authority in wa



it to do so. Kids on the street become  
it justifies efforts to control, restrain, or  
em.

the logic of the broken windows thesis—  
land. Legal scholar Bernard Harcourt,  
d that broken windows policing does  
points out that increased police surveil-  
”: enormous increases in spending on  
n complaints, and deepening distrust  
<sup>11</sup> Oakland’s relentless focus on reduc-  
public order certainly increased tensions  
. As Oakland hip hop artist and activ-  
l, the city’s zero tolerance policies and  
s young people of color “as potential  
come in their own neighborhoods.”<sup>112</sup>

se struggles over childhood and public  
ring, at the school assembly, and in the  
contested their exclusions from pub-  
l the loitering hearing directly refused  
es that turned children into thugs and  
dgeted, chatted, and giggled as Jackie  
and struggled to keep the room in  
r was “not a symptom” of “incomplete  
meaningful” refusal to follow the rules,  
something about “their relation to the  
hing when Robert called them “poten-  
ating out objections and talking loudly  
tried as adults. Their outbursts point-  
ys we treat adolescents in the United  
of citizenship and yet as adults fully  
actions.<sup>114</sup>

what geographer Donald Mitchell calls  
space and a place in the city’s public  
ide looking in at the city’s new land-  
e for access was not always orderly. It  
included young people looking for a  
chool and young people dealing drugs  
e current economic order. Young peo-  
ays that helped perpetuate their exclu-

sion from public spaces. Disorderly spaces were seen as a sign that students needed discipline and control. A Youth Together student explained, “They never have anything. Some don’t know how to do things when we ask for them because they’re scared.” These comments hint at a complex dynamic. As Chang calls “the politics of containment,” as public space for youth declined, youth crowds were seen as disorderly, public policy makers responded by trying to further restrict young people’s uses of public space.

Youth activists interpreted the problem differently than the older, mostly African American community leaders described at the start of this chapter. Both groups had divergent responses simply as evidence of generational differences: “rowdy teenagers” and “old heads” or “old people.”<sup>116</sup> Youth activists and homeowners organized different political mobilizations that shaped the solutions to the problems of youth. Young people in Oakland’s neighborhood political movements were active. But even middle school students had organized and were well educated about public policy. They were organizing and developing their own understandings of childhood and youth.

tudents reinforced adult assumptions couldn't handle autonomy. One Skyline Teenagers are just rowdy. And we can know how to act. That's why we don't get some of us don't know how to act." dynamic produced by what author Jeff ent."<sup>115</sup> As the number of public spaces are more likely to overwhelm the few like Jack London Square. Then, if youth used this as an argument for the need for more public space.

Proposed antiloitering law very differently than homeowners at the council meeting but it would be wrong to interpret these as evidence of a generational divide between "respectable" and "street valiant" activists were embedded in very different ways they articulated the needs and remained marginalized from many policy networks and centers of policy debate. In contact with Oakland's youth activists and policies like Proposition 21. Youth were a kind of politics that reworked defini-

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*onally left blank*

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## What Is “the Power of

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Prop 21 has been okayed again  
us youngstas could cast no vote,  
What is going on in this world  
and why are we young being tried  
Explain to me, America, why you  
You've robbed our childhoods,  
surrounding us with guns and drugs  
You're running full ahead on punishment  
but turning your back on an anti-crime  
Are we not a republican government  
Then why don't teenagers have a voice  
Are we not people?  
Why in court can we be adults,  
but outside the courts we are not  
You need to end this awful sequence  
or in the future there be a difference  
why America's called a melting pot  
It'll be because adults turned their backs  
who suffered moral rot  
for they, the young, were suffering  
The world had changed so fast  
that parents had no time for tutoring  
which left their learning up to luck  
A child left with no teaching  
of the real world outside the classroom  
will wander aimlessly, and inevitably  
After wandering through these mazes  
the goodest of people are bound  
The parents paid attention of course  
but they failed to teach enough  
they had no time because times  
they had to work two times as hard  
and left their child's life up to luck

—Dwayne Thomas  
Juvenile Hall

## of the Youth”?

but can be sent to the Pen.

we live in,

ed as adults?

ou have given up hope.

ope.

nishment

idote.

ment, governed by the people?

a vote?

t their equal?

el

ent reason

pot:

eir back on their young,

ng from gridlock.

nd so much

eluge for their kids

ack.

ssroom

tably self-destruct.

urban streets,

l to be corrupt.

urse,

were rough,

ard as their parents

ck.

ne Knowledge, Alameda County

ll, published in *The Beat Within*

On a sunny afternoon in April 2001, and young adults marched through downtown Alameda County. The Board of Supervisors abandoned plans to build a new juvenile hall, expanded from 299 beds to 400, in Alameda County. At first this plan attracted little attention as youth activists began a sustained campaign. The group included Southeast Asian, Tongan, black, and white youth, alongside local college students, young professionals, and parents. They marched towards the entrance to the Board of Supervisors building in hip hop styles: young men in hooded sweatshirts and jeans, alongside teenage girls in tight pants and sneakers. They filed through metal detectors, and placed their backpacks and signs through the x-ray machines. They chanted through the corridors—"Books not bars" and the rhythmic, "Ain't no power like the power of the youth don't stop. Say what you mean and leather briefcases leaving the corridors." The crowd packed into the Board of Supervisors meeting room, young people surrounding a row of county juvenile justice experts, and a few older community members. They chanted along with the youth activists at the back of the room, sitting uncomfortably. I was an assistant DA, both of whom I had interviewed for the additional beds and he worried that the plan might even lead to reinstating the death penalty for a young person who committed a terrible crime while out of juvenile hall.

The meeting began with a formal presentation by the supervisors explaining that the county was planning a new plan for population growth. But this was interrupted by the youth activists meeting. Midway through the presentation, a young man with coffee-colored hair stood up and said, "We came here to make our case." Scott, the Board of Supervisors, repeatedly threatened to remove them if they were not respectful. Shortly thereafter, the youth activists performed raps and spoken word pieces. They interacted with the audience, and told personal stories about their "alternatives to incarceration," "services



a multiracial crowd of 150 teenagers in downtown Oakland to demand that the county build a "Super Jail for Kids." Months later, the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved plans to build a jail with 540 beds, in a far-flung suburb of Oakland that had attracted little attention, but that changed during the protest campaign. At this first protest, Latino, Black, and Jewish high school students marched alongside teachers, and nonprofit workers from the Board of Supervisors' offices. Many dressed in baggy sweatshirts and sagging pants that flared at the ankles. The crowd slowly surrounded armed sheriff's deputies, sending them back to their patrol cars as their chants echoed: "No more beds"; "No more jails"; "Take the power of the youth, 'cause the youth got the power." Older men and women in suits from the county building stopped and stared in disbelief. At the Board of Supervisors hearing, a sea of county officials in suits, scattered juvenile justice community representatives. I marched alongside youth activists and then retreated to watch from a distance. I was interviewed by a reporter, and interviewed. The DA, James Thurman, in his fifties, insisted that the county needed a new juvenile hall and that these protests could backfire and hurt the county if a kid on probation committed a crime.

At the probation presentation to the five county supervisors, the Board needed a new, larger juvenile hall to house the county. It was not a standard Board of Supervisors meeting. The probation department's formal presentation was interrupted by a young man with dark skin and curly brown hair. He interrupted the presentation to "shut down the meeting" if youth activists were called up to testify. Instead, youth activists were called up to testify. They read poetry, engaged in call and response, and shared their stories alongside more familiar calls for "education, training, and jobs for youth." The first speaker,

an organizer with Youth Force Coalition, people locked up in juvenile hall, and the prisoners behind walls, as he urged the: the skies, not concrete walls and metal: puzzled expressions on their faces as th: in rhythm, pumped their hands in the a

The campaign against the Super Jail: testers convinced the conservative Bo: million of preapproved money for th: convinced the two African American: Carson, to vote against any expansion: proposed juvenile hall shrank in size: May 2003, the Board of Supervisors v: at the current site. To win this victory, with juvenile justice think tanks like t: Foundation, and the National Counc: provided youth activists with statistics: the county's reliance on incarceration. with homeowners in Dublin to fight: in this suburb far from the homes and: Possibly most important, youth activis: nation's youth policies and, in the wor: alternatives to detention to "the forefro

The Super Jail campaign was part of: fornia and across the nation that challe: ization of a generation."<sup>2</sup> Youth activis: developed new grass-roots strategies fo: ical struggles from New York to the Ba: ana.<sup>3</sup> Several training centers and netw: ative on Youth Organizing, the Haywo: Strategy Center, have begun to knit tog: to share strategies and forge national a: Popular books like Anya Kamenetz's *C*: to organize in colleges, workplaces, an: more public investment in young peo: activism is on the rise globally, as you: Brazil have begun to organize and cr: response to the potent combination of: expanded consumer desires driven by g:

on, asked for a moment of silence for  
then launched into a freestyle rap about  
supervisors to put “freedom first, touch  
l doors.” The supervisors listened with  
e young audience bounced their heads  
air, and cheered for the young rapper.

l won a series of victories. Youth pro-  
ard of Corrections to turn down \$2.3  
e Alameda County expansion. They  
n supervisors, Nate Miley and Keith  
n. Slowly over the next two years, the  
from 540 beds to 450 beds. Finally, in  
voted to build a 360-bed juvenile hall  
youth activists formed close alliances  
he Youth Law Center, Annie E. Casey  
il on Crime and Delinquency, which  
s and concrete proposals for reducing  
They also formed a surprising alliance  
against locating the new juvenile hall  
d families of most incarcerated youth.  
sts challenged the punitive turn in the  
ds of one county staff person, pushed  
ont of the county agenda.”<sup>1</sup>

a rising tide of youth activism in Cali-  
enged what activists call “the criminal-  
st organizations throughout the 1990s  
r engaging youth in diverse local polit-  
y Area, from Portland to rural Louisi-  
orks, including the Funders’ Collabor-  
od Burn’s Institute, and the Movement  
gether these local grass-roots initiatives  
nd sometimes transnational coalitions.  
*Generation Debt* have called for youth  
nd the halls of government to demand  
ople. Beyond the United States, youth  
ng people from sub-Saharan Africa to  
aft oppositional political identities in  
shrinking economic opportunities and  
globalized media.<sup>4</sup>

This campaign built on a series of . . . challenged the punitive turn in our national school discipline policies to local curricula. In 2000, youth activists in California gathered against Proposition 21, a ballot initiative that expanded a range of juvenile offenses and made as many as fourteen as adults. Each of these campaigns targeted particular laws and public policies had been used as objects of discipline, control, or surveillance. It was much broader struggle to reshape the neighborhood and the place of youth as citizens.

Throughout this book, we have seen how youth became a central symbol in Oakland politics, central to the city's past and future and to debates about crime, justice, and the future. In most of the city's political networks, youth was marginalized or silent, more often treated as a symptom of neighborhood decline than as a political force. Youth, especially seen children and youth contesting the boundaries of and from public space.

Daniel HoSang, an American student, argued that a generational political identity emerged in response to the "assault on youth citizenship" in the 1990s. As the welfare state led to declining investments in education, a new round of get tough on youth policies emerged, a pejorative identity, emblematic of the "youth crisis." Oakland scholar-activists Shawn Giniewski and others argue that people today, like blacks before 1954, are excluded from political power and are subjected to police violence. The focus on young people certainly politicized youth, but the cultural meanings we attach to youth also matter. Youth is located between childhood and adulthood. As a period of dependence, youth inevitably calls attention to the state's obligations and to a broader terrain of social justice.

Youth activists used generational identity to challenge central premises of neoliberal urban governance. This book. They used claims to youth to contest the state's power to make demands on the state in an era of neoliberal governance. They drew on childhood, youth, and the ability it demands, to reconstruct a vision of youth.

local youth activist mobilizations that challenged the city's youth policies in the 1990s, from curfew laws and antiloitering ordinances. In the process, they gained national attention in their fight against a law that increased penalties for a wide range of offenses, making it far easier to try juveniles as young adults. These campaigns directly challenged the ways in which the city "criminalized youth" by treating them as delinquents under surveillance, but they also engaged in a broader critique of the cultural and legal definition of childhood in the city.

For many children and youth serve as powerful symbols in discussions about the city's past, its problems with education, and urban redevelopment. In the process, young people themselves remained excluded as objects of reform or as symbolical subjects. But we have also repeated the cycle of their exclusions from full citizenship.

As a cultural studies scholar, I argue that this new generation's response to a political and economic crisis in the 1980s and '90s. Conservative attacks on the city's investments in young people, but also to a broader critique of the city's values. In the process, "youth itself became a symbol of the failure of family, values, and nation."<sup>5</sup> As scholar Dwight and Taj James argue that young people "face intense economic isolation, lack of social support, and pervasive social stigma."<sup>6</sup> These assaults on a generation. But the complex culture of the city made it a powerful political identity. The tension between dependence and independence, and the relationships among generations, are central to the city's relations.<sup>7</sup>

These identities to challenge some of the central themes of governance that we have explored in this book. We will construct a space for protest politics and a new form of partnership and community-based governance, and the notions of parental responsibility and the role of the state as parent, and to fight

for a more comprehensive vision of the critiques of the ways in which neoliberalies between public and private spheres

Youth activists rejected a model of streets and in the private sphere. They practices to construct a new view of mate place in the public spaces of the movement's claims to public space were of the local (and national) dominance opment.<sup>8</sup> We have seen how youth, and repeatedly cleared from public space scapes for middle-class consumption lended this erasure of young people fr parties with street protests, they challe izing was dangerous and reclaimed pu These political occupations of public s was necessary for claiming the rights o tally denied to youth.<sup>9</sup>

Youth activists constructed a social tics of generation instead of race. The linked young people across racial line cies that had abandoned and criminali politics was not color-blind. Youth ac ized images of youth crime that have increased state investments in police s sized the ways in which state policies e in particular, from childhood and from sider why a politics of generation eme how it transformed, but did not aband politics of generation offers an intrig political subjectivities we've seen in ho

### *Creating a Counterpublic*

The "Super Jail" and "No on Prop 21 attention as youth movements, and the one news headline described as the " youth activism took.<sup>10</sup> Young people cla ied knowledge as they spoke about ju

welfare state. They offered compelling  
al urban policies redrew the boundar-

childhood that locates children off the  
used urban space and youth cultural  
youth as active citizens with a legiti-  
city and in the body politic. The youth  
e particularly important in the context  
of neoliberal models of urban redevel-  
l particularly youth of color, have been  
as Oakland has tried to create land-  
. Youth protests fundamentally chal-  
om public space. By combining dance  
nged the perception that youth social-  
blic space for youth cultural practices.  
space claimed a “right to the city” that  
of citizenship that are often fundamen-

l movement that foregrounded a poli-  
ey forged new political networks that  
es to challenge neoliberal public poli-  
zed a generation. But this generational  
ctivists directly challenged the racial-  
been central to building support for  
urveillance and prisons. They empha-  
xcluded youth of color, and black boys  
n public spaces. It is important to con-  
rged in urban centers nationwide, and  
lon, racial political subjectivities. This  
uing alternative to the race and class  
meowner and parent politics.

” campaigns drew a lot of news media  
press was endlessly fascinated by what  
idealistic, poetic,” and “jarring” form  
aimed moral high ground and embod-  
venile justice issues. High school and

college students often led the protests. Jail, and most, though not all participants were relatively young, between the ages of 18 and 25. Youth crime policies had politicized the age of participants did not determine the age of participants did not determine the age of participants identified as a “youth movement.”

Youth, as a political identity, provided a symbolic space to craft a new counterpublic of political carnival, rituals that, as often invert existing hierarchies.<sup>12</sup> The protestors meeting intentionally disrupted the ceremony. Instead of professionals speaking while young people remained silent, youth challenged the department’s authority and silenced the department symbolically put the probation department with and inverted the form of the legal system and innocence. At another protest, one person saying, “This generation wasn’t born to be born to put the system on trial” and “education is criminal.”

Youth was a powerful political identity symbolically connected contemporary rebellion, and radical protest with de expected to challenge authority in the memories of the Black Panthers, Chicano Asian student movements helped contemporary potential of youth in the Oakland politicized images of youth as revolutionary out in school. In one flier for a rally a person stands with hands on a detonator ready to explode. The fissures in the words “No More Walls” the walls are crumbling from the force of youth. A flier for one of the biggest anti-Prison activism of the hip hop generation to the late sixties and seventies. This flier shows a brown person, holding up a microphone in a gesture of the hip hop generation. This symbolic movements enhanced the power of youth (See Figure 17).



against Proposition 21 and the Super  
ants in these overlapping campaigns  
es of fourteen and thirty. Get tough on  
many young people in California. But  
ine that activists would organize or be

ed activists with the material and sym-  
lic.<sup>11</sup> Youth protests included elements  
anthropologist Victor Turner argues,  
initial protest at the Board of Super-  
d the traditional form of expert testi-  
ing eloquently about youth problems  
young people challenged the probation  
he adult experts. Youth activists then  
ment itself on trial. They often played  
trial and the language of criminal guilt  
e speaker made this inversion explicit,  
o be put on trial by the system. It was  
“Youth are not criminal. Not funding

identity in Oakland, partly because it  
y activism to a tradition of idealism,  
eep roots in the Bay Area. Youth are  
American cultural imagination. Vivid  
ano Movement student walkouts, and  
solidate this image of the revolution-  
imaginary. Youth activists often mobi-  
y on the handheld fliers they passed  
against the Super Jail, a young person  
dy to blow up prison bars with dyna-  
ore Cell Blocks for Youth” suggest that  
ce of youth activism (See Figure 16).  
rop 21 rallies explicitly connected the  
o the youth movements of the sixties  
wn arm thrust straight out of rolling  
clenched fist, a black power salute for  
c link between past and present social  
outh as a political identity in Oakland

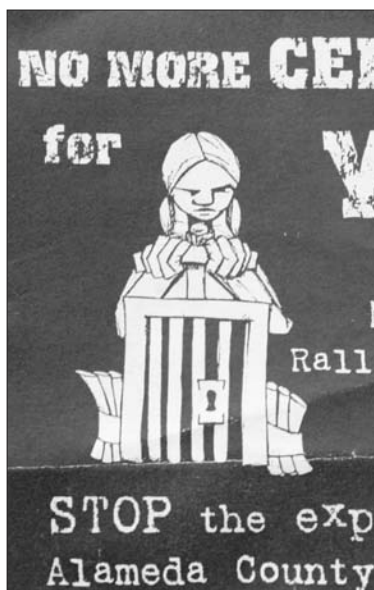
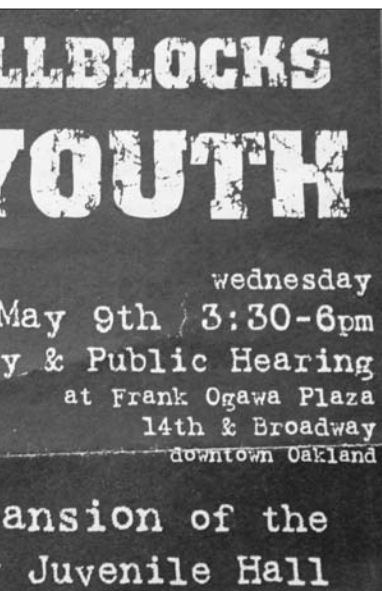


Figure 16. No More Cell Blocks. A flier for a rally at Alameda County's Juvenile Hall.

Van Jones, an African American, Youth International Party (YIP) member, described the Super Jail campaign as “youth activism.” Jones founded the Ella Baker Center for Community Development, which most emphasized youth organizing in Oakland. In his videos of civil rights protests as part of the Super Jail campaign, Jones used one flier, called “The Birth of a Movement,” to encourage youth activists to the young people who “led sit-ins and protests of the new generation of protest.” Jones constructed the Super Jail campaign to launch a familiar critique of civil rights organizations today were “too lame and ineffective.” The power of the people can be confined to the whup-ass. . . . You have to be creative because if you do it on his terms, the only way to win is to lose.

Youth activists intentionally built a new movement in Oakland's established, adult-run civil rights organizations. Speaking as youth, they challenged the politics at a time when black and Latino discourses of “community responsibility” were dominant.



for the campaign against the expansion

Yale-educated lawyer and youth advocate as “traditional militant youth activist,” Center, named for the organizer who led the civil rights movement. They used their youth organizing training, and “ment,” connected contemporary activists at lunch counters that sparked a lineage back to 1960s protests and civil rights-era leadership. Most civil rights activists were too tired. . . . I don’t believe the true power is in a ballot box. . . . We need to be about the struggle, not just the outcome. . . . I’m not sure about how you engage the enemy when the outcome is already known.”<sup>13</sup>

political infrastructure separate from civil rights networks, churches, and communities—they created the space for oppositional politics. . . . Political incorporation and neoliberal “reform” had delegitimized protest politics.<sup>14</sup>



Figure 17. Hip Hop Power  
Prop 21 protest, printed by  
designed by Local 1200, a

Many of the established black churches had very close working relationships with the black urban regime consolidated in the '90s. These organizations usually followed traditional channels, embraced discourses of "pragmatic" politics. Partnerships in policing encouraged neighborhood activists to redefine their rights of self-policing. Middle-class parent activists sought to make up for public disinvestments in education as adults fought for expanded investment in youth. Images of youth as dangerous or deficient shifted responsibility for youth repeatedly onto parents and progressive politics of childhood.

Youth activism against the Super Jail was part of a networked infrastructure of nonprofit organizations. Youth nonprofits in Oakland were served by the state into government and hesitant to direct their efforts when some nonprofit leaders expressed



Salute. A flier for No on  
y Third Eye Movement,  
hip hop collective.

ies and civic organizations developed  
city politicians and with the police as  
political power in the 1980s and early  
owed bureaucratic “problem-solving”  
partnership,” and avoided confronta-  
ng often encouraged black neighbor-  
of citizenships as the right to sufficient  
s frequently relied on volunteer labor  
n children’s environments. Even when  
ts in youth, they too often reproduced  
ient. Narrow visions of private, family  
od in the way of crafting a more pro-

and Prop 21 was nurtured by a densely  
youth services in the Bay Area. Most  
vice providers, effectively incorporated  
tly challenge local politicians. Indeed,  
d concerns about plans to expand juve-

nile hall during a probation service pro  
tion official explicitly warned that they  
and so should avoid criticism of the pla  
nizations developed youth leadership a  
These organizations trained succeeding  
helped consolidate youth as a political  
the distinction between these “political  
providers with no politics,” which she in

Many of the youth activist groups o  
or primarily along racial or ethnic li  
coalitions that challenged law and or  
demanded expanded investments in yo  
in Oakland in the late 1990s included  
school organizing effort; AYPAL, an A  
activist network; the East Bay Asian Yo  
African American youth leadership or  
(YOU), a youth organizing committee  
Oakland (PUEBLO); Young Women U  
ect run by and for low-income young  
organizing effort of a homeless advoca  
peer education and intervention progr  
student activist group mentored by a le  
few long-standing grass-roots groups t  
a nonprofit and so had no paid staff or

The Kids First! Coalition (KF!C) fir  
knit group of these youth service prov  
to formulate a systematic challenge to  
youth crime and to build support for in  
of the founders of KF!C explained th  
grams were sitting around “all bellyack  
money for kids.” They were frustrated  
mated infrastructure for youth servic  
to the problems of youth violence. Bo  
campaign, they decided to launch a vo  
mandate that the city dedicate 2.5% of  
services for children and youth.

The Measure K Kids First! Campaign  
and youth to argue that the state was  
researchers wrote reports documentin

vider meeting in 2000, a county proba-  
represented the probation department  
nned expansion. But many youth orga-  
nd organizing groups during the 1990s.  
ng generations of youth activists and  
identity.<sup>15</sup> One executive director drew  
l youth service providers” and “service  
nsisted could “not create social change.”  
organized within specific high schools  
nes, but repeatedly came together in  
rder responses to youth violence and  
outh. Core youth activist organizations  
l Youth Together, the multiracial high  
Asian and Pacific Islander high school  
outh Center; Leadership Excellence, an  
organization; Youth for Oakland United  
e of People United for a Better Life in  
nited for Oakland, an organizing proj-  
g women of color; UNYTE, the youth  
cy group; Youth Alive, an antiviolence  
am; and Olin (later Huastec), a Latino  
ocal labor activist. Olin was one of the  
hat refused to become incorporated as  
grants.

rst formally brought together a tightly  
iders and high school activists in 1996  
Oakland’s law and order responses to  
vestments in youth development. One  
at the directors of several youth pro-  
ning about why it was so hard to raise  
d by chronic funding problems, deci-  
es, and repeated repressive responses  
rrowing from a similar San Francisco  
ter initiative—Measure K—that would  
its general fund for grants to nonprofit

gn used persuasive images of children  
failing to invest in their future. Youth  
g significant reductions in city spend-

ing for youth programs since the 1960s. They argued that the city should fund youth programs deprived youth of respect and “esteem for youth,” and demonstrated “the power of young people.”<sup>16</sup> Groups of children, youth, and adults gathered in neighborhoods for signatures and showed up to city hall wearing purple t-shirts with yellow line drawings of children and adults. Petitions to spell out Kids First. When they gathered for signatures, a crowd of children pulled the petitions into city hall. Captured in newspaper images helped to convince 75% of voters to create the “Oakland children’s trust fund,” youth activism formed the ultimate image of private power and the need for public investment that would help youth get “their fair share” of the city budget.<sup>17</sup>

Youth activist organizations helped to create a political rhetoric that linked their everyday personal experiences in children’s environments that had direct political consequences. Young people in Oakland viscerally felt the “impact of their living physical environment” of their homes. A seventeen-year-old Latina student activist described how she lived near an active drug corner in the city. “I grew up on that block in many ways. She knew everyone on the block. There were “hecka cool parties.” But just one day, a shot ricocheted through her living room. “There was a big hole in the wall.” She described how she had to go to school and “try to have a cool day.”

[You] step into an environment that’s not good for teaching. Other students feel like you’re not safe. . . . You get so tired of the situation. You sit out there and deal drugs. You despise the criminal justice system, which is what they want you to do. . . . Going to school otherwise they’d fund out of it. . . . It’s such a negative attitude about school.

Politicized through youth activism, youth activists began to call the school system one of the major struggles youth faced in East Oakland. They argued that the criminal justice system, bad education



s and charged that the city's failures to  
of "safe havens," perpetuated "low self-  
"a lack of the city's commitment to its  
outh, and parents canvassed neighbor-  
o city council meetings wearing bright  
gs of children posed in acrobatic posi-  
y had collected the requisite number of  
red wagons filled with boxes of signed  
newspaper photographs, these iconic  
ers to pass Measure K. Calling for "an  
activists and children's advocates trans-  
privilege (a trust fund) into a demand  
o all children "succeed in life" and get

d young people develop political cri-  
nal struggles to broader disinvestments  
eepened racial and class inequalities.  
lt "their declining value in the declin-  
mes and schools.<sup>18</sup> As Lupe Gomez, a  
ivist from Castlemont, explained, she  
the Elmhurst flatlands and loved her  
one (including the drug dealers), and  
st a few days before we talked, a gun-  
oom. "Debris flew everywhere. There  
ed what it felt like the next day to come

all negative. . . . Some teachers are not  
do and don't want to put up with any-  
ion you in. You want to get out. You'll  
operate. . . . You end up in the criminal  
t. Obviously they don't want you com-  
r schools. They wonder why we have  
You got to show by example.

Lupe linked her daily stresses to what  
ol-to-prison pipeline.<sup>19</sup> She defined the  
Dakland as "becoming a target of the  
, even the issue of poverty."

The hypercriminalization of youth led to a confounding maze of control and punishment. One Youth Together member, called “a parent,” described the ways tardiness and tardiness were punished, even when they had done little or nothing. A person explained that when students were late to class until fourth period. Youth activists were often punishing students for being late by calling them out. Another student reported that some teachers would call the room if they are late, and if they’re caught, they would call one school several kids got suspended. A Tongan young man got suspended from school for starting a fight, and another African American student got suspended for starting up a fight.” As sociologist Victor Rios has argued, the “punitive arm of the state” has crossed traditional boundaries like family, school, and community, and even workers, and even parents to label and punish.

Youth activist networks politicized the streets and schools through youth nonprofits mobilized high school students to challenge school suspension policies; to challenge the school district; to challenge the school district department, and, later, to contest efforts to bring more police into the schools; and to oppose the school district’s centers, ethnic studies classes, and in-school programs. In 2003 Kids First! organized a year-long campaign for students because “public education is not working for youth organizations only had a short history of organizing a new generation of young activists, creating a network of young people in the schools, and linked young people to the streets.”

The Bay Area has a dense subculture of youth activism that helped nurture youth activism in Oakland. Youth organizing centers, like the Center for Transformative Organizing Unity and Liberation (SOU), the Center for Media Council and We Interrupt This, have provided organizing training and political education. In 2003, Smith, a 23-year-old white queer poet and activist, described the informal and formal activism in the Bay Area. . . . There are hella young people

had transformed Oakland schools into punishment—into what Victor Duarte, “prison-state.” At a youth speakout, student suspension policies punished students for being wrong. At Oakland Tech, one young person who was late, school officials keep them out of class. Youth activists struggled to understand the logic of keeping them out of class even longer. At other schools, teachers lock students out of the classroom. If a student is caught in the hall, they are suspended. At Oakland Tech, a student was suspended for five days for a water balloon fight. At another school, a student from Castlemont when his cousin got in trouble, a student “got suspended for breaking a rule.” As documented, in cities like Oakland, schools have been turned into “traditionally nurturing institutions. Youth centers, leading teachers, youth activists, and parents treat young people as criminals.”<sup>20</sup>

These daily experiences of exclusion on the streets and in school throughout the late 1990s.<sup>21</sup> Activist-oriented youth groups led school students to defeat a proposed curriculum and institute alternative discipline policies. Youth activists fought the city’s decisions to fund its own police department and to bring the Oakland Police Department to enforce the loitering law. They fought for teen centers, increased funding for youth programs, and a long campaign to win free bus passes for students. “School is supposed to be free.”<sup>22</sup> While many of these mobilizations spanned a lifetime, each mobilization trained a generation of youth activists and created a culture of social justice activism that spread across race and geography.

The emergence of social justice organizations that were based in Oakland. Several progressive organizing groups, including the Third World Organizing and School of Leadership (TWO), and media organizations, like Youth Power and the Youth Message, conducted research and provided political education for youth activists. Dahlia Abuelgasan, a youth organizer and activist, described the depth of organizing in Oakland. She said, “There’s always movements and people who know what’s going on and are

doing shit. It takes so many different forms, putting different demands on big companies, policy makers, theater or art collectives. “It’s not protesting.”

The Bay Area is also home to multiracial activists with histories in local labor movements, and groups like the Black Panther Party and local MC, described the impact of a young activist, he met a man who had been in the Party in the thirties and regularly talked about how he worked security for the Panthers. Longino, who helped nurture Latino youth activists in the 1990s. This older generation of movement activists, SNCC, the Black Panthers, and Chicago, were in the Bay Area and maintained ties to young activists. Organizers came together with older activists at a local Resistance conference to challenge the status quo in the United States. One conference subcommittee was the Youth Coalition, which built regional relationships, especially when Proposition 21 was placed on the ballot.

The “youth movement” actually included a wide age range, including college students and young adults and hip hop producers in their thirties and forties. Some were in high school or even middle school. There was a broad spectrum of approaches to developing youth leadership, more fully youth led, while others used a mix of adult and combined adult and youth leadership. “The high school students are running the programs, and older students as mentors in the beginning, but not always,” Longino said. Through a process of generational succession, many young activists sometimes moved on to become adults. Victor Duarte began as a student activist in the Bay Area and Olin, and later returned to work for the Bay Area. Jakada Imani, the thirty-year-old Black Panther Party MC, first became involved in political activism in high school where he got involved in campaigns against the use of violence and against racist textbooks in schools. In the Bay Area, Zulu Nation chapter, he conducted “knockout” campaigns with kids who complained about violent police practices.

forms. Some are staging protests, making-  
makers or government.” Others created  
t, but it is part of the same thing.”

multiple generations of progressive activ-  
ments, the Third World student move-  
hers. Jakada Imani, a youth organizer  
of “alive and walking about history.” As  
had been a member of the Communist  
ked with his friend’s father, who had  
g-time Chicano Movement organizers  
networks in Oakland throughout the  
ment activists, who had worked with  
no Movement, still often lived in the  
ger activists. Many students and youth  
ctivists in September 1998 at the Criti-  
e the prison industrial complex in the  
mittee developed into the Youth Force  
onships among youth activists, espe-  
on the ballot.

cluded activists from across a fairly wide  
nd some nonprofit executive directors  
or forties who worked alongside teenag-  
bl. Youth activist organizations included  
veloping youth leadership; some were  
l more of an apprenticeship model that

<sup>23</sup> As one young organizer explained,  
g things now. They needed college stu-  
now they can run their own meetings.”<sup>24</sup>  
ccession, the most active high school  
me full-time staff and later directors in  
to train younger students. For example,  
ist in high school with Youth Together  
or Youth Together after completing col-  
African American youth organizer and  
ctivism in high school in East Oakland,  
gainst the proposed curfew in Oakland  
s. Later, with the Bay Area Universal  
ow your rights” workshops for younger  
lice crackdowns on hip hop parties. He

was a founding member of the cultural center of the hip hop label Freedom Fighters, and used his networks to promote youth activist campaigns. He served as the executive director of the Ella Baker Center.

Adults who remained engaged activists used youth culture to use youth cultural forms associated with underground hip hop, graffiti, and performative social action. Many older leaders mentored young people in youth culture and performed more as mentors than participants in youth activist rallies and campaigns. I was unconsciously cultivating very different professional styles I would adopt when I became an adult. I wore political t-shirts and jeans instead of suits. I adopted a more informal speaking style with specific words and phrases connected to hip hop culture.

The No on Prop 21 campaign built on existing youth organizing. Youth activists created new campaigns, including hip hop concerts and voter registration drives. They also built on the work of think tanks that provided scientific research to support activist demands. After Proposition 21 passed, to preserve the momentum that had been built, several organizations came together to form the Youth Empowerment Center (YEC), which provided space, training, and resources for youth-led activist collaborations. The YEC led a statewide campaign called Books Not Bars, which focused on ending youth incarceration and to demand a redemptive justice system. “locking kids up” to “lifting them up.” The YEC also led the County Juvenile Hall expansion served as a platform for youth activist collaborations.

### *Reclaiming Childhood to Demand Justice*

One evening at an East Oakland neighborhood meeting, William Johnson, a confident seventeen-year-old, took the stage to criticize police crackdowns and to vote against Proposition 21. As he spoke, the crowd of tall boys with the chubby, dimpled cheeks and freckles on their faces on stage. “Can you imagine this young man

l collective Underground Railroad and both of which used hip hop music and campaigns. In 2006, he replaced Van Jones at the Ella Baker Center.

ists often continued to claim the space of community centers and institutions, particularly those that were used to build an infrastructure for progressive movements. I maintained personal ties to contemporary youth and hip hop cultures. Like other older activists, I found myself at community and planning meetings, I found myself more comfortable with bodily practices than the bureaucratic meetings with city and county officials. I wore jeans and slacks and blouses. I swore more, I walked more, I changed my posture, and used paralinguistic practices of youth and hip hop cultures.

It was on this local infrastructure of youth and hip hop that I developed political strategies that combined community organizing, street protests and carefully cultivated relationships with juvenile justice advocates. I used research and statistics to support youth organizing. In 2011, youth groups struggled to organize a campaign against the Alameda County Youth Empowerment Center. The campaign generated during the campaign. Several youth groups, and technical support to nurture the campaign. The Ella Baker Center also launched a campaign against the Alameda County Youth Empowerment Center. The campaign focused attention on alternatives to the current distribution of state expenditures from the state budget. The campaign against the Alameda County Youth Empowerment Center was a focal point for these developing

## *Building an Accountable State*

neighborhood meeting in early 2000, a 17-year-old African American activist, stood up to speak on youth and to urge the crowd to demand an end to the current distribution of state expenditures from the state budget. He called his cousin, a four-foot-tall, 110-pound prepubescent child, to the podium and asked, “What is the chance of a 110-pound man in adult prison?” “We don’t need

more money to fight crime. We need more money to go to college. That's what we need to do. Already a veteran in Oakland's youth theater, he used to use children as powerful political symbols. In a cousin on the stage directly challenged the "super-predators," "gangbangers," or adult-like "super-predators" highlights the ways youth activists used theater to rework notions of family responsibility and commitment to youth.

Since the 1970s, images of youth crime have been an explicit political project to critique the social and order responses to urban economic dislocation. The political power of this representation was explored in *Moral Poverty and How to Win America* by John DiIulio and William Bennett. DiIulio and Bennett used the term "super-predator" in the mid-1990s to describe a new breed so violent that they shocked and terrified. They argued that massive increases in violence as this "super-predator" nation grew from 1990 to 2010. *Body Count* was written to explicitly attack structural explanations for crime in economic dislocations or racial inequality. Bennett defined youth crime as caused by the breakdown of female-headed families to properly care for children. Crime rates were a "problem of sin not of nature." DiIulio and Bennett argued that criminals to "savages" and "wolf-packs" were a deep fears that a growing number of dangerous youth were a body politic. DiIulio and Bennett used the term "super-predator" children to create a powerful argument. The theory suggested that there was little that could be done to stop the impending crime wave because it was determined solely within the family.<sup>25</sup> The only appropriate role for the state was to provide a safe environment.

The "super-predator" crime wave that was predicted to begin in the late 1990s, both in Oakland and across the country, presuppositions continued to influence policy. The self-consciously progressive Bay Area's response to the expanded juvenile hall relied on the idea that larger youth populations would lead to a



more money for schools so that he can go instead of throwing us behind bars.” Through activist networks, William knew how to use symbols. The image of his fresh-faced face contrasted with the racialized images of “youth criminals” and “super-predators.” William’s stagecraft leveraged the symbolic power of childhood innocence to demand a revitalized state.

As dangerous as these images have been part of an anti-welfare state and to promote law and order during economic and social crises. We can see the impact of this thesis by examining the book *Body Count: America's War on Crime and Drugs*, written by John DiIulio. DiIulio first coined the term, “super-predator” to describe a new generation of youth criminals who were more violent than adult prisoners. DiIulio predicted that there would be an “increasingly violent” teenage population. *Body Count* used this “super-predator thesis” to argue that the causes of youth crime were racial discrimination. Instead, DiIulio and others argued that crime was caused by “moral poverty” and the failure of parents to raise their children. High black youth crime rates were a “black on black” issue. With images comparing youth crime to “super-predators,” the super-predator thesis encoded the idea that dangerous youth of color threatened the nation. These racialized fears of other people’s actions led to a backlash against state welfare programs. Their argument was that the state could do to reform youth or to prevent crime. Since the future of the nation was determined by crime, *Body Count* suggested that the role of the state was that of a policeman.

What did not happen, rather notably, was that youth crime did not decrease. Youth crime even as youth populations skyrocketed nationwide.<sup>26</sup> But many of the theory’s assumptions influenced policy making and politics, even in California.<sup>27</sup> Alameda County proponents of the theory used remarkably similar assumptions that crime was caused automatically to more crime and that

youth were becoming more violent.<sup>28</sup> A juvenile hall explained, the current hall house the increasing population of youth and violent crimes.”<sup>29</sup> A 2002 *Oakland* article reported that juveniles commit about 60% of the city’s homicides. The article had completely misread a police report that said that eighteen had been arrested for murder. The article made because of the pervasive community violence. This kind of news coverage escalated the fear of violence. A California poll in 1996 found that juveniles committed most violent crime at a time when the majority of violent arrests were of juveniles. As violence increased in the late nineties, adults still believed that violence was increasing.<sup>33</sup>

We have seen how the image of dangerous youth has been behind efforts to redefine the role and boundaries of the juvenile hall. The juvenile hall has drawn general lines in Oakland. Oakland increased the focus on a narrow logic of crime prevention, drawing it into the fabric of the city. Fears of crime changed the structure of local politics, where adults and children how parents and schools responded to the image of dangerous youth. The image of dangerous youth shifted public responsibility for social welfare, shifting it from the state for “disrespectful” young people running wild.

Youth activists in their juvenile justice system protests held youth in the juvenile justice system as a symbol of the responsibility adults have for children to critique the system’s ability, and individual responsibility. Youth activists held paper cut-outs of prison bars in front of the hall. Arrows pointing down that said, “I can’t read.” The newspaper showed images of particularly violent youth, some as young as eleven, highlighting the impact of the law on who would be affected by the law (See *Children’s Movement Taking Children*,” implying that the juvenile hall was disrupting innocent children.

Many youth activist slogans also warned of the danger of incarcerated youth. Even the choice of the name “Children’s Movement Kids” emphasized a connection to children.

As one letter of support for the new bill was “not structured or equipped to handle youthful offenders who commit serious crimes,” the *Los Angeles Times* and *San Francisco Chronicle* *and Tribune* article reported that “juvenile homicides.”<sup>30</sup> It turned out the reporter was wrong: that year, only two juveniles under 18 were killed.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless the error was easy to understand: a common sense that youth were dangerous. In the 1990s, adult fears, even as youth crime fell.<sup>32</sup> In 1990, 60% of adults believed that juveniles were more dangerous than adults, even when only 13% of California’s violent youth crime fell by more than 50% in 1991. In 1992, 60% believed that teen violent crime rates were

rising. The perception that dangerous youth was a powerful force behind the purpose of government along neoliberal lines, “governed through crime,” and the emphasis on discipline, and security extended deep into the culture. Crime reshaped the rhythms of daily life, and how businesses operated, and even the way people thought about the needs and problems of young people. Often, it often served to shrink a vision of public space. In the 1990s, it was easy to blame faulty families for the violence on the streets.

Anti-crime campaigns consistently portrayed children as dangerous. They used the responsibility of parents. Neoliberal models of choice, accountability, and discipline. At anti-Prop 21 rallies, young people held signs that said, “I could be in prison now.” Often, news stories showed young kids behind bars, boys or girls, emphasizing the innocence and vulnerability of the kids (see Figure 18). Another flier for a protest held signs that said, “CAL Prisons kidnapping and corrupting our children.”

Protesters worked to reclaim childhood for incarcerated youth. The word “kid” in the slogan “Super Jail for Kids” was more than the word “youth.”



Figure 18. Books Not Bars: The symbol of the Books Not Bars campaign. (Photo courtesy of Ella Baker Center for Youth Policy Studies, photographer)

The heavy circulation of the phrases “youth” and “danger” fundamentally transformed the meaning of “youth,” which now signified danger. In contrast, “kid” highlighted the tension of innocence and danger. Youth activists argued that youth needed “books not bars” and “coaches not bars.” Children needed proximity to their families, not detention halls or out-of-home placements. Education, family, and recreation tied incarcerated youth to their families. With calls to “expand minds not prisons,” youth activists called to invest in the unlimited potential of children.

Youth activists considered Prop 21 a “War on Youth” that was “criminalizing youth.” Youth activists rejected the fundamental premise of Prop 21, which criminalized both the criminal justice system and youth. Youth activists argued that criminal justice policies targeting youth threatened to define all youth as dangerous. If young people were under attack, youth



Symbolic power of childhood.  
Center for Human Rights, John Pil-

“youth crime” and “youth violence” had  
ing of “youth” so that the term itself  
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This rhetoric that emphasized home,  
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youth as dangerous. Insisting that all  
n activists called into question the fun-

damental claims that youth “chose” to be a problem of individuals who should be routinely challenged the probation department was being built for the good of youth. The government’s therapeutic language of reform in juvenile hall, turned them into hard labor. The department spoke of “numbers of beds,” “youth workers,” youth activists referred to “cells,” a Latina activist from East Oakland, called the juvenile hall next to the adult jail “a prison.” “Could you just look out the window to see what we’re doing that to send to our kids?”

Youth activists explicitly highlighted racial inequality from the protections and norms of the juvenile justice system. Proposition 21 and other adult treatment laws excluded children under eighteen from the care of the juvenile justice system. Youth are far more likely to be tried in the adult courts than in the juvenile courts. The courts often use race or racialized labels to justify exclusion. “The racial bias is obviousness.” One study in Los Angeles County found that “Black boys 7.3 times, and Asian boys 2.5 times as adults than white boys committing the same offense.” This is evidence for a hierarchy of racial exclusion that places Black and Latino youth below whites but continues to locate youth of color at the bottom of the racial hierarchy. The report *And Justice for All: Racial Disparities in the Treatment of Youth of Color*—especially African American youth—“for similar offenses” across the state is “unequal.”<sup>35</sup> More broadly, youth activists challenge the construction of youth as hardened (and adult as soft) and support for get tough on youth policies. The report also documented stark racial disparities in school suspensions and expulsions. Youth activists pointed to the high rates of youth in schools excluded far too many youth from the ultimate normative space of childhood.

Youth activists also challenged the complex equation of crime, age, and race. Youth activists argued that crime is not a function of age or race.<sup>37</sup> One youth-led study of a TV news stories about young people focused on news stories about education concentrated on youth. The report analyzed differences in repre-

to become criminal and that crime was to be cut off from society. Youth activists rejected the department's argument that the new facilities were for "troubled" and "at-risk" young people. They rejected the department's argument that locking kids up, even for minor offenses, was the best way to protect hardened criminals. While the department argued for "youth guidance centers," and "counseling centers," youth activists argued for "jails," and "guards." Mariana Lopez, a youth activist, criticized the new planned location for the facility in Dublin. "All the young offenders are losing their futures. What kind of message is

being sent by the state's role in excluding youth of color from safe and creative spaces of childhood. Most obvious is the way that transfer policies explicitly exclude some categories of childhood. Youth of color are treated as adult system than white youth because of stereotypes like "gangs" as a proxy for "dangerous." A study by the county found that black boys were 18.4 times more likely to be tried in adult court than boys 4.5 times more likely to be tried in juvenile court for similar crimes.<sup>34</sup> This data provides evidence that positions Asians and Latino youth and African Americans at the bottom of the justice system. *Justice for Some* documents that "youth of color receive different and harsher treatment in a juvenile justice system that is 'separate and unequal.'" Youth activists suggested that representation of youth (like) criminals created political support for the system. In their report *Locked Out, Kids First!*, youth activists in Oakland public school suspensions and expulsions and the ways zero tolerance policies excluded youth of color from remaining in school, and in their homes.<sup>36</sup>

The ways media coverage created a community of fear—criminalizing youth and racializing youth. A study in Oakland showed that 63% of news coverage was based on youth crime. Even one-third of news coverage was based on crime and violence.<sup>38</sup> Another study found that representations of white youth and youth of

color and showed that media represent youth of color as the perpetrators of crime. When youth of color are represented as criminal, they were framed as “innocent faces,” and depicted with youthful features. Youth of color kids were shown handcuffed, in court, and in jail. Youth activists critiqued the ways media excluded youth of color from childhood (and the legal and (in)equivalent) protections of the juvenile justice system.

Youth activists worked to reclaim the definition of childhood, defining children as vulnerable and in need of adult protection and the parental obligations it entails, and the social responsibility, not only individual but also demands on the state. At the April 2008 protest in Chicago, an eighteen-year-old Latina activist, Yvonne, called out local politicians of color, stop speaking and carried a rosebud up to the podium and handed it directly to the two African American representatives.

It is wonderful to see people of African American descent and in such positions of power, but why can't we get where you are because their definition of juvenile hall is the destruction of youth. We are dying. I am dying because of violence in our communities are crumbling. It's a battle. People separate themselves out from the process of killing us, Keith Carter.

Here she singled out the African American representative who previously voted for the larger hall, and pointed to the reality that youth of color “Yes we're loud and angry. Why do you haven't even had a chance to bloom. Some of us end up in jail sometime soon.”

At the same protest, another Latina activist, who had been in juvenile hall for five years, criticized the mistreatment. She said, “None of it gave me a word from the counselors who put you down and said ‘I don't care about your bills.’ . . . I sit here angry at all of you who promised me.” Both of these speeches



representations disproportionately identified time. Even when white youth were represented as children, described with terms like yearbook pictures. In contrast, minority youth were framed already by the justice system.<sup>39</sup> Media images fostered public policies that looked good and from the important (if inadequate) justice system.

Key elements of the modern construction of youth as inherently reformable but also as in need of protection. These claims to childhood, and the idea of reformability, enabled youth activists to talk about their own responsibility, and to make explicit their protest against the Super Jail, Veronika, and the system, demanding that adults, and particularly those separating themselves from youth. She spoke in a soft voice full of emotion to the men on the board.

African American descent on the council asked, "what about the other brothers? They say their schools aren't good. The expansion is taking away young people souls. I see it everyday. What are you putting us through. Our picture is a bigger picture. It's about oppression. It's about youth. "They're rowdy." You are helping to destroy us." - Veronika.

African American board member who had previously been in the audience cheered loudly. "Do you want to see our destruction? We don't want to see our destruction. Stop stereotyping us, waiting for us to be destroyed."

A young woman, who had been on probation for the treatment she encountered in the system, spoke out. . . . In juvenile hall, there were signs that said, 'I'm glad you're here. You're paying for your crime. You did not give me what you promised. You called on the moral obligation adults



y argued that the state has been a neg-  
us on the state as parent built on the  
ing “in loco parentis” to insist that the  
ntal responsibilities. It explicitly chal-  
blame families for youth crime and set  
state.

ily” to call for racial solidarity and to  
corporation had left “many brothers”  
ghlighted the limits of racial solidar-  
Oakland, the chief of police, the city  
ation were all African American, and  
much of the city bureaucracy. These  
died the successes of Oakland’s civil  
political and administrative power. But  
rastructure that allowed for these Afri-  
se to positions of power was gone. She  
African American, Latino, and Asian  
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youth in the juvenile justice system as  
used on getting both Keith Carson and  
s to show solidarity with the youth of  
Meanwhile, they largely ignored the  
l Scott Haggerty, apparently accepting  
fail to identify with kids in the hall.

om the “risky” actions of youth to the  
protest in front of the Board of Super-  
ne meaning of “at-risk” youth: “We are  
overty, at risk of people trying to lock  
going to help us. Sorry I can’t help but  
trying to build?” Similarly, at a public  
the supervisors to do what they often  
o to the “peer pressure” of the power-  
matizing adult behavior with language  
uth, these activists shifted the focus to  
ons of individual youth.

alternatives to incarceration and chal-  
orical commitment to invest in “model

programs” and follow “best practices.” Not Bars campaign, insisted, “There is things need to happen.” But she asked, the leadership? It all ends up going back to write a list of what we want to see of model programs and actual implementation of disappear.” Youth activists challengeers to look to the police and justice system they consistently pointed out the linkports for youth and the involvement of Darden acknowledged that “a lot of or “What do they need? They don’t need public funding for their schools and social services to be spent on prisons.”

Youth activists’ claims to childhood operated in several important ways to in the context of early twenty-first century ties to reconstruct racial community African Americans and other people of criminal justice policies. But they also youth and youth of color back into the munity. They used childhood to launch of color were criminalized and youth national political discourses. Youth membership in the family of the nation of parental responsibility to demand the

Youth activism against the Super Jail the expanded juvenile hall. Supervisor time children’s advocate, objected to the tics” and insisted that the kids in juvenile a bad attitude.” “Excuse me. That’s not sick kids. They have been neglected for were born. . . . Their life experiences are she would look like a cold-hearted but with the youth protestors. She explained don’t have a clue about how to raise children to kids, and they say, ‘Close the jail. Kids they don’t. . . . Not these kids.” Steele power of childhood to reframe the de

Michelle Darden, a leader of the Books is a lot of agreement on what kinds of, “Where are the investments? Where’s back to criminal justice. . . . It’s one thing happen. Somewhere between the idea mentation, millions of dollars just sort ed the tendency of public policy mak- tems to secure “public safety.” Instead, ks between the absence of social sup- f youth in the justice system. Michelle ur kids are messed up,” but she asked, d to be incarcerated. They don’t need recreation centers and health care and

42

, and the parental obligations it entails, reconstruct social and political space ury U.S. cities. They used generational and solidarity and to critique the ways f color increasingly supported tougher worked to reincorporate both criminal e family of an imagined national com- ch a moral critique of the ways youth crime was racialized in both local and activists claimed childhood to assert n, and they drew on a broader notion at the state invest in their future.

il created a quandary for supporters of Gail Steele, a white woman and long- ne youth movement’s “sound-bite poli- ile hall are not “little fifth graders with t what we have here. These are deeply orever, practically from the time they e wrong choices.” But she worried that reaucrat or “ogre” when she disagreed ed, “You take young people who really ildren, how difficult it is, what happens ds belong at home.’ Well I’m sorry, no e’s frustration highlights the symbolic bate about youth crime and challenge

the reliance on incarceration as a solution. Arguments also point to some problems with

Youth activists had to work against the idea that children and youth are not competent social actors. Lacking the knowledge or experience to shape public policy, and without the voice of the nation, they are generally framed as full citizens. District Attorney Tom Bradley's naiveté as he argued for the expanded juvenile justice is that youth should not be detained. "The evidence has shown me otherwise."<sup>44</sup> Other activists supported the campaign by casting doubt on the impact of the protests. James Thurman, the African American leader of the youth protestors were being "marched to jail," insisted that the majority of activists who were in the Jail were not "a spontaneous uprising" but rather "activists with an agenda they feel passionate about." To suggest that if young people were perceived as "youth" they couldn't be seen as the "pure" voice of the "youth," they were too naïve and inexperienced.

Youth activists offered a fundamental critique of the state as incomplete citizens. Zack, a seventeen-year-old activist with Youth Together, explained, "The mainstream view is that if you're eighteen, you don't have a brain or anything you do is righteous and legal, and if you're eighteen, it's just kids causing trouble." Victor, a high school student leader in Youth Together, criticized the exclusions of youth from basic rights during the Proposition 21 campaign because he felt that the campaign was based on something that affected us. Prop 21 is like a 65-year-old voting on propositions that affect children. Of course they are going to vote yes. Let us have a say.

Young people's limited rights of citizenship led to an approach to political engagement. Victor described the use of street protests, of "making noise," as a form of citizenship. "That's the only power that we have. The vote, ability to make noise, to contact people. The only thing we can do is hold a rally and protest." Victor was worried that adults sometimes interpreted youth protests as "inferior." But Victor asked adults to "put the

tion to youth problems. But her com-  
th “youth” as a political identity.

the pervasive common sense that chil-  
al and political actors with the knowl-  
icy.<sup>43</sup> While children may be the future  
ed as only citizens-in-the-making, not  
n Orloff emphasized youth protestors’  
juvenile hall: “I think their basic prem-  
ed. I wish they were right, but experi-  
ers worked to discredit the Super Jail  
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American assistant DA, told me that  
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g of youth” but instead the actions of  
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essionable to be good policy makers.

tal critique of this definition of youth  
een-year-old white activist with Youth  
culture basically says that until you’re  
anything. Once you hit eighteen every-  
nd fighting for your rights. But before  
trouble.” Greg, an African American  
Together at Skyline, challenged the  
of citizenship. He became involved in  
e was frustrated that “we couldn’t vote  
1 was for youngsters, and you have a  
t are not even going to affect them? Of  
s vote on things that affect us.”

citizenship significantly shaped their  
ctor Duarte explained the importance  
given young people’s limited rights of  
t we have.” Adults “have the ability to  
the person that represents them. The  
nd make noise.” Both Greg and Victor  
reted youth rallies as “childish behav-  
nemselves in our shoes. At least try to

see where we come from. If we are honest, Victor's challenge raises the question of how to "reconfigure the rights of youth and the 'noise' in the streets."

Youth activists clearly worked to reclaim the street and youth even as they drew on powerful cultural categories. They refused both the moralism of Ronald Reagan and Gail Steele's more sympathetic depictions of youth at risk, or primarily full of negative life experiences. They rejected constructions of childhood that locate responsibility in a reified private sphere—in the home—and sought to pull young people from the street. They redoubled the rights and capacity to participate in public life.

### *Hip Hop Politics Reclaims the Street*

Youth activists in the Bay Area developed a politics that intentionally blurred the line between culture and political protests. They used local hip hop as a cultural and quasi-institutional base for their work. They used a network of large-scale commercial venues for their work and a network of underground hip hop collectives, including the Living Word Project, the Living Word Collective, the Living Word Project, the Living Word Project, and the Living Word Project, all of which trained young activists in different campaigns. Organizers used hip hop to bring people out for protests in the way that hip hop had plastered their schools and neighborhoods. They used well-produced fliers, called friends, and door-to-door work in school hallways.

Protests against Proposition 21 and Proposition 21 and open squares in the heart of both San Francisco and Oakland. Door parties and then moved into the streets and boulevards. Sometimes these were formal protests, at other times a flatbed truck brought a message to parks and schools. They used spoken word and raps onto public buses and got people involved in the campaign.

The mix of politics and pleasure in the campaign was a rally in front of the probation department.



holding a protest, why are we doing it?” of how youth activists used protests to re-define the place of youth in the city by “making

re-define our understanding of childhood and the powerful symbolic associations of those cultural definitions of youth as criminal, and the neoliberal definitions of youth as “deeply sick,” at the expense of their experiences and skills. They rejected the notion of responsibility for children and youth purely on the part of “the family”—and that excluded youth as “agents of change” with the right to participate in the public sphere of politics.<sup>46</sup>

## *Street*

They developed a distinctive form of hip hop that blurred the boundaries between hip hop parties and DJ networks and hip hop collectives as the primary space from which to organize. In the absence of a formal hip hop in the Bay Area, a dense network of collectives emerged, like Black Dot Artists and the Underground Railroad, and Freedom Riders. They performed at rallies for different causes, used hip hop promotional techniques, turned their parties into what they would for a party. Young people used their parties as a means to spread the word through classrooms

and the Super Jail claimed public parks and streets in San Francisco and Oakland for outdoor performances, stopping traffic along major thoroughfares. Formal and well-advertised protests, while the Super Jail used “guerrilla hip hop” music and No on 57. <sup>47</sup> Some MCs and poets also took their parties to the streets where they would perform, educate, and organize.<sup>48</sup>

The act of occupying public space was clear at a rally in San Francisco the week before the vote on Prop-



Figure 19. Ain't No Power Like the Power  
Proposition 21 march in downtown Oak  
Center for Human Rights, John Pilgrim,

osition 21. On this gray, rainy day, I jo  
and high school students at 4:00 P.M.  
middle school. These young protestor  
with some Asian and Pacific Islander  
twelve to eighteen. We marched throu  
tion department, dancing down the str  
justice no peace. We don't need police  
gathered in the street in front of the j  
Speaking with microphones from the  
high school students gave brief statem  
ers asked each Oakland school to "rep  
schools. In a brief speech, an African  
juvenile court building as "the place t  
us to prison." But he reassured the yo  
worry about the police today. "We're n

The teenage protestors clearly enjoy  
the relationship between youth and the



er of the Youth. Protestors at a No on  
land. (Photo courtesy of Ella Baker  
photographer)

ained a crowd of eighty middle school  
in the playground of a West Oakland  
ors were primarily black and Latino,  
youth, and they ranged in ages from  
gh downtown and towards the proba-  
reets to the rhythms of the chants: “No  
”; “21 is a prop that we gotta stop.” We  
juvenile court and probation building.  
back of the flatbed truck, a couple of  
ments against Prop 21. Young organiz-  
resent,” and students cheered for their  
American young man described the  
they take us to court before they send  
ung audience that they didn’t have to  
ot going to let you go.”

ved the way street protests overturned  
e police on Oakland’s streets and chal-

lenged the emerging spatial order that pushed hip hop culture from public spaces. After a few days, a group of young activists proceeded to have a demonstration in the section. They had no permit for the event. The demonstrators, black, Latino, and Pacific Islander youth, occupied a downtown street, with speakers blaring hip hop music. As dozens of police officers simply stood by, allowing traffic. The police at these rallies protected the protesters with no attempt to get the protesters or the demonstrators. The organizer asserted, “We have the upper hand. We are making them to work for us right now.”

Youth activists occupied the streets in a way that enacted a fundamental right to the city. They argued that the right to public space is not an abstract concept. Public space is “a practice” that must be constantly re-created through daily use and political action. Youth activists marched, and spoke in the streets, they reclaimed public space and youth culture. A common chant during these protests claims to public space quite clear: “We are the city. The streets is ours.”

These political occupations of public space were a direct claim to citizenship. Mitchell argues that “the right of citizenship” because it is only in public space that the needs of individuals and groups can be seen, and youth activists argued, controlling public space should be a political act. These sorts of actions that can be considered as a form of citizenship. Youth activists defined as members of “the legitimate city.” Youth activists in public space reinforced their exclusion from the city. Youth activists in public space reinforced their exclusion from attention on the needs and desires of youth. Youth activists protested in Oakland’s streets, they made their presence visible. They demanded more than the city could give them. Instead, they used public space to challenge the city. Youth activists which geographer David Harvey defines as “a right to the city” but also “an active right to the city.” Youth activists more in accord with our heart’s desire.

Youth activists’ hip hop politics also challenged the dominant representations of hip hop as violent or criminal. Youth activists represented hip hop styles as the main sign of “dangerous

t excluded young people and hip hop  
v brief speeches against Prop 21, these  
dance party in the middle of the inter-  
event. As it got dark, a large group of  
youth danced in the middle of a down-  
hip hop dance music from a flatbed truck  
d disinterested a block away diverting  
cted kids' rights to the street and made  
dance party to disperse. As one orga-  
nd. The cops are diverting traffic. We're  
."

as well as halls of political power in a  
to public space.<sup>49</sup> Don Mitchell argues  
abstract or stable right. Instead, public  
stantly recreated and defended as truly  
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Whose streets is these?" a young orga-  
and the crowd would respond, "These

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blic spaces "that the desires and needs  
and therefore recognized."<sup>50</sup> As Mitch-  
apes the nature of public debate, "the  
d legitimate," and the kinds of people  
e public."<sup>51</sup> Excluding youth from pub-  
m "the legitimate public" and focused  
an adult public. When youth activists  
ade young people's needs and desires  
e limited right to hang out on the cor-  
claim a fundamental right to the city,  
es as a right not only to live in and use  
to make the city different, to shape it  
"<sup>52</sup>

o directly challenged dominant repre-  
ninal. Many adults interpreted hip hop  
youth" in Oakland. As youth activists

in their baggy pants and baseball hats, and rapped against the new juvenile law, reframed hip hop culture and youth forms of citizenship. By combining public culture, youth activists demanded that graffiti be considered a legitimate part of free speech.

Since its origins, hip hop culture thrived in public space. Graffiti artists splashed paint across buses, freeways, and buildings. Disc jockeys filled the air with youth music. Robin Kelley and Tricia Rose have argued that these styles became “weapons” in an “ad hoc public space.”<sup>53</sup> In late-twentieth-century Oakland, donuts, blasting hip hop from car stereos, were certainly youth strategies in that ongoing war. Youth activists used hip hop much more explicitly to claim public space and citizenship.<sup>54</sup>

Youth activists often described Proposition 21 as a hip hop generation war. One anti-Prop 21 flier titled “war on hip hop” and made clear that graffiti was a medium of hip hop as well. In simple, bold, black background, the flier said, “Hip-Hop War.” At the bottom it added, “No Prop 21” and “It’s not a Battle.” Several provisions of Prop 21 as targeted by youth activists: provisions of hip hop culture in public space, such as graffiti, lowering the definition of vandalism from five dollars of property damage to four hundred dollars. Youth activists criticized the proposition’s gang provisions, arguing that they would be turned into felonies if the police suspected a group. As explained, “Any group of three or more people with a common name can be labeled a ‘gang.’” “If you are caught on the street rapping” “will land you in jail.”

Young people worried that hip hop culture would subject them to further surveillance and police on the streets. As Youth Together member Vincent Williams said, “This is an attack on us,” an attempt “to classify us as a gang.” About “gangs,” they are “not talking about real gangs.” Many of his family members fit “the stereotype.” His cousins always “dressed in the same style w

s marched through downtown streets  
hall to the Board of Supervisors, they  
socializing in the street as expressive  
politics with the pleasures of hip hop  
youth occupations of public space be  
speech and political assembly.

has enacted young people's claims to  
their names, neighborhoods, and art  
Beats blaring from boom boxes or car  
and voices. American studies scholars  
argued that hip hop music and cultural  
war of position to take back public  
land, the Sideshow, cruising, spinning  
reos, and gathering in the streets were  
going battle. But youth activists used  
m their rights to public space and to

op 21 as an attack on hip hop and the  
flier described the proposition as "a  
activists would fight back through the  
red and white block letters on a yellow  
Will Prevail," and in graffiti-style print,  
attle. . . . It's War." Activists singled out  
ting hip hop, and particularly expres-  
ces. Proposition 21 increased penalties  
felony vandalism from fifty thousand  
ndred dollars. Activists also frequently  
ions, which allowed misdemeanors to  
spected gang membership. As one flier  
ore folks who dress similar or share a  
? Chillin' with your folks" or "hangin'  
a jail."<sup>55</sup>

and other urban youth cultural styles  
allance and punishment on Oakland's  
ictor Duarte said, Prop 21 felt like "an  
s like delinquents." When people talk  
out punk rockers." Victor knew he and  
ereotype of a gang member." His cous-  
when they went out, wearing the same

colors and same shirts,” and he worried of trouble through Proposition 21.” Vi street by an older woman, who saw him do you belong to?’ It really got me mad away. But I knew she was ignorant.”

Hip hop also provided a powerful oppositional attitudes into fuel for political condition of message rappers like Public “decided to take that anger [in hip hop Youth activists called the last week of the of Rage.” They defined their rage as political youth anger as an individual problem management classes. Jakada Imani expected to turn the “devil-may-care,” “fuck you” politics. Youth activists frequently used hip hop called out for “who-riders to represent.” “Who-ride” means to act wild, crazy, or crazy actions. Organizers used this the pleasures of acting crazy, to describe political action. More generally, they framed political ing in the pleasures of the street. Instead the pleasures of the street, these youth leaders before them, sought to channel towards political action.

Activists emphasized the dangers of Proposition 21 as an imminent danger to protestors. Organize preparations for the possibility of Proposition 21 protest in front of the presence of numbers of ACLU lawyers on their arm of the adults at this march, mostly teachers. College students, wore large stickers that were to take notes in case of arrests of older activists warned youth to stick to “a target” by the police. At rallies, speaking by the police and warned that they would “let you down.” Even the youth organizer “let them take you,” reinforced the community probation department wanted to jail the potential dangers of political protest action.



ed that they could “get in some kind  
ctor himself had been stopped on the  
m wearing red and asked, “What gang  
ad. I didn’t say anything. I just walked

medium for turning youth anger and  
itical action. Activists built on the tra-  
Enemy, who, as Chuck D explained,  
op] and direct it at something real.”<sup>56</sup>  
he Proposition 21 campaign the “Week  
olitical, challenging interpretations of  
that should be controlled with anger  
plained that the youth movement tried  
attitude” of hip hop into militant poli-  
p hop slang, as when a youth organizer  
nt” and asked “who’s down to ride?”  
r disruptive and also to defeat through  
erm, which referred generally to the  
the pleasures of oppositional political  
olitical protest as a way of participat-  
ead of suppressing anger and denying  
n organizers, much like the Black Pan-  
this generation’s angers and pleasures

political protest and framed the police  
Common protest rituals included elab-  
of being arrested. Many students at the  
probation department had written the  
ns in ink for use in case of arrest. Most  
hers, nonprofit workers, and older col-  
marked us as “Legal Observers.” We  
or clashes with the police. At protests,  
gether as they left to avoid being made  
kers frequently told stories of humilia-  
police are “looking for a reason to take  
y who reassured the crowd “We won’t  
mon presumption that the police and  
ne young protestors. This focus on the  
ctually made the protests more appeal-

ing to many youth who enjoyed the pleasures of street action.

Organizers sometimes worried that youth were participating primarily for the pleasures of the street. At a rally outside of the police station, when the crowd was chanting, an African American woman organizer said, “I see y’all folks coming out to smoke blunts and blunts, and I see y’all and light a blunt and forget about it. I see y’all and I want to see y’all locked up in there.” But when organizers resisted attempts to impose too much structure at the same rally, an organizer called for more spontaneity on the microphone,” but to keep the rap alive.” A young black man sitting near me yelled out, “Yo, Po-Po [police], right? We can still say ‘I ain’t gon’’ didn’t respond, so he added, “Y’all better get outta here!”

Youth activists worked to turn this form of resistance into transformational politics. As ethnographers and anthropologists have shown, working-class youth often reject school and embrace oppositional politics. But this form of agency or resistance often reproduces racial and class exclusion. Studies scholar and Oakland activist Sherry Noveck’s activism provides a powerful example of how youth turned oppositional resistance into “transformative resistance” that challenge negative stereotypes as they engage in community organizing.

Youth activists have tried to realize this vision by linking progressive hip hop directly to social justice. Oakland rap artist Boots of The Streets has linked political hip hop to grass-roots organizing.

Political rap groups [like Public Enemy] have been around only through listening. . . . They were around when people died out when people saw their lives being taken away. On the other hand, gangsta groups and rappers who were around for a long time of a movement. The drug game has been around for a long time directly impacted lives, and for . . . that it earned people some money. Hip hop was around in order for political rap to be around, but it was around that will make people’s lives

oppositional attitude and implicit danger that young people came to these events meet. At one anti-Prop 21 rally in front of a school, she was paying scant attention to a young woman who complained, "I'm sick of young people who skip school. You can't just go home and take care about y'all. Y'all are family. I don't want to see you get discipline on their political action. At the same time, rappers to come and "bust it, represent the community positive: "No disrespecting nobody." She then yelled out, "We can still disrespect the police. Fuck the Po-Po, right?" The organizer responded, "You can't get all controlling now." This kind of oppositional attitude into a hip hop culture. Professor Paul Willis and many educational researchers have argued that youth of color often use these identities like "hustler" or "thug."<sup>57</sup> This identity often reifies negative stereotypes and social inequalities. African American scholar Henry Giroux has argued that youth use hip hop as a form of "oppositional resistance" that enables youth to challenge authority in local political struggles.<sup>58</sup> This is the potential of hip hop politics by connecting to specific local campaigns for youth empowerment. The Coup argued for the importance of hip hop movements:

[Hip hop in the late 1980s] offered solutions that weren't part of a movement, so they weren't changing. . . . On the other hand, people who talk about selling drugs are a part of the culture that's been around for many years and has always been positive in the sense that it's a place where gangsta rap has a home. . . . In order for there to be a movement that will change things better in a material sense.<sup>59</sup>

American studies scholar George Lipsitz's analyses of rap music routinely imply that rap causes youth crime. These attacks on youth culture, which ignore the ways that they erase the political and economic transformations and infrastructure for youth in cities like New York, are allies in local progressive hip hop—hip hop that views hip hop culture “rather than confrontational” as youth cultural expressions.<sup>61</sup> By using hip hop mobilization, young activists posed a direct challenge to hip hop as criminal. Their form of hip hop activism pushed an analysis of youth crime back into public space and framed hip hop as the language of future leadership and youth cultural practices.

### *Race and the Cultural Politics of Youth*

One of the largest rallies against Proposition 13 in Los Angeles and featured an Asian break dance performance by established artists like The Coup and the Roots, and the Company of Prophets, and up-and-coming acts. The crowd was incredibly diverse, almost a quarter Asian, a quarter black, and a quarter white, but that barely describes the mix of South Asian, black, and white hip hop fans, punkers, skateboarders, earnest socialists sold out literature, and sat scattered throughout the audience. During the performances, young men and women danced, listened to music, circulated petitions, registered voters, and more.

Jakada Imani, one of the event's MCs, spoke to the multiracial community presented to the rally. He asked, “Been here. They looked around and saw lots of white ones. What they gonna do?” He asked, “What they really do anything. “So what we’re gonna do? We represent.” Youth activists cultivated a collective identity as “the hip hop generation” or simply as “youth” that they avoided or somehow transcended. They sought to reconfigure, not abandon, racial politics and collective identity as “youth of color” and

Lipsitz has argued that attacks on rap  
s youth crime and inner-city decline.  
h many black adults have embraced,  
asformations that have decimated the  
Oakland.<sup>60</sup> Youth activists—and their  
ave tried to “embrace and transform”  
t, isolate and marginalize” dominant  
g hip hop as a resource for political  
direct challenge to the portrayals of hip  
p politics worked to bring a structural  
olic policy debates. And by reframing  
ders, they reclaimed public space for

## *Youth*

rop 21 drew a crowd of almost a thou-  
cing group and hip hop performances  
and Dead Prez, local groups like The  
ming high school acts. The crowd was  
sian, a quarter black, a quarter Latino,  
captures the diversity of protestors.  
headz rapped at an open mike, young  
sat on the grass, queer activists passed  
ewspapers, and older men and women  
watching young people run the show.  
and women flirted and danced to the  
voters, and chanted against Prop 21.

Cs, emphasized the challenge that this  
the status quo. “The 5-0 have already  
aw all these youth. What they gonna  
of black ones, brown ones, yellow ones,  
e paused to indicate that they couldn’t  
na do is keep it peaceful. We’re gonna  
generational political identity, speak-  
ply as “youth,” but this does not mean  
ended race. Youth activists worked to  
ical subjectivities. They constructed a  
affected by the “war on youth.”

Political alliances among youth of color made sense in Oakland. Oakland was a place where alliances between blacks and Latinos were common, depending on the school. These schools often encouraged young people to organize around their communities of interest. In the 1990s, black and Latino riots became a regular part of each school year. One Latino counselor at a school where the population began to increase, he would tell his Asian and black students that the school still “belonged to the Asians” that Latino students were “taking over.” The tensions between Asian and black students escalated into racial riots that led many Asian kids to transfer to other schools.

Even within the multiracial youth organizations, alliances emerged as youth or adult observers noticed high school boys or Latina activists coming together in the juvenile justice system with the same group of young men.<sup>62</sup> At one school board hearing, a parent spoke passionately against Mayor Jerry Brown’s proposal for a charter school, calling the proposal “racist” and “color need discipline” or were “animalistic.” Elmhurst NCPC leader Bill Clay heard that the youth activists were talking about black students could speak about racism, and he asked the black kids, why can’t they find more than one person of color? The director of one youth organization pointed out that having all these Asian faces talking about racism was a disconnect in young people’s experiences of racism.

Youth activists consciously worked to create a sense of identity as “youth of color” in the face of racism. Posters, fliers, and murals in youth activists’ spaces imagined a community of Asian, Latin American, and black women united in struggle. Activists often referred to themselves as “youth of color” who were “overrepresented” in a city where they were underrepresented. Every year in the mural, *We Are Our Ancestors*, a book, emphasizes this unity among youth of color in the industrial complex.

Christine Wong Yap painted the mural in 1991, after the 21 protests, and it circulated to other youth organizations.

of color certainly did not exist in any  
as home to periodic race riots in high  
or blacks and Asians or Tongans and  
these tensions in neighborhoods and  
ple to draw narrow racial boundaries  
At Castlemont High School in the late  
most a ritual marking the beginning of  
or explained that as the Latino student  
ld “hear rumors from African Ameri-  
ngs to us, is run by us” or resentment  
.” At Skyline, a fight between a couple  
over a period of days into a series of  
to avoid school for several days.

activist coalitions, tensions occasion-  
ers wondered whether Asian American  
uld speak for troubled youth or youth  
e same authority as African American  
earing, many Asian American youth  
y Brown’s proposal to create a military  
acist because it assumed “students of  
s to be trained into obedience.” When  
rd these comments, he assumed the  
ck kids and questioned whether Asian  
asking, “If they’re going to talk about  
man two or four?” An Asian American  
privately expressed similar worries that  
bout racism missed significant differ-  
racial exclusion in Oakland.

d to produce a generational political  
of these ongoing racial tensions. Pho-  
st campaigns worked to construct an  
o, Native, and black young men and  
en emphasized unity among “youth of  
a “too racist” juvenile hall.<sup>63</sup> The imag-  
rs, which graces the front cover of this  
uth of color under attack by the prison

atural for the campaign against Propo-  
protests around the state in 2000. In



Figure 20. *We Are Our Ancestors*. Mural by Scott Braley, part of the Generation 21 youth movement in California. (Copyright © 2010 by Scott Braley)

the foreground, a Chinese boy and Na circle, holding hands with black and L threatened by monsters representing t old white men and women, including on youth,” a white history teacher “te literally “targeting” a young Latino mo an alligator-like prison system. The fi handcuffs by Pete Wilson highlights t tion of black men, but the image repres The mural mounts a clear critique of reproduce white political power and pr opportunity for youth of color.

Mariana Lopez emphasized the im understand their shared experiences o lines. Growing up in East Oakland, sl schools and racism from black bus d English. But since she was twelve, she h ing trainings that taught her about th can American farm workers, the Chic Panthers and “all the people they lost”





Painted in support of the anti-Proposition 53, Christine Wong Yap, artist, 2000. Photo

Latino American girl come together in a community with other Latino youth. They are surrounded and oppressed by the media, prisons, and police and by politicians like Governor Pete Wilson with his “war on youth” and President Bill Clinton. A mother who is protecting her child from the negative image of a black young man placed in the media is particularly powerful criminalization of youth presents all youth of color as under threat. The text discusses the racial hierarchies that continue to exist and that threaten freedom and justice.

The importance of getting young people to understand the roots of oppression across racial and gender lines is emphasized. The author shares her own experience of racial tensions in Oakland and how she learned to relate to others who assumed she didn't speak Spanish. She also mentions her participation in youth organizations and the links among the struggles of Mexican American student movement, and the Black Panther Party in Oakland. She learned how to relate to others who assumed she didn't speak Spanish.

her experiences of getting dirty looks and a brother faced in public, where too often we assumed he was up to no good.

You can't be a person of color and go to school with the cameras. Why do you try to fight it? The system is putting both of you down. Everything that's happening to you is because they don't like all of us. How do they want to lock you up. They want to put

Youth organizing groups even used high schools as opportunities to cultivate experiences of oppression. As a Youth Together organizer, I remember a "Young people were running the gauntlet" a lot of youth. Out the door, young people on the bus. By the time they get to school, many of them were treated as criminals." There was no nurse to give you aspirin." When Youth Together organizers helped students connect their everyday experiences to broader issues of oppression, genocide, racism, and educational inequality, students at Castlemont created a poster illustrating these connections. Line drawings of a bus surrounded by all the problems youth face, such as need for jobs, safe places to be after school, and in large print were the labels of "Racism,"

Youth activists often called for Open Social Studies curriculum that would foster better understanding among students of color. As one African American student told a group of Skyline students, the kind of curriculum we need to go beyond the standard, and often a

Ethnic Studies is great. But it's not just for people of color. We have a common fight against racism, and we need each other's allies. I encourage you to take an ethnic studies or racism class. How have Latinos fought against racism? What have African Americans fought against racism? What have Asian Americans fought against racism? We could back each other up in this fight

as a teenage mom to the suspicion her  
ten people saw his hip hop style and

to Macy's and not get targeted by all  
when you're both basically oppressed?  
own. Get together and fight the system.  
isn't because they don't like you, it's  
w come your schools are poor? They  
t you in a failing situation.

l the occasional race riots in Oakland  
ate deeper conversations about shared  
uth Together staff person explained,  
let. Even home was not a safe place for  
ple were harassed on the street, on the  
maybe they were ten minutes late, and  
was "no drinking water, no bathrooms,  
schools erupted into racial violence,  
dents to "peel back the layers," to con-  
pader histories and "cycles of oppres-  
l discrimination." Youth Together stu-  
that highlighted their understanding  
f a boy and girl at the center were sur-  
ought to school on a daily basis (their  
ool, supportive teachers), but below in  
"Class Oppression," and "Violence."  
akland schools to develop an ethnic  
both greater respect and political unity  
n American adult organizer explained  
d of ethnic studies needed would have  
political, vision of multiculturalism.

ust culture that you need to under-  
nst racism as people of color. We are  
think about ethnic studies as an anti-  
ht against racism? How have Asians  
frican American struggles been? You

Youth activists didn't avoid talking about the experiences of all youth of color. They discussed youth crime, and they frequently called for police crackdowns specifically targeted at youth policing. Kids First's publication *Locke* called for late suspension and expulsion of black students. The Super Jail described the proposal as targeting "youth of color" but also included a plan to address the overrepresentation of black youth in the system, and Latino youth remained underrepresented, although they were still incarcerated at high rates.

Youth activists and adult advisors worked to help students explore their own racial prejudices, and these efforts produced racial tensions and inequalities. At Skyline, mediation between black and Asian students at Skyline held a three-day mediation in which students reflected on the ways academic achievement helped to produce racial stereotypes and inequalities. That few African Americans were in advanced classes, usually the same five or six in all the classes, was a source of resentment that Asians "didn't get as high as we do." Teachers didn't see them "as threats." "If there's a problem, the police will come and want to jack us up." "We're being treated like we're being approached with respect." "The school administration has a lot of stereotypes. When they talk to us, they think that they are nerds." But Asians also expressed side of the stereotypes of Asians as model minorities. In response to Asian student or parent complaints, teachers and administrators responded to Asian students who were quiet and wouldn't raise their voices. They were pressured to prove they were tough enough to handle challenges from black students who asserted their rights.

Youth organizers tried to link the stereotypes to the ways students felt marginalized by administrators who talk at us like we're children." One African American student organizer said this treatment produced violence: "We're being treated like we're children." An Asian student organizer for Skyline said,

about race or simply equate the expectedly challenged racialized images of attention to the ways criminal justice young black men for surveillance and *Pushed Out* emphasized the disproportion-boys.<sup>64</sup> Fliers for the campaign against as generically “racist” and targeting the chart that documented the massive Alameda County’s juvenile hall. Asian presented compared to their population, rates higher than whites.<sup>65</sup>

s often encouraged young people to as well as the structural processes that ties in the public schools. After a riot Skyline High school, youth organizers they encouraged Asian and black stu-tracking and school security practices and divisions. Asian students realized their honors or AP classes: “It’s usu-uses.” But in the lowest division classes, classes.” Black students described their “hard punishment” because administra-are five black students by the cars, the p. For the Asians, they just get a warn-‘Hurry on to class now.’ The adminis-they see Asians walking down the hall, Asian students also described the down-model minorities. Administrators rarely complaints because of stereotypes that fuss. And Asian young men often felt ough to negotiate Oakland’s streets and ssumed they wouldn’t fight back.

truggles of students across racial lines disrespected by school administrators. ed about feeling infantilized and crimi-as “with a bull horn, like we’re animals, American young woman suggested that e get mad, and we take it into our own or Youth Together worked to turn this

anger into action against the administration. I saw it yesterday. I was walking in the hallway and a security guard stopped a couple of black guys. I said, "We can go up legally to the administration and we can make them take a pay cut." The response was, "We need to come together and organize."

Youth offered a flexible form of identity that recognized the particularities of contemporary age and class. The category "youth" itself is racialized and classed, and often racialized "underclass."<sup>66</sup> Poverty is concentrated among people of color, who constitute the majority of students in public schools and the growing employment gap across race, class, and gender lines, even in the city. A student explained that security crackdowns were implemented because it was a "ghetto school." But another student said, "The struggles across Oakland public schools are not about teachers, or facilities needed for a high-quality education. Schools are ghetto schools." Youth as a category of identity, for black, Latino, Asian, and even some white youth, was shaped by experiences in the "ghetto schools" of Oakland, where that race, class, and gender intersected.

Organizing as youth, activists could challenge existing racial and class formations. Crackdowns on youth in Oakland's schools affected the bodies of black boys, but they were also felt in schools and neighborhoods, surveilling and disciplining diverse youth. Activists in the Laurel neighborhood worked with black boys and young men, with their soup kitchens and gang members waiting to start fights on the streets. A Chinatown mall adopted a no-loitering policy that targeted the Asian youth who hung out there. Youth who were overrepresented in juvenile hall included black boys, Latino youth remained underrepresented in the category Asian, some Southeast Asian youth were as overrepresented as black boys in Oakland. Youth of color, numbers of Southeast Asian, Pacific Islander youth, of school, hung out on the streets, or were otherwise visible objects of fear in Oakland.

ration: “I feel you about the security. I  
all and nobody stopped me. But secu-  
am willing to work with you on that.  
ation and fight. We can walk out. We  
room erupted into cheers, as he added,  
ize and fight for a better education.”  
ntity politics that could respond to the  
nd racial formations. In California, the  
d often serves as a proxy for a stigma-  
trated among children and youth, and  
y of children and youth in California,  
lderly.<sup>67</sup> Disinvestments in California’s  
hesis on security have affected youth  
n if unevenly. At a youth speakout, one  
owns targeted Castlemont High School  
other student pointed out the common  
ls, none of which had sufficient books,  
quality education, saying, “All Oakland  
political identity created the space for  
hite students to recognize their shared  
Oakland, while still exposing the ways  
to produce disparate burdens.  
d be attentive to the diversity of local  
owns on crime and increased surveil-  
nd neighborhoods often did focus on  
re not confined to them. In particular  
ce focused on Tongan, Latino, or Viet-  
district worried that a group of Tongan  
ed-up cars and baggy pants, might be  
on the streets near the middle school.  
ring policy because adults were afraid  
re after school. Black youth were mas-  
, while on the surface both Asian and  
ted. But breaking down the pan-ethnic  
n and Pacific Islander youth were just  
Oakland’s juvenile hall.<sup>68</sup> As significant  
lander, and Latino youth dropped out  
joined gangs, they too became hyper-

Oakland's public schools and neighborhoods create hybrid youth cultural styles that transcend racial categories. The white vice-principal of one school said that youth culture was the dominant culture in Oakland, not good or bad, that's just the way it is. I had friends as did the daughters of other white friends. Even young immigrant adults, like the owner of the neighborhood auto repair shop, called out to me with a Vietnamese accent. John Turner, an African American in the East Oakland flatlands but went to college in Laos, Laotian, Vietnamese, and Hmong kids. He had never even heard of the term "Asian" until he went to college. Asian kids in Oakland wore baggy pants, spoke the same slang, and acted the same.

Two interactions at the Skyline meeting highlighted the construction of racial categories in Oakland. A white man, dressed in baggy pants and a baseball cap, told some blacks "try to mug at me, make me feel like some things like, 'Why you tryin' to dress like that? Baggy pants, tight all the way up to here [pointing to his pants]. But that's not me. I grew up in the suburbs." A white student who attended the session in Oakland at the predominantly black and Latino Berkeley High School attended an Alameda County court session in Oakland about the racism black students faced on campus. She said that black security guards would let her roam the campus as a white student.

I never felt privileged till I came to Skyline High School. I went to school before, and everyone discriminated against you're coming from. The only way to get along is to be like we have in common. Maybe the Chinese people are in chains, but we have more in common than you think.

She spoke about her own path across Oakland neighborhoods. "People have all these assumptions about me. I grew up on East 95th." As she spoke with me in the Oakland flatlands, several black students called her "black" and "She's hard."



neighborhoods brought youth together to what often destabilized simple racial categories. One public school explained that black students were in Oakland public schools. "That's the same." His daughters spoke Black English, friends whose kids went to public school. The Vietnamese guys that ran his neighborhood spoke to each other, "Wha's up Homes?" with an African American young man, grew up in Oakland, went to Oakland High, where Cambodian, Laotian, and Vietnamese went to school with black and Latino students. The idea of Asians as a "model minority" was challenged at his high school "wore the same baggy pants and sneakers just as much as the black kids." The mediation highlighted the flexible connections between public and private schools. One Asian young man wearing a backwards baseball cap, complained that white people would look down at the floor. They'll say 'Black, Dog?' They want me to wear the pants and sneakers [pointing to his waist] Asian Urkel style. "I grew up in the same neighborhood as you." Another young man for black students had grown up in East Oakland flatlands and previously attended a private school. She spoke up passionately about her experience on campus at Skyline, shocked at the ways white people would slam the doors but would stop any black

Skyline. I was the only white girl in my grade. I was discriminated against me. So I know where to get by this is to focus on the things that white people didn't come over on a slave ship. More than we think.

across Oakland's racial and class boundaries. I got bused up here. For years I grew up with the rhythms and style of the East Bay. Friends on the sidelines commented, "She's

Youth activists often called themselves of acknowledging and politicizing the Kelley and Shawn Ginwright rightly emphasized politicize black urban youth, many Bay Area youth for crafting a multiracial political identity with blackness as the grounds for an oppositional politics. The Bay Area was a multiracial youth culture and youth culture. Jakada Imani explained how hip hop worked as a unifying force. “Hip hop was the glue for this movement. On a march, if the music is playing, people will join. It’s also been crucial for organizing because hip-hop is multiethnic from the beginning. You might be “banda or techno kids” and still be part of it.” Jakada insisted that hip hop has become a dominant youth culture. Young people across racial lines organized hip hop dance crews, created graffiti art, and participated in street protests. Hip hop created a language that people could use across the city and across racial lines. Liberalism has deepened exclusions and marginalization of people.<sup>71</sup>

Youth offered a more flexible political language for political movements in a context where traditional American youth shared similar struggles with parents and schools. This generational political identity was often race- and class-segregated in the past. We have seen how black political movements often implicitly excluded Latino residents and young people. Homeowner interests over those of young people and homeowners often linked race, class, and age. Children or children on the street from being seen as “a youth movement” or as the “hip hop generation” alliances across Oakland’s increasingly diverse youth. They could also reach out to young people across California and the nation where Latino youth were often seen as the most “dangerous youth.”

Finally, youth activists also highlighted the importance of (ways over race) because of transformations in the city brought many black and Latino administrators into local positions of power where they

ives the “hip hop generation” as a way  
se hybrid youth cultures. While Robin  
mphasize the potential for hip hop to  
Area activists used hip hop as a vehicle  
tivity that drew on but also reconfigured  
sitional political identity.<sup>69</sup> Hip hop in  
ulture, no longer (if ever) simply a black  
how the rhythms and popular appeal  
Hip hop has become the protest music  
e chants have a hip hop flavor, young  
r drawing together youth of all colors—  
the get.”<sup>70</sup> Even though youth activists  
might not “live and breathe hip hop,”  
e deeply incorporated into urban youth  
nes performed spoken word, formed  
rt, and bounced along to hip hop beats  
nguage and set of symbols that young  
ross the globe to protest the ways neo-  
l truncated the lives of too many young

ical identity than race- or class-based  
ere many Asian, Latino, and African  
gles in Oakland’s neighborhoods and  
ntity worked to disrupt and transcend  
networks of local politics in Oakland.  
networks in Oakland’s flatlands often  
d prioritized black middle-class hom-  
people and renters.<sup>72</sup> In the hills, white  
and age to exclude public school chil-  
elonging in the hills. Coming together  
“hip hop generation,” activists could craft  
y multiracial poor and working class.  
people in cities and neighborhoods in  
o or Southeast Asian youth were seen

hted a politics of generation (in some  
ations in Oakland’s urban regime that  
ministrators, activists, and politicians  
ey often supported increased policing

and incarceration to discipline youth. Angela Ards argues, “a mature hip-hop race-based political analysis of the is- ingly, the face of injustice is the color analysis that pins blame on some lily Organizing as youth, youth activists ha solidarity and demanded that African color reclaim youth of color as their ow

### *Conclusion*

Youth activists put forward two ver- tory, images of young people in their (even revolutionary) actors, capable o and youth as “children” who needed itself makes youth activism in Oakland because it suggests the potential for a imagery but is not fundamentally gro- demanded a childhood for youth in- clear the multiple ways “youth crimina- egory of childhood. They used family i- dence and vulnerability as the ground- same time, they reworked a commons- They challenged the right of the juve- best interests of the child” and articula- zens with rights both to social support- in Oakland suggests at least one strate- tics of childhood that could rebuild str- challenge neoliberal ideologies of self-

Youth activists produced a very dif- street than that produced by many ho- land. They rejected a privatized model- youth only in homes, schools, or sup- the public sphere. The Prop 21 protests- political protest in ways that explicitly- tural practices. More fundamentally, th- and “youth” could be reconstructed by- youth activists occupied public space- power, in a way that enacted their claim-

As African American studies scholar  
op movement will have more than a  
issues affecting urban youth. Inceas-  
of the rainbow, so a black-white racial  
-white power structure is outdated.”<sup>73</sup>  
ave both pointed to the limits of racial  
American elders and other adults of  
own children.

ry different, and potentially contradic-  
r political practice: youth as political  
f planning and executing a campaign,  
adult care and support. This tension  
d interesting and potentially powerful  
politics of youth that draws on family  
unded in paternalism. Youth activists  
the juvenile justice system and made  
als” were being excluded from the cat-  
magery and ideas of children’s depen-  
ds for claims on the state. But at the  
ense understanding of “dependents.”<sup>74</sup>  
nile justice system to determine “the  
ted a clear view of youth as active citi-  
and to political power. Youth activism  
gy for constructing a progressive poli-  
structures and cultures of care that could  
help and privatized family values.

fferent vision of childhood and of the  
meowner and parent activists in Oak-  
of childhood that located children and  
ervised after-school programs out of  
s combined hip hop dance parties and  
y reclaimed the streets for youth cul-  
ney rejected the notion that childhood  
clearing youth off the streets. Instead,  
es, both streets and halls of political  
ns of a fundamental “right to the city.”

Youth have few formal rights as citizens. Youth in the streets was one of the few ways that youth's personal struggles became political. Young people in schools and violent neighborhoods often turned to their parents, friends, and the youth center for resources to manage the constant crises of their young people's problems were often blamed on parents or young people themselves. Youth activists challenged the ways parent and homeowner groups cleared youth off the streets, which undermined their own efforts to increase youth employment. As long as youth were confined to age-segregated spaces of childhood, they were citizens without the right to demand a right to the city. Youth activists' claims to the street were central to the framing of youth crime as a public problem and not an individual choice or family failure. Claiming a right to the city could "become public."<sup>75</sup>

Youth activism offers one powerful challenge to the neoliberal urban political order. Youth activists reclaimed public space and created "a remarkably constrained notion of rights."<sup>76</sup> Grass-roots street activism calls for "a greater right to the city, a right to the right to space, and the right to control economic policy." Reclaiming the right to the city is reclaiming "public space, not for societal order but for struggle for justice."<sup>77</sup> Youth activists reclaimed the city. They redefined young people as political actors and demanded that the state act to reduce the harm to children's lives.

citizens, and their power to make noise  
youth could make their daily per-  
e's everyday struggles in dysfunctional  
often remained invisible, known only  
youth workers who struggled with few  
es of poor children's lives. Even worse,  
amed on the private choices of parents  
ivists pointed to a significant problem  
r activists used space to save children.  
eowner and parent activists may have  
ease state investments in children and  
d to after-school programs and other  
they would be framed as incomplete  
a fair share of the budget. Youth activ-  
o their efforts to reframe the problem  
d not simply a private problem of indi-  
ing space in public, youth as a social

al example of a grass-roots challenge  
r that has restricted the uses of public  
stricted public sphere and a rather shriv-  
ruggles around the world are joining  
ght that includes the right to housing,  
ontrol rather than be the victims of eco-  
the city in this expanded sense requires  
al order and control, but rather for the  
ade this broader claim of a right to the  
members of the legitimate public and  
the deep racial and class inequalities in

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## Conclusion: Hope and

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Young people are growing up facing increasing inequality alongside expanding wealth, racially unequal childhoods and limited opportunity. At a special police-youth dialogue in Chicago with Suzanne Lacy, two young people asked the police chief that captured their experiences of living in poverty: “Can an American young woman challenge you? Can we respect your authority?” In a similar dialogue, a black young man on probation asked, “You say we’re all supposed to be rich.”

The police chief had no real answer. How do we use state power, and crushed structures of authority, to oppress these young people as a nation? May we demand them to lower their expectations and realize their dreams? Can black parents across class lines have to teach their children to avoid getting “beat down” when they are poor? Maybe we should send poor kids to private schools so they can learn to control the raw sense of powerlessness. Can the nation’s promises to the vast inequality of its youth as a nation, can we accept these as our reality? What kind of nation that abandons its communities for all our children?

We began this book with Jerry Bronk’s critique of seeing a central precept of neoliberal urban policy that communities and families were responsible for solving the deep problems facing young people. We argued that the work of parents and community activists was to create better environments for the city’s children. But we also argued that these were acceptable political choices. Community activists were overwhelmed by the social costs of our nation’s policies.

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## and Fear

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today in contradictory times: increasing  
dreams, deep poverty beside lavish  
in an era that promises equal oppor-  
tunity organized by performance artist  
and questions of Oakland's black police  
of this contradictory moment. An African  
woman, "Y'all like to beat us down. How  
more plaintive tone, a fifteen-year-old  
"How come we can't get together? We

answer to these questions about respect,  
of opportunity. But how do we answer  
for working-class and poor kids have  
to be we probably can't all be rich. Maybe  
to teach their kids the skills they need  
if the police stop them on the street.  
to anger management classes so they  
of injustice they feel as they compare  
realities they see around them. But as  
answers? Do we really want to be the  
commitment to create real equal opportu-

shown at a community meeting embracing  
community governance—that Oakland's com-  
munity on their own for trying to solve the  
problems. We have also seen the formidable efforts  
of working to construct safe and nurturing  
environments. Oakland's activists often faced unac-  
ceptable activists in Oakland's flatlands, over-  
coming the city's drug wars, sometimes turned to

the police as their only choice. As they gathered in their neighborhood, they embraced a vision of the future that came from Oakland's lower hills with kids in the streets. They used their own volunteer labor to try to create safe public spaces for all of Oakland's children. Their vision of the future through their volunteer labor was rarely enough to change the way it came into children's lives and landscapes. Even when they needed to defend their children from the negative and distorted public responses to kids in the streets, they lost the debates. Across the city, neighborhood after neighborhood, they tried but to clear young people off the streets. They needed the investment necessary for urban redevelopment. They needed to reconstruct our ideas of youth in the streets. They needed full citizenship and public spaces.

Over the last fifteen years, Oakland's parents and young citizens, who refused to abandon a generation of children, found fits and starts to reconstruct structures of care. Community activists and adult advocates pushed through the city that expanded after-school programs and created safe spaces for youth. Advocates used this growing network of care through general governance, to create a lobby to pressure the city. Public-private partnerships created these spaces. They used citizens' ability to demand state action to address children's needs. They succeeded in expanding care, getting kids off the street and in creating new spaces. They reduced violence, but did little to address the economic crisis. The retreating state supports for poor families did little to abated the crises of low-income families. They tried to pick up the pieces.

Children and youth do not live in a vacuum. They can serve as powerful symbols and actors in the struggle to reconstruct the state. Debates about child care, public and private responsibility and the role of government. The ways we frame the crisis and the people shape the visions of the state we want. The ways we try to secure. The politics of youth, the personal dilemmas of social reproduction, and the economic orders.

struggled to save kids in their neighborhoods as disciplinary father. Parents in the public schools often had to rely on the state to reconstruct safe and nurturing land. They tried to equalize childhood, but it was difficult to address the vast inequalities built up over time, even wealthy black parents in the hills of Oakland. The images of black youth crime that shaped national public policy and local activism often felt they had no choice but to compete for the private development. Youth activists struggled to face their persistent exclusion from

city government, pushed by its citation of poor children, has worked in new spaces and cultures of care for kids. Youth activists pushed the city to create a children's trust fund and nonprofit services for children and youth in the nonprofit sector, characteristic of neoliberalism to prevent crime and invest in youth. Public policy opened new possibilities but also constrained and narrowed understandings of childhood. Funding after-school programs to keep kids in school, programs to prevent youth crime and address deeper problems of child poverty and family violence. Neoliberal public policies exacerbated these problems and left poorly funded nonprofits to

operate in the private realm outside of politics. They are engaged in on-going struggles over how to use their voices and children help redraw the boundaries of childhood. They are forging changing ideas about the proper role of the state, the needs and problems of young people, what to promote and the kinds of state action that are possible, and our collective responses to deeply entrenched problems, shape changing political and eco-

## *Oakland in the Age of Obama*

Oakland cycled madly between hope and despair. In Oakland in July, I saw vendors at street fairs selling t-shirts, hats, and posters of Barack Obama and the Obama movement. On election night, happy to cheer Barack Obama's election as a sign of progress in a post-voting rights era, there were troubling reminders that all was not well. A 25-year-old biracial young man, who had been arrested that as everyone celebrated in the downtown Oakland of police surrounding the crowds telling me that it was a happy moment, it was a reminder of how things had been all the time."

Despite the excitement about national politics, a growing sense of despair and frustration was evident in the plummeting housing prices, and a rash of layoffs at both local and state budgets.<sup>1</sup> Murder and violence again, though still lower than in the mid-1990s, in Oakland flatlands dominated the nightly news. In the city restaurants made some middle-class people feel that Oakland had a new mayor, Ron Dellums, the son of civil rights leader C. L. Dellums, was a symbolic return of black political power. But Dellums provided little leadership in the face of political storms. A 22-year-old African American woman told me that she saw a difference in the city in the early 2000s. Back in 2000-2002, she said, "Everyone was driving fine cars, dressed nice. No more drugs."

Only hours into 2009 came a more troubling sign. The first black president had changed the mood in Oakland's streets. A fight broke out in the early morning A.M. as revelers returned home on BART from the Bay Area. When BART police responded to a 22-year-old black man, in the background. The next week, when the district attorney's peaceful protest erupted in violence as thousands of adults poured through downtown ven-

hope and fear in 2008. When I visited street fairs hawking an endless variety of Obama alongside icons of the civil rights movement, crowds poured into Oakland's streets as a symbol of the possibilities for racial justice. But even at that optimistic moment, the mood was not well on Oakland's streets. As Obama, like Obama identifies as black, noted in downtown streets, there was a military line of police directing them what to do. For him at that time, he showed Oakland youth "feel quarantined

by national politics, there was an escalation in tension with local politics. A slowing economy, a rash of foreclosures left gaping holes in the neighborhood, and violent crime rates were on the rise since the mid-1990s. Shootings in the East Oakland neighborhoods, and a spate of armed robberies in the city left many residents afraid to go out to dinner. In 2007, a former congressman and nephew of Barack Obama, whose election in 2007 embodied the spirit of hope and progressive politics in Oakland. In the face of gathering economic and social challenges, an American woman in Elmhurst told me about the city's mood as she rode the bus every day: "Everybody had their paper [money]. They don't have it now. Now everybody looks hungry."

A disturbing reminder that the election of Barack Obama did little in the lives of young people on the streets. On the Fruitvale BART station at 2:00 AM on New Year's Eve parties around the city, a police officer shot Oscar Grant, a young man, as he lay already restrained on the ground. At the time, the district attorney had still filed no charges, a situation that drew small groups of teenagers and young adults to the station, venting their anger at the long history of

police abuse and disrespect they had seen. Newspapers were filled with photos of protesters carrying signs proclaiming “No More Police Brutality.” More rarely, dancing on police cars and later came another harsh reminder of Oakland’s war on crime: on a routine patrol, a police car started a shootout with Oakland police officers and was shot down.

Two ballot measures on the November 2008 elections visions of Oakland’s public policy choices. A fiscal crisis loomed: the first planned a 10% increase in 105 police officers along with 75 police officers, expanding the amount of city funding for police to what advocates called Kids First 2. The second presented a different vision of the state and the rights of children, going through the chapters of this book. It highlighted the important role youth play in politics and the challenges of neoliberal urban governance we have seen.

Governing through crime created a new paradigm in Oakland that defined the core right of police. Community policing leaders began to organize, and later also as the group, Oakland Residents’ Police Network (ORPN). They demanded a significant increase in police to twelve hundred officers, campaigning for a new vision of governing, and defined the first priority. But they opposed levying new taxes to fund the police force, insisting that the city should pay for the police fund. They were frustrated by city hall’s decision to bring new police officers from a previous era. In 2004 to fund police and youth violence prevention, they began to organize an incipient tax resistance movement that helped defeat the 2008 police parcel tax. In the Prop 13 era, needed a two-thirds majority to pass.

Kids First 2 used the symbolic power of the state’s responsibility for children. As the initiative would go a long way” to making a better city provided “a safe and nurturing environment for all children.<sup>2</sup> But the initiative faced enormous opposition from most city council members, who argued



experienced on Oakland's streets. The young Asian, black, Latino, and white chanting "I am Oscar Grant," and smashing windows. A few months of tension and violence on the frontline of a police stop, a 27-year-old parolee, killing four officers before he was

November 2008 ballot crystallized opposing policies as crime escalated and a new fiscal year parcel tax to fund an additional 100 police technicians. The second proposed measure set aside for youth programs through these dueling measures embodied different values of citizens that we have seen percolating. The debates that ensued highlight the tensions and some of the core contradictions in Oakland explored.

A vocal and powerful constituency in Oakland of citizenship as a right to public safety. They organized as Safety First in 2003 and Residents for Peaceful Neighborhoods. They opposed expansion of Oakland's police force and called for the city to get back to the basics of the priority of city government as public security. They wanted to fund the expansion of the police force out of the general fund. By the scandals and by the slow pace of hiring, a ballot initiative, Measure Y, passed in 2008 to fund police prevention programs. These groups led the revolt in Oakland. They opposed and wanted to pass a tax, which, like all taxes in the post-9/11 era, had difficulty to pass.

After the 9/11 era of childhood to further expand the program, one advocate explained, "This initiative is to ensure that all Oakland neighborhoods have a 'safe environment' where families can raise their children." It met with unanimous opposition from the mayor and the city council. He argued that increasing the pool of grant

funding for children at a time of budget cuts in other general fund spending: to parks, libraries, and so on. In the strange world of California politics, crafted at the ballot box, this kind of zero-sum game is common. Voters choose to expand public spending on certain programs, but voters and politicians rarely pay for them. Kids First 2 received just over 500,000 votes than the police parcel tax, but still lost in the face of a worsening budget crisis, hoping for a reduced expansion of funds.<sup>3</sup>

Many activists in the Safety First group were motivated both because of the looming fiscal crisis and because they defined the core responsibilities of local government. A press statement explained, “We believe that programs to reduce crime and violence are important. Other programs should be subordinate to the priority of reducing street crime so that Oakland’s residents can live without fear.” Oakland’s expanded police contract provoked deep discomfort and new criticisms of police services. Some critics framed nonprofit contracts as evidence of patronage politics. More funding for youth as self-interest. Safety First criticized the city for “lack of transparency and no accountability.”<sup>4</sup> ORPN accused Youth First to promote Oakland’s “thug culture,” which made Oakland’s streets that the police then had to clean up.

These debates offer several important lessons for advocates need to beware of framing issues around crime and safety programs. This strategy only reinforces the idea that responsibility is stopping crime and that the only path to safety. It does not build support for investing in children’s environments. Saying that youth are dangerous, which encourages a sense of responsibility for caring for kids and makes community investment absolutely necessary.<sup>6</sup> If we want to build a culture of opportunity childhoods, youth advocates need to focus on children for children and youth programs. The local government has the power to confront much broader issues at the state, and national levels of government.

budget deficits would force deep cuts in recreation, senior services, and police budgets, which are often partially zero-sum game is increasingly common. Relying on schools, parks, or after-school programs rarely approve the new taxes that could have passed over a 50% yes vote, slightly fewer than if it were not a tax, it passed. In the end, however, youth advocates compromised

Some groups opposed increasing Kids First funding and because of the narrow way they were funded by local government. As Safety First's mission is to fund long-range social programs to prevent crime; but that the funding of such programs is a primary goal of immediate *suppression* of crime. Citizens can walk its streets and use its parks and recreation partnerships with nonprofits also promote the criticisms of the city's investments in youth programs as "special interests," their governance is based on narrow politics, and their advocacy for funding is based on handing out grants to non-profits with the Youth Uprising of using public funds to prevent crime which created the disorder and crime on the streets that had to be cleaned up.<sup>5</sup>

These are important lessons for youth advocates. Youth advocates' investments in youth as crime prevention programs reinforces the idea that the state's primary responsibility at the core right of citizenship is a right to safety. A vision of the state as responsible for crime prevention. Such arguments also reproduce the idea that crime prevention encourages the disavowal of public responsibility. Our investments in punishment appear to be a way to build and sustain investments in equal justice. Youth advocates cannot just fight for new set-asides for youth; they must also build alliances and sufficient political power to change tax and spending policies (at local, state, and federal level) that shift resources towards corpo-

rations and the wealthy and away from  
We have to change the zero-sum game  
programs means losing health care, sch

Cities like Oakland face significant  
just and equal environments for chil  
portionate number of poor families a  
than surrounding wealthier cities. Mu  
“social democratic projects,” as urban  
they have limited powers to tax and “  
to cities” with lower taxes.<sup>7</sup> But we mu  
about the power of government to im  
liberal governance was forged out of  
alternative may have to be forged in cit  
solve these problems alone, but if Oak  
and equal childhoods, who will? If O  
for abandoning its children, who will?  
thugs, who will see them as children?

Barack Obama’s election offered at l  
have to struggle on its own to reduce  
temporary childhood. In Obama’s nov  
phia, he called on the nation to invest i

This time we want to talk about the cr  
future of black children and white ch  
panic children and Native American  
the cynicism that tells us that these  
don’t look like us are somebody else  
are not those kids, they are our kids, a  
a twenty-first-century economy. Not t

Obama implicitly argued that racia  
blocked this nation’s attempts to creat  
children.

We may well be entering a new era  
and we look again to government to la  
ous, stable, and equal union, but it is  
the structuring ideologies of neoliber  
roiling economic waters calm. It rem  
willing to face the ways racial inequities

n working families and their children.  
ne in which gaining new after-school  
hool funding, or parks.

constraints as they try to create more  
children. Oakland is home to a dispro-  
nd children and has a lower tax base  
unicipalities are “poor instruments” for  
historians have long observed, because  
overtaxed” employers can always “flee  
ust challenge Jerry Brown’s pessimism  
prove the lives of young people. Neo-  
municipal struggles, and any viable  
ies as well. The city of Oakland cannot  
kland does not try to create more just  
akland does not condemn the nation  
’ If cities like Oakland define youth as

least the hope that Oakland would not  
the unacceptable inequalities in con-  
w-famous speech on race in Philadel-  
in all its children:

rumbling schools that are stealing the  
children and Asian children and His-  
children. This time we want to reject  
kids can’t learn; that those kids who  
’s problem. The children of America  
and we will not let them fall behind in  
this time.

al images of childhood have too long  
te truly equal opportunities for all its

when faith in the markets has tanked  
ay the foundation for a more prosper-  
far from clear that we have overcome  
lism, which may quickly return as the  
ains to be seen whether the nation is  
es continue to structure children’s lives.

We must not allow the ideal of posttrauma to be so  
unable to see the inequalities staring us in the face  
that began in 2008 will only make inequality worse  
California once again severely slashed funding for

### *Is a Progressive “Kids First” Politics Possible?*

The stories in this book offer important lessons for  
a new course. We have seen the power of public  
rate claims on the state, but we have also seen the  
constructing a progressive politics of care that  
our ideas about childhood itself—the idea that  
by nuclear families, in safe and secure homes,  
supervised or on the streets. Too often, childhood  
instead of as a vital social investment, but  
ways public actions fundamentally shape  
and thus determine the choices available  
of childhood frequently presumes a world  
that simply does not exist.

This book has traced alternate ways of thinking about  
responsibility. Black traditions of othering and  
one important model for how to challenge  
duction in this neoliberal moment. The  
Deal reformers offer others. These ad  
of America’s “semi-welfare state” from  
organizing to expand state responsibility  
Pensions (later, Aid for Families with Dependent  
public schools, the juvenile justice system,  
hoping that these children’s programs  
constructing a more comprehensive welfare  
draw on these traditions to reimagine  
responsibility, and not just the respon  
neighborhoods. But we also need to learn from  
to actually deliver the support children

Historian Linda Gordon argues that  
is an impediment to creating a progres  
the twentieth century, child savers tried  
out helping their mothers, whom they  
embraced a narrow concept of child

acial America to leave us color-blind, us in the face. And the economic crisis equalities in childhood deeper—as Cali-ling for schools and youth programs.

### *ics Possible?*

tant lessons as the nation tries to chart r of childhood and youth to reinvigo- also identified significant barriers to childhood. Some obstacles are tied to ideal that children should be nurtured private homes, and rarely found unsu- we define children as “private goods” nt.<sup>8</sup> This conceptualization erases the ape family life and children’s worlds, ble to parents and children. Our ideal distinction between public and private

ys of imagining children as a public r mothers and communal fathers offer enge the privatization of social repro- e progressive era child savers and New vocates built the initial infrastructure the 1880s to the 1930s, in large part by ity for children. They created Mother’s Dependent Children), mandatory free em, and publicly funded playgrounds, would be the first steps towards con- are state in the United States.<sup>9</sup> We can e nurturing children as a collective sibility of extended families or neigh- om the repeated failures of these efforts a need.

t the idea of childhood innocence itself ssive “Kids first politics.”<sup>10</sup> Throughout ied to save “innocent children” with- often defined as morally suspect. They ren’s needs and often tried to punish

poor parents who did not meet them. from “neglectful” parents instead of w ing, create safe neighborhoods, or red bizarre fiction that one could punish dren. We do the same thing today whe welfare check if she doesn’t comply w ing that we are not depriving her child reduce direct monetary payments to fa and then pay nonprofits to help kids s progressive politics of childhood must ize families in whatever form they take

Race remains one of the most signi vision of collective responsibility for an The racial distribution of poverty and p our commitment to kids. Americans c our kids” and so not our responsibility to write off poor black children and y or “a thug culture” and to refuse to re produced daily crises in many of their at least until they become young teen them. But we repeatedly refuse to see t produced America’s vast racial and clas

America’s unequal childhoods have phy of its cities and suburbs in ways th for efforts to invest in kids. These lan connected problems. First, they have space and danger that has naturalized inequalities as transparent expressions inner-city kids have undermined supp calls for a more law and order state. S vast physical distances between poor ent neighborhoods, play in separate pa physical and psychic distance impedes with the struggles of poor kids and u of inclusion. Luring more middle-clas have seen, is no guarantee of a more p can exacerbate tensions and create ne kids. And middle-class families can a class-segregated neighborhoods.



Child welfare agencies took kids away from working with parents to improve housing and reduce family poverty. But this led to the removal of parents without punishing their children. When we take away “the mother’s” part of a family, we create work requirements, while pretending to care for children of food and shelter. Or when we remove parents from families (because we don’t trust parents) to help them survive the ensuing crises. Clearly any policy that neither reifies “the family” nor demonstrates

significant barriers to developing a broader social contract and commitment to America’s children. The use of punishment in America has corrupted public policy. It defines many poor kids of color as “not the product of faulty families.” It is far too easy for white America to view youth as the product of faulty families and to ignore the public decisions that have shaped their lives. As a nation, we may pity them, but we are managers, at which point we mostly fear the ways in which public policies have created deep social divides in childhood.

These divides have been built into the physical geography of the country that create additional stumbling blocks. The landscapes of inequality pose two interconnected problems: First, they have created a commonsense equation of poverty and crime, and justified existing racial and class divisions in terms of culture or morality. Images of crime and poverty support the welfare state and buttressed the social contract. Second, these landscapes have created a stark divide between poor and wealthy kids; they live in different neighborhoods, attend unequal schools. This divide prevents middle-class adults from identifying with the struggles of poor families and undermines efforts to create a politics of solidarity. It forces families to cities like Oakland, as we have abandoned progressive politics of youth. Instead, it has led to new efforts to control and contain poor youth. When public schools always retreat to private schools and



Figure 21. *The Choice Facing America*. This illustration was commissioned by Oakland's Youth Commission and is part of the Elements. (Courtesy of Youth UpRising)

Constructing a more progressive path to confront these racial divides and challenge the criminality that has twisted our public life for youth. Our urban wars—the war on drugs and street crime—have not made neighborhoods safer. We have consolidated an image of black and brown people up *forever*, and to suffer the social and economic entail, more police and suppression of crime (or the nation's) crime problems. The police do not solve violent crimes. But prisons do not make neighborhoods safer. Oakland's streets angrier, more violent than when the police "took them off the streets." We have abandon generations of poor, predominantly young men, to that fate. We have tried to solve the escalating economic inequality through more police. It has only deepened crises in poor families and communities. The racial inequalities in young people's lives



s mural at Youth Uprising was commis-  
and designed by Ariel Shepard of Visual

politics of childhood requires that we  
challenge the powerful image of youth  
response to the needs and problems of  
drugs, the war on gangs, and the war on  
neighborhoods or children safer. Instead, they  
and Latino boys as thugs, as threats to  
society. Unless we are willing to lock peo-  
ple up, the moral, and financial costs that would  
cannot fundamentally solve Oakland's  
problems. Police must arrest people who commit  
crimes that make us safer.<sup>11</sup> Prisoners come back to  
the streets and mentally ill, and with fewer skills  
to survive on the streets."<sup>12</sup> It is essentially unjust to  
rely primarily on African American and Latino  
youth for the last thirty years to manage  
the streets through prisons. This expensive experiment  
has harmed families and communities and escalated  
violence. We need to abandon it. We face a

fundamental choice as a nation, a choice made at Youth UpRising (See Figure 21). We have the opportunities across our urban landscapes to create the divided landscapes of childhood that give rise to these problems.

There are things we can do as a nation to address these problems. The United States *chooses* to have so many poor young people. We can eliminate poverty among the elderly. We can do the same with children. The United States could create a family allowance, considered, or could create publicly funded child care for all the country's children, as Great Britain has done more in higher education so that access is based on students' ability to pay. We could expand the minimum wage, raise the wages of America's lowest-paid workers, and control inflation to ensure that low-wage workers can afford to live. We can build high-quality low- and moderate-cost housing to improve children's home environment. We can invest in public day care and after-school programs for children in struggling families. We can invest in expanding the Earned Income Tax Zone, that move beyond piecemeal programs to create supports for children and families in America's poorest communities.

Finally, we must transform our justice system. Prisons resemble prisons and they provide young people with no chance to change their lives. States like Missouri are moving away from punishment, creating programs based on counseling not punishment, creating small, home-like facilities instead of prisons. We can ensure that people can be teenagers instead of gladiators. We can ensure that people do not lend themselves to universal public policies that are based on fear. Others may focus specifically on poor communities, but we must be color-blind. We will only take these steps if we address race and class exclusions from childhood public policies.

Revitalizing a progressive politics is a challenge to the current neoliberal governance. Political and economic policies of the last 30 years have radically constricted both the scope and the impact of liberalism. Neoliberalism has defined dependency as a failure and has reified the long-standing emphasis on individualism.

oice graphically illustrated by a mural  
We can invest in creating truly equal  
apes or we can continue to tolerate the  
generate hopelessness and violence.

on to create more equal and just child-  
e high child poverty rates and to incar-  
We successfully reduced, indeed almost  
through Social Security and Medicare.  
Many public policies would help. The  
owance, as President Nixon once con-  
ed savings accounts (like a trust fund)  
Britain recently did.<sup>13</sup> We could invest  
s to education doesn't depend on par-  
the earned income tax credit to raise  
rkers and index the minimum wage to  
rkers don't fall more behind each year.  
oderate-income housing, which would  
s and thus reduce stress and pressure  
n limited incomes. We can fund pub-  
s to reduce the crises of care in work-  
ng new models, like Harlem Children's  
ograms to provide comprehensive sup-  
rica's poor neighborhoods.

venile justice systems so they don't  
ung people with real opportunities to  
have already demonstrated how: focus  
e alternatives to incarceration, build  
rison warehouses, so that young peo-  
tors.<sup>14</sup> Some of these approaches may  
olicies that invest in all American kids.  
r kids. But they cannot be absolutely  
steps once we confront the ways racial  
ervade our national consciousness and

of youth can offer a vital challenge to  
economic changes over the last thirty  
structures and cultures of care. Neo-  
the ultimate failure of citizenship and  
autonomous individualism in Amer-

ica. Children and youth may be the or  
As such they may help us reimagine a  
dency and thus fundamentally priorit

### *Hopeful Signs*

The politics of youth in Oakland e  
of this neoliberal moment: a shrink  
space, and a fearful public who somet  
the city also developed more hopeful  
new direction. Black, Latino, Asian, a  
investments in children's environment  
nity activists, like Bill Clay in Elmhurst  
and Shirley Casey in the hills, reached  
refused to abandon kids on the street  
networks of care, even as they someti  
fears of dangerous youth.

Youth activists trained a generation  
lenged, and sometimes changed, the wa  
They insisted that young people were n  
or criminals to be contained, but citiz  
lead the transformation of Oakland's  
activists point the way to a politics of ch  
of young people themselves as citizens.  
activists may become the kind of lea  
understand that political action, not ju  
ate more just childhoods. Oakland's yo  
with parents and juvenile justice refor  
to challenge the state's failed criminal j  
Books Not Bars and its many allies cel  
Governor Schwarzenegger committed  
dysfunctional, and expensive youth p  
into rehabilitative placements closer  
began to argue that any real path out  
must include prison reform. In 2009, e  
justice reformers proposed "a people's  
in corrections spending so that educat

City officials, along with the Oakla  
embrace other mechanisms for reducin

ly legitimate dependents we have left. a social order that values interdepend- zes human relationships over profits.

embodied many of the troubling signs ting public sphere, privatized public imes supported punitive policies. But models that can point the nation in a nd white parents fought for increased s in and out of school. Many commu- t, Robert Jackson in the Laurel district, d out to nurture Oakland's kids. They as thugs. And they worked to expand mes embraced policies that reinforced

of new leaders in Oakland who chal- ays policy makers thought about youth. ot a collection of problems to be fixed, ens with ideas and energy who could s schools and neighborhoods. Youth nildhood that recognizes the capacities s with a right to the city. These young ders in Oakland and the nation, who ust social services, is necessary to cre- outh activists have expanded alliances rmers throughout California in order justice policies and to demand reform. ebrated a major victory in 2007 when to closing some of California's violent, risons in order to shift young people to home. Progressive advocates have of California's repeated budget crises ducators, parents, youth, and criminal budget fix" that demanded reductions ion spending could be maintained.<sup>15</sup> nd Police Department, have begun to ng violence in Oakland. They have cre-

ated alternatives to incarceration, using high-risk youth turn their lives around (opened, campaigned for, and run out of Community Organizations, Youth Up and Youth ALIVE), which could create street credibility that could city or county twenty street workers to reach out to toughest streets on weekend nights. They to specific problem areas and potential information with the police. Outreach numbers, call people on the street “to connect to job training and other services. work as bringing hope and care into the

Oakland Community Organization (OCO) is an example of the kind of political organizing that is the politics of childhood. Organizing through the 1970s, OCO built strong bases in the flatlands, creating a multiracial neighborhood politics. In the late 1980s, the power of “parental love” as a motivator for parents through churches and schools to better their children.”<sup>17</sup> OCO’s parent organizing addressed needs and challenged neoliberal ideologies and communities for their children’s well-being. Services for children in Oakland: home visits, programs in after-school programs, reducing truancy. OCO led a powerful campaign to highlight the needs of Oakland’s hills and flatlands. They sought to challenge neoliberal ideologies of “choice” and “parental responsibility” and to push the low-income parents and to push the schools and charter schools in Oakland. With these new schools, which trained teachers and improved scores and graduation rates at some of the schools. The campaign elevated the concept of caring for the needs and problems of Oakland’s youth. At the Hurst Middle School during its transition to a charter school, the “complete culture change” she saw was different, attendance rates improved, and teachers and students started to g



ng street-savvy case managers to help  
nd. Many of these models were devel-  
of Oakland's nonprofits (like Oakland  
Rising, East Bay Asian Youth Center,  
te programs with more flexibility and  
nty agencies. In 2008, the city funded  
young men and women on Oakland's  
ne police point these outreach workers  
d conflicts, but the workers never share  
h workers hand out their cell phone  
he loved ones," and help people con-  
. Most important, they talk about their  
ne streets to prevent violence.<sup>16</sup>

n (OCO) offers an important exam-  
necessary to craft a more progressive  
rough Oakland's congregations since  
black and Latino churches through-  
al political network, still rare in Oak-  
te 1990s, OCO began to recognize the  
or for advocacy and to organize par-  
build power "to protect the interests of  
ing continuously politicized children's  
logy that simply blamed poor parents  
failings. They helped win many new  
network centers at the libraries, invest-  
ced class sizes in K-3. Most recently  
highlight inequalities in schools across  
ized on the openings created by core  
accountability" to build power among  
ne city to commit to create more small  
d's flatlands. OCO remained engaged  
ed parent leaders and improved test  
of Oakland's flatland schools.<sup>18</sup> OCO's  
re above control as a response to the  
ng people. The vice-principal of Elm-  
tion into two small schools explained  
y on campus. The halls felt completely  
suspension rates dropped drastically,  
et to know and care about each other.

Another principal described the change in the “cop” into being “an instructional leader.”

OCO linked parent leaders to a broader movement at the state, and national levels, through the Oakland Organizing Communities through Organizing (OCO) project. This provided a more politicized understanding of the “platform for Oakland’s working families” and the needs of working families with affordable housing. OCO’s model of collaboration and cooperation was instrumental to provide more land for new schools. In 2001, OCO brought eight hundred and thirty-two hundred leaders from other cities to demand a “fair share budget plan” to take the burden off the backs of California’s working families.

Oakland’s organizing efforts—especially those of the OCO—offer an important corrective to the current politics. Middle-class sympathy for poor families and the starkly unequal childhoods in color-blind cities. Middle-class reformers reproduce narrow understandings of poverty and ignore the political causes of poverty. We need to shame the nation into facing the unequal distribution of wealth. We should show America’s wealthy and powerful how they live and ways in which their fates and futures are intertwined with those of color. But we also need organizations that can help youth and working-class families across the country demand that the state invest in all our children. This is a turn in American public policy. Oakland is a model of getting out of the politics of fear, which has led to a generation of fear, and towards a true politics of justice.

Governing through crime endangers the lives of black, white, Latino, and Asian kids. It is about locking, locker searches, and zero tolerance policies in urban and suburban, poor and wealthy areas. We need to link the struggles and fates of black and white families and policing into core values of American democracy. We need to link the struggles and fates of black and white families but they also consolidate an image of fear. We need to create new links across racial lines and build a new movement. Organizing efforts. These organizers may find support among Oakland’s elderly community people.

age in his job, from being a “glorified  
r.”<sup>19</sup>

broad network of activists at the local,  
the PICO Network (People Improv-  
g) so they could develop and act on a  
ir children’s needs. They established a  
lies” and a “vision for a city that val-  
housing, after-school programs, and a  
on between the city and school district  
.”<sup>20</sup> When the state faced a budget cri-  
red leaders to Sacramento along with  
r PICO organizations around the state  
that would “not balance the budget on  
ies and poorest citizens.”<sup>21</sup>

cially those of OCO and youth activ-  
some of the problems facing kids-first  
or kids will never be enough to change  
ntemporary cities. Too often middle-  
nderstandings of children’s needs and  
and inequality. We can, and should,  
equal childhoods we have made. We  
middle-class (often white) elders the  
are linked to the fates of poor children  
ons that will build the power among  
ross racial lines that is necessary to  
children and to challenge the punitive  
and’s activists can help us chart a path  
ed us to abandon and try to contain a  
of hope.<sup>22</sup>

ers all our children. Prisons are rob-  
ids of money for education. Drug test-  
ce policies have become the norm in  
hy schools alike, turning surveillance  
rican schools. These policies continue  
k middle-class kids to black poor kids,  
f all America’s youth as suspect. They  
d open the potential for new organiz-  
willing foot soldiers in unlikely places:  
policing activists who desperately want

a better future for children in Oakland  
class where parents face their own anx  
even among the wealthy in the hills. It  
the next generation, *all of our kids*, ha  
they need to support us as we age.

d's flatlands, within the fragile middle  
anxieties about their children's future, and  
it is in all of our interests to ensure that  
they have the skills, capacity, and confidence

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# Notes

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## INTRODUCTION

1. I borrow these well-known formulations from Sibley (1969: 95). See Sibley 1995, James 1986, and Valenzuela 2003.
2. Austin and Willard 1998: 1, Donahue et al. 2003.
3. Wyness et al. 2004.
4. Cindi Katz 2001a: 709.
5. This book builds on calls to investigate the role of race in juvenile justice (Phelps 1995, Ruddick 2003, Cindi Katz 2001b, 2001a).
6. Aitkin 2000.
7. Cindi Katz 2001b: 52, Mizen 2002.
8. See Lindsey 2009, Cindi Katz 2001a, Koza 2003.
9. Lindsey 2009.
10. See Lindsey 2009 for poverty, and Austin and Willard 1998 for disparities in juvenile justice. Most studies compare different Asian ethnicities, but if one compares Tongan or Cambodian American kids, one finds higher rates of incarceration, and life trajectories (Le et al. 2003).
11. See Clarence Taylor 2009 for a powerful argument about race. Although I use it as shorthand in this book, a central theme is that neither that race no longer matters nor that race matters less.
12. Gupta and Sharma 2006, Li 2005, Mitchell et al. 2003.
13. Mitchell et al. 2003: 432.
14. Abrams 1977.
15. As historians Robert Self (2003:14) and others have argued, Deal liberalism itself was rife with contradictions. It offered paths to the middle class for white workers and immigrants, but not from equal opportunities.
16. Michael Katz 2001: 27, Hyatt 2001: 202.
17. Kingfisher and Goldsmith 2001, Morgan 2003.
18. Simon 1997 and 2007: 75, Parenti 1999, 2003.
19. Lancaster 2007: xiii.
20. Warren et al. 2008: 5.
21. Braman 2004.
22. Rios 2004.

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s from Levi-Strauss (1963: 89) and Turner  
Valentine et al. 1998 for related arguments.  
al. 1998.

the politics of childhood and youth by Ste-  
2004.

ozol 2005, and Lareau 2003.

in 1995, Crowell et al. 2001, Krisberg et al.  
ational research doesn't distinguish between  
es Chinese or Japanese American kids with  
nds radically different levels of poverty, levels  
(. 2001).

l critique of the term "post-civil rights era."  
s will be abundantly clear I mean to suggest  
acial inequalities are gone.

nell 1992, Ferguson and Gupta 2002.

Ira Katznelson (2005) demonstrate, New  
ions, regulating the markets and expanding  
nd families while excluding black families

n and Maskovsky 2003.

Davis 1992.

23. Wacquant 2001.
24. Jeffrey and McDowell 2004: 131, Cindi K  
1992.
25. Michael Katz 2001: 104.
26. Hyatt 2001.
27. Holland et al. argue that public-private  
“market rule” pose deep challenges to democ  
cally also “create an opening, albeit a small on  
the emergence of “counter-publics” (2007: 9).
28. Maskovsky 2006: 77-78, Rose 1996: 41.
29. Michael Katz 2001, Li 2005, and Brenne
30. Hebdige (1988: 30), Adams 1997, Griffin
31. Buckholtz 2002 argues that youth is bes  
depends on context of speaking, like deictics
32. Zelizer 1994, Valentine 2004, Prout and
33. Lesko 2001, Valentine 2004, Ackland  
1998.
34. Pollock 2005: 47.
35. Fraser 1989: 204.
36. Goldstein 2001: 238.
37. Ritterhouse 2006: 63.
38. Lindenmeyer 2007.
39. Collins 1990.
40. This pattern reproduced the long-stand  
mainstream civil rights activism (Crenshaw 1
41. HoSang 2006: 8.
42. Jeffrey and McDowell 2004, Comaroff a  
Sargent 1998, Jenks 1996, Ruddick 2003.
43. Finn 2001.
44. These trends cross gender and racial lin
45. Robbins and Wilner 2001, Steinle 2005.
46. Arnett 2004, Feldman and Elliott 1990.
47. Juvenile justice historian Barry Feld arg  
states to selectively choose between two const  
status, to maximize their social control, and t  
(Feld 1999: 9).
48. Males 1996: 248, Finn 2001, Schwartz et
49. Krisberg et al. 1987, McGarrell 1993, Zin
50. News coverage of youth crime escalated  
crime rate dropped 20% (Dorfman and Shira
51. Macallair and Males 2000.
52. Poe-Yamagata and Jones 2000: 25.
53. Deitch 2009, National Council on Crim  
Watch and Amnesty International 2005, Male
54. Feld 1999: 7.



Katz 2001a, 2004, Giroux 2003, Jones et al.

partnerships characteristic of neoliberal  
racy, but at the same time, sometimes ironi-  
ne, for democratic empowerment” and for

er and Theodore 2002.

1993.

t defined as a “shifter” because its meaning  
“this” and “there.”

James 1990.

1995, Adams 1997, Austin and Willard

ing marginalization of black women from  
1996).

and Comaroff 2000, Scheper-Hughes and

es (Fussell and Furstenberg 2005: 30).

ques that these schizophrenic policies “enable  
structs to manipulate young people’s legal  
to subordinate their freedom and autonomy”

al. 1984.

ring 1998, Feld 1999.

l between 1990 and 1998 even as the youth  
ldi 2001).

ne and Delinquency 2007, Human Rights  
es and Macallair 2000.

55. National focus groups and polls have revealed that youth in minority neighborhoods are more likely to be arrested (Austin 2001: 15).

56. Katz and Stern 2005, Isaacs 2008.

57. Golden 1995: 21.

58. Center for Juvenile and Criminal Justice 2005. The report documented the influence of decisions made by police officers in minority neighborhoods, racial disparities in arrest rates at which youth are arrested, charged, prosecuted, and placed in placements (Austin 1995).

59. Le et. al 2001: 27, Hamparian and Leiber 2005.

60. Poe-Yamagata and Jones 2000: 3.

61. Austin 1995, Males and Macallair 2000, and Center for Juvenile and Criminal Justice et. al. 2002: 14). “nearly 72% of African American youth referred to juvenile court while 43% of white youth were detained for their first offense (Center for Juvenile and Criminal Justice et. al. 2002: 14).

62. Holloway and Valentine 2000: 15, see also Holloway 2003.

63. Aitkin 2000: 20.

64. Holloway and Valentine 2000: 15. Model of Youthful Offending 2003.

65. Comaroff and Comaroff 2000: 306.

66. Chang 2005.

67. Kids Count 2003, Race profile, Table 1. Median household income of \$84,194 compared to \$35,061 for black families and \$37,442 for Latino families (Robert Gammon 2003, Racial Income Disparities Abound; U.S. Department of Education 2002, Much as Members of Other Ethnic Groups). Kids Count 2002).

68. Gregory 1998, Harris-Lacewell 2004, Paolucci 2004, Maskovsky 2006, Self 2003.

69. Kitwana 2003, Sullivan 1996.

70. Dawson 1995, Cohen 1999.

71. Self 2003: 13.

72. Guinier and Torres 2002.

73. Scheingold 1984, Sanjek 1998.

74. Asian and Latino activists more often participated in community organizations that operated on a citywide level. Fruitvale that have longer histories as centers of community organizing are exceptions to this trend.

75. Castells 1983, Gregory 1998, Logan and Molotch 1987.

76. Logan and Molotch 1987.

77. Both Sanjek 1998 and Gregory 1998 analyzed how youth use racial and classed identities through local politics.

78. See Rhomberg 2004 for a wonderful history of Oakland's public sphere.

79. Kirp 2007, Schmitt 2007.

repeatedly documented this equation (Soler

e et al. 2002: 13-14. Criminologists have  
at many points: police patrols focusing on  
police stops and searches, and differential  
prosecuted, and sentenced to out-of-home

r 1997.

Leonard et.al. 1995. One report found that  
red for felony drug offenses were detained  
ne same type of referrals” (Center for Juve-

so Massey 1994.

el studies include Cindi Katz 2004, Ruddick

7. White families had a median income  
families, \$37,408 for Asian families, and  
on and Michele R. Marcucci. “Census:  
ta Show Whites Earn Nearly Twice as  
.” *Oakland Tribune*, Tuesday, August 27,

tillo 2007, Dawson 2001, Reed 1999, 2000,

articipated in ethnic- or language-based  
el. Neighborhoods like Chinatown and  
of Chinese and Mexican communities are

Molotoch 1987.

alyze the ways in which people construct  
itics.

historical account of the fragmentation of

## CHAPTER 1

1. Bissell 2005: 218.
2. Harris-Lacewell 2004: 30, Smith 2001.
3. Sociologist Patrick Carr (2005) found that he also saw community policing as a way to instill trust. Parenti 1999 argue that the police manipulate community to secure their consent for expanded police power.
4. Maskovsky 2006: 76. Gregory 1998, Guzman 2000.
5. Simon 2007: 114.
6. Simon 2007: 109.
7. Wacquant 1999, 2001.
8. This broad neighborhood definition is used by the Elmhurst Blight Committee, and by some other researchers.
9. Molatore n.d.: 10.
10. See Self 2003, McClintock 2008.
11. The median household income in 1999 was \$25,962, while just above E. 14<sup>th</sup> tract 4096 was \$28,000. The neighborhood above MacArthur (census tract 4098) had a median income of \$30,000 (FactFinder).
12. Census Tract 4096 (2000 American Factfinder).
13. The only racial violence in Elmhurst was the 1967 riot by black youth that fought frequently at Castlemont High School.
14. See Self 2003: 150, 160ff. Between 1950 and 1970, the neighborhood shifted from majority white to 51.4% minority. The 1998th along the E. 14th flatland corridor was 70% black (May 1973: 12, Regal 1967).
15. Regal 1967: 85.
16. See also Molatore n.d.: 5.
17. Self 2003: 175.
18. Self 2003: 174.
19. Rhomberg 2004: 186. See also Molatore n.d.: 10.
20. Oakland Citizens Committee for Urban Renewal.
21. United Way of the Bay Area Elmhurst page: <http://www.uwbayarea.org/central.php>. Ed-Data [viewed July 2009], fiscal year 2000-2001, Castlemont High School, [www.ed-data.k12.ca.us](http://www.ed-data.k12.ca.us) [viewed July 2009].
22. One study in 1985 estimated that in part of the neighborhood represented an important part of the livelihood of many residents.
23. Williams 1989.
24. Ed-Data, fiscal year 2000-2001, student enrollment data, [www.ed-data.k12.ca.us](http://www.ed-data.k12.ca.us) [viewed Aug. 2003].
25. Cf. Gregory 1998.
26. Molatore n.d.: 4, "Groups Get Action in Elmhurst," *Oakland Tribune*, March 17, 1974, 1.
27. "Activism Unites Elmhurst," *Oakland Tribune*, March 17, 1974, 1.
28. Susser 1982: 99-100.

that white working-class activists in Chicago  
will order in youth. Mike Davis 1992 and  
and the fears of black adults and senior citizens  
owers.  
ano 2004, Cattelino 2004.

used by the city's redevelopment agency, by  
e neighborhood residents.

for census tract 4095 below E. 14<sup>th</sup> was  
as \$31,385 and the Toler Heights neigh-  
3) was \$56,063 (Census 2000 American

ctFinder).

s caused by informal gangs of white and  
ont High School in the late 1950s (May 1973).  
and 1960 the population in East Oakland  
y. By 1970, a smaller area from 82nd Ave. to  
0.6% black, 26.4% white, and 2.9% Indian

n.d.

a Renewal 1990.

profile at <http://www.uwba.org/helplink/data->  
al year 2000-2001, student profile, Castlem-  
wed Aug. 2003].

s of East Oakland, money from drug dealing  
od for 30-35% of residents (Molatore n.d.: 16).

profile, Castlemont High School, [www.ed-](http://www.ed-)

a Elmhurst Community," *Oakland Post*,

*tribune*, Oct. 19, 1992, A3.

29. I thank Sue Hyatt for encouraging me to
30. Molatore n.d.: 10, Rhomberg 2004.
31. Valentine 1996b, Griffin 1993, and Adam
32. Drake 1945. See also Williams 2001 and
33. Reed 2000: 17, 19, 23-24, Prince 2002, B
34. Naples 1998: 111, 36. See also Patricia Hi
35. Katz 2004: 156.
36. Burton 1997.
37. Ashley et al. 1997: 170.
38. See Devine 1997.
39. Chauncey Bailey, "Jobs Program Has To
40. Duster 1987: 303. Freeman and Holzer 1
41. Molatore n.d.: 14.
42. Corcoran and Matsudaira 2005: 381.
43. Carole Stack's research on fast food wor  
can youth had a harder time getting hired, see  
the management track than did Asians and L
44. Corcoran and Matsudaira 2005: 366.
45. Wacquant 2001.
46. Warren et al. 2008: 3.
47. Pager 2009: 3.
48. Roberts 2001, Braman 2004.
49. Pager 2009: 4.
50. Pager 2009: 3, see also NAACP Legal D
51. Urban Health Initiative 2000: 2.
52. Go et. al. 2000.
53. Jenks 1996. See also Wyness 2000: 24.
54. See also Gregory 1998: 156.
55. Steven Gregory borrows the term "gene  
make this argument (1998: 160).
56. Maskovsky 2006: 85. See Higgenbotham  
dered politics of respectability.
57. Williams 2001: 88.
58. Gregory 1998: 137.
59. Sasson and Nelson 1996 also found that bl  
only to decrease crime but also to restore the rol
60. Gregory 1998: 230, Suttles 1972.
61. Skogan 2004. For these debates, see Gre  
Walters 1993.
62. Bass 1998.
63. This comment hints at a shift in the way  
the state and its citizens: instead of state autho  
the neoliberal state gets its authority from the  
Ferguson and Gupta 2002).
64. Self 2003: 69-72.
65. Gilroy makes a similar argument about

to flesh out this piece of my argument.

ns 1997.

Pattillo-McCoy 1999.

oyd 2008.

ll Collins 1990 and Gregory 1998: 135.

ough Task,” *Oakland Tribune*, May 14, 2003.

1986.

kers in Oakland found that African Ameri-  
curing day shifts, and getting promoted to  
atinos (2001: 182).

efense Fund 2007.

rational affinity” from Karl Mannheim to

n 1993 for a historical account of the gen-

black elders participate in home alert groups, not  
es of “old heads” and “community mothers.”

eene and Mastrofsky 1988, Trajanowitz 1990,

y we conceptualize the relationship between  
ority emanating from its status above society,  
e way it is embedded within community (see

British policing (1982: 165).

66. Rhomberg 2004, Self 2003. See also the work of  
as Elaine Brown's *Taste of Power* and Bobby Seale's *Black  
67. OPD first developed the African American advisory committee. It later  
added Latino and Asian advisory committees. In 1998, it created a  
youth advisory committee to address the general concerns of the  
68. For an analysis of community policing in Oakland, see  
1993, Weatheritt 1988, Skolnick and Bayley 1994.  
69. In Oakland, the COPS grant brought the crime rate to a  
ous high in 1972 (Stacey Wells and Harry Harrell, *Oakland Tribune*,  
*Oakland Tribune*, May 8, 1998). In 2001, the city cut police  
staffing—one factor, along with the recession, that led to a spike  
in 2003, when the city decided to temporarily increase police  
70. Oakland borrowed the COMSTAT crime management system from  
the former police chief of Houston as a consumer of the program,  
“problem-solving” in San Diego.  
71. Klinenberg 2002: 150, see also Parenti 1996.  
72. Kelling and Moore (1988: 19) and Mastropaolo (1998) argue that  
policing often generates more community cooperation and  
secure community consent.  
73. Reed 1999: 119, Boyd 2008: xvii.  
74. Bureau of Justice Statistics 2003: 55.  
75. In one illustrative case, a deacon at Depue Baptist Church was  
frisked, and detained by the police because he was suspected of being  
a robbery suspect. His family circulated a petition to demand his  
congregation, while the deputy chief wished to prosecute. The church  
have tried to resolve the problem.  
76. Self 2003. Skogan 1989 found that African Americans are stopped  
at higher rates than other racial groups.  
77. Maskovsky 2006 and Cattellino 2004.  
78. Gregory 1998: 156.  
79. Maskovsky has argued that “neoliberal” policies have led to  
in converting residents to idealized subjects in the name of  
80. Anthropologists like Chesluk 2004, Gregory 1998, and  
few criminologists like Mastrofski (1988: 37), have argued that  
81. See also Klinenberg 2002: 153ff.  
82. See also Chesluk 2004.  
83. Wilson and Kelling 1982, Gregory 1998: 156.  
84. Gregory 1998: 232.  
85. Anderson 1999. See Patillo-McCoy 1999.  
86. Through homeowner quality-of-life activism, residents have  
were “disarticulated from the broader structural causes of  
violations of the rights of individuals to maintain a safe and  
87. Some national surveys suggest that support for the police increases  
after age fifty and is higher among African Americans (Schwartz et al.  
(Schwartz et al. 1993).  
88. Gilroy 1982: 161.*



many Black Panther autobiographies, such as LeRae's *Seize the Time*.

an Advisory Committee on Crime and later in 2000, they began to talk about creating additional fault lines in police-community relations. Nationally see Trajanowitz 1990, Walters 1988, Kelling and Moore 1988.

The police department staffing above its previous crisis, "Program to Fund 50 More Officers," the city had to pick up the tab for the increased costs, that may have led to the city budget crisis and a freeze police hiring.

The mapping technique from New York, hired a consultant, and sent its officers for training in

1999: 63ff.

Profski (1988: 61) argue that quality-of-life complaints and so requires intensified efforts to

Deputy Chief Bryant's church was stopped, the supposedly matched the description of the incident and a flurry of emails through the city they had contacted him directly so he could

and African Americans participate in civilian policing

governance has had a mediocre track record in the inner-city" (2006: 79).

Gregory 1998, and Cattelino 2004, as well as a number of others have explored this theme.

154.

and for another criticism of Anderson.

from, issues of crime, drugs, or poor city services in the context and framed as local and typically episodic incidents of a middle-class lifestyle" (Gregory 1998: 154).

support for trying juveniles as adults increases among African American parents than among any other group

## CHAPTER 2

1. Geographer Gill Valentine argues that e people's" kids, while projects of inclusion foc
2. My argument about the volunteer state Hyatt 2001 and to Michael Katz 2001: 163 ff. S what he calls "the entrepreneurial state."
3. Michael Katz 2001: 137.
4. Putnam 2000.
5. 2001: 166.
6. See Sharma 2006, Li 2005, Gupta and S Comaroff and Comaroff 2000, Paley 2001, Cr
7. The third sector, neither government nor institutions, research publications, and lobbyin interests, such as Aspen Institute and the ASSO tions and Voluntary Associations. The magazin work to link nonprofit youth services provider
8. Family incomes in a single census block \$200,000.
9. Self 2003: 164. In 1970, the heart of the M Arthur was .1% black (Social Explorer 1970 da
10. Redwood Heights is mostly in census tr block group 3 further down the hill along Ma Asian. One long-time white Redwood Height a local real estate agent organized residents to on the market, so that they could be in contro
11. Census block 4069, group 3 (American noted all subsequent data is from Census 200
12. Sharon Higgens, "Lessons Learned at P March 2, 2005.
13. Ruddick 2003: 337.
14. California Recreation Commission 1955 cities that had a centralized system to run pul
15. Oakland Community Chest 1938, Oakla
16. Kenney 1948: 4, 22.
17. Hawes 1991, Gordon 1988, 1990, Nasaw court see Getis 2000, Schlossman 1977, Platt r
18. Kett 1977, Mintz 2004, Chudacoff 2007.
19. Skocpol 1996 makes a similar argument
20. Boys and Girls Club history at <http://www> [viewed May 2009].
21. Thorne reports this public program end mothers entering the workforce began its pre Agencies see May 1973, Self 2003.
22. Ruddick 2003: 337.
23. Self 2003, Rhomberg 2004.

exclusionary political projects target “other  
us on “our kids” (1996b).

is indebted to the work and advice of Sue  
see also Klinenberg 2002 for a critique of

harma 2006: 21ff, Ferguson and Gupta 2002,  
ruikshank 1999.

r private for-profit corporation, has developed  
g efforts to define, defend, and expand its  
ciation for Research on Non-Profit Organiza-  
ne *Youth Today* and the After-School Alliance  
s into youth-specific advocacy networks.  
k could range from under \$10,000 to over

Laurel district and Redwood Heights Mac-  
ata, available at [www.socialexplorer.com](http://www.socialexplorer.com)).

ract 4069, block group 1. For comparison,  
cArthur is 21% white, 41% black, and 26%  
s resident told me that in the 1950s and ‘60s  
come together to buy any house that came  
ol of who it was sold to.

Fact Finder Census 2000). Unless otherwise  
o.

ublic Schools in Oakland,” *Oakland Tribune*,

: 29. In 1917, Oakland was one of the only  
blic youth recreation programs (Curtis 1917).  
and Junior Chamber of Commerce 1935.

1985. For accounts of child saving in juvenile  
977, and Schneider 1992.

.  
[www.bgcoakland.org/history/history.html](http://www.bgcoakland.org/history/history.html)

led in the late 1960s, just as the number of  
cipitous rise (2003: 174). On the Associated

24. Self 2003.
25. Hoggart 1991.
26. Rubin 1983: 24.
27. Children's Advocacy Institute 2006: I-6
28. Rubin 1981 and 1983, <http://www.oakland2008>].
29. Oakland voters passed several parcel tax measures in 2006 that together provided \$907 million to cover necessary repairs and seismic retrofits to aging schools. Proposed Administrator Wants to Ask Voters for Approval (March 8, 2006). Voters also passed a series of measures for parks and recreation facilities (Measure K in 1989, Measure M in 2002).
30. One study estimated that during the boom years, government spending per child in Oakland increased 10% in comparison to growth in total government spending (Kane et al. 2004: 8).
31. On California's budget deficit, see the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities (2007).
32. Children's Advocacy Institute 2006: I-2.
33. Oakland city government had substantial budget deficits. It faced massive deficits in 2003, 2005, and 2007, due in part to ups and downs in the housing market. (Heather MacDonald, "Oakland Looking at Budget Cuts," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 23, 2007). The state raided local funds in 1994 and 1995. (Mahoney, "Supervisor Jittery over State Budget Cuts," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 17, 2007).
34. Thorne 2003: 167. See also Hochschild 2004: 10.
35. [www.escore.com](http://www.escore.com) [viewed July 2002].
36. Cindi Katz 2001b.
37. Laurel Elementary Healthy Start Survey (2002).
38. Valentine and John McKendrick (1997) found that reading was reduced more by parental anxieties than by the availability of books.
39. Best 1990.
40. Lancaster 2007: 150-51.
41. Hawes 1991, Meucci and Redmon 1997.
42. Medrich et al. 1982 and Litt 1997 document the effects of violence on neighborhoods.
43. Thorne 2003, Hochschild 2004, Garey 2004.
44. "After School Activities in Oakland: An Evaluation of the Life Enrichment Agency Report to Life Enrichment Agency, May 14, 2002.
45. For professional families, extended kinship networks provide support. Extended family ties may also be more stretched for black working-class parents and their children (Kane 1997).
46. Carnegie Foundation 1992: 10.
47. Carnegie Foundation 1995: 106.

-7.

ndparks.org/about\_friends.htm [viewed July

axes and school bonds in 1994, 2000, and  
cover the estimated \$1 billion of neces-  
schools (Simone Sebastian, "Schools Measure  
s for \$435 Million," *San Francisco Chronicle*,  
F bonds for acquiring and refurbishing parks  
Measure I in 2000, and measure DD in

om years between 1996 and 2000, total  
increased by only 1.9%, an increase that pales  
t expenditures for the same period (Brecher

California Budget Project 2007 and 2008.

4.

al budget surpluses in 2000 and 2006, but  
7-2009. Oakland was particularly vulner-  
since it derived little revenue from sales tax  
Budget Shortfall," *Oakland Tribune* March  
4, 2003, and again in 2007 (Lisa Coffey  
et Woes," *Montclarion*, June 28, 2002).

2004.

r Results (author's files).

argue that children's access to public play is  
ne availability of public play spaces.

ment parental hypervigilance in poor urban

2002.

Assessment of Programs and Resources."  
hment Committee, Oakland City Council,

often lived scattered across the country.  
ned and thus no longer provide as much sup-  
r children as in earlier generations (Kaplan

48. Carnegie Foundation 1992: 10.
49. Carnegie Foundation 1992: 1.
50. Scott et al. 2006: 696-97. Influential authors include Robert Putnam, Robert D. Woodberry, and Milbrey McLaughlin.
51. Urban Strategies Council 1996: 11.
52. Garey 2002.
53. Prominent California advocacy groups include the California After-School Network, and Fight Crime: Invest in Kids.
54. The federal government increased after-school funding to \$1.08 billion in 2008 (<http://www.afterschoolalliance.org>, 2009]). California passed the After School Learning Act in 1998, creating a pool of state funding for after-school programs. Voters passed Proposition 49, which helped to increase funding in 2005.
55. Scott et al. 2006: 706.
56. Safe Passages 2007: 2.
57. After School Alliance 2001: 2.
58. This extended semidependent period of the middle class is the result of the complex combination of dependence and independence of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Keele 2004).
59. Carnegie Foundation 1992: 28.
60. Mintz 2004: 380-81.
61. On middle-class fears of falling see Ehrlich 1995.
62. California Budget Project 2007: 3.
63. California Budget Project 2008: 30. See also the California Budget Project for discussions of middle-class fears of falling.
64. Hacker 2008.
65. Williams 2007.
66. Finn 2001: 176.
67. Ruddick 2003.
68. Joan Williams (2000: 36ff) argues that the middle class has lost its elasticity. One or two generations ago, middle-class parents were expected to supervise their children's development, but now they are more passively cultivating their children.
69. Lareau 2003.
70. Williams 2000. See Field 1995 for how elite parents have become more intensive.
71. This intensive parenting means both more time spent with their children today than they did twenty-five years ago. See the Pew Study Finds More Togetherness of Kids, Parents.
72. Chudacoff 2007 describes the 1950s and 1960s as a period of intensive parenting even though play was deeply commodified and supervised.
73. Lareau 2000 and 2003, see also Hoffert 2003.
74. Carnegie Foundation 1992: 67.
75. Lareau 2000, 2003.
76. Patillo-McCoy 1999.
77. Isaacs 2008: 5.

Authors include Karen Pittman, Michelle Gam-

included The After-School Alliance, Califor-  
Invest in Kids.

After-school funding from \$40 million in 1998 to  
alliance.org/policy21stcclc.cfm [viewed July  
Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnership  
competitive grants, and in 2002, California  
to rapidly expand state funding starting in

of youth is not altogether new. It resembles  
independence experienced by youth in the  
ett 1977).

Ehrenreich 1989, Heiman 2001, Ortner 1998.

Heiman 2001, Ortner 1998, Ehrenreich 1989

5.

This is a modern twist on the ideal of domes-  
class mothers were encouraged to stay home  
that they spent as much time “housekeeping” as

education becomes endless labor in Japan.

Mothers and fathers spend more time with  
years ago (Jacqueline Salmon, “Surprising  
nts,” *Oakland Tribune*, May 10, 2001).

1960s as a high point in children’s free play,  
and somewhat colonized by adults.

and Sandberg 2001.

78. Shapiro 2005, Oliver and Shapiro 1995,
79. Ferguson 2000.
80. [www.ibabuzz.com/education/](http://www.ibabuzz.com/education/) [viewed
81. Hays 1988.
82. On the complex role of gender and “public schools” see Smith-Rosenberg 1987: 263, Getis 2000, and
83. Hyatt 2001.
84. Cindi Katz 2001b: 49.
85. Jones et al. trace the consolidation of the public school system in New York, although they do not use the term “public school.”
86. Lareau 2000.
87. Tucker, Jill and Robert Gammon. “Separating the Edge.” *Oakland Tribune* June 18, 2003. See [viewed June 2008].
88. Pugh 2005: 20.
89. The value of these block grants, unlike other federal grants, has increased year since they are rarely indexed to inflation. The percentage of funding for children declined from 20.1% in 1960 to 18.5% in 2008 (entitlement programs for seniors expanded from 18.5% in 1960 to 2008: 6).
90. Foundations and many state and federal programs, which encourages hyperinnovation.
91. A statewide evaluation of Healthy Start (http://ccsp.ucdavis.edu/sites/ccsp.ucdavis.edu/files/2008]).
92. California State Budget Project 2001, quoted in “California Budget: Keep Pace,” *Oakland Tribune*, June 16, 2003.
93. Safe Passages 2007: 5.
94. City of Oakland Mayor’s Office and Partnership for Children and Youth 2007: 4.
95. Burr et al. 2005: 4.
96. Katz and Sachsse 1996: 16-17, Wolch 1996: 16-17.
97. Gilmore 2007, Rodriguez 2007.
98. Gilmore 2007: 46.
99. Rodriguez 2007: 33.
100. Miller 1993, Clarke et al. 2007.
101. Oakland Fund for Children and Youth 2003: 2.
102. Mark Friedman of the Fiscal Policy Studies Center, “Public Schools for Children and Youth 2003: 2.
103. Oakland Fund for Children and Youth 2003: 2.
104. Social services have focused on individual children and families in the twentieth century (Finn 2001: 170, Sarri and Finn 2001: 170).
105. Oakland Fund for Children and Youth 2003: 2.
106. Goode and Maskovsky 2001: 20.
107. See also Halpern 2003: 96.
108. Garey 2002.
109. California Budget Project 2008: 54.



Conley 1999.

Feb. 25, 2008].

public mothers” in the progressive era, see  
Kunzel 1993.

is model from the 1970s to the early 1990s in  
“neoliberal” (1992: 107).

rate and Unequal: Fundraisers Give Schools  
also [rhs.ousd.ca/campusgrid.net/home](http://rhs.ousd.ca/campusgrid.net/home)

e those for the elderly, tends to fall each  
n. The percent of domestic federal spend-  
o to 15.4% in 2005, while spending on  
from 22.1% to 45.9%. (Isaacs and Lovell

l agencies prefer to fund new, not existing,  
n instead of stability (Landau 1988).

-funded programs found similar struggles  
[u/files/HSSusExeSumMay4.pdf](#) [viewed June

quoted in Jill Tucker, “State’s Spending Fails to

k and Recreation 1994.

o.

2003: 40.

udies Institute, quoted in Oakland Fund for

2003: Appendix D.

ual reform (or salvation) since the early  
Finn 1992).

2003: Appendix D9-10.

110. Katz 2001b: 51-52.

111. Tilde Herrera, "Eastlake YMCA Needs" *Oakland Tribune*, March 5, 2003.

112. KTVU, "Budget Cuts Force Oakland Sc" [www.ktvu.com/news/2211021/detail.html](http://www.ktvu.com/news/2211021/detail.html) [viewed 1/11/04].

### CHAPTER 3

1. Heyman 1963: 34.

2. Bonilla-Silva 2006, Gilroy 1987, Balibar 1991. The emphasis on cultural distinctions is not new. See Bourdieu and Passeron (1995) on social hierarchies (1995).

3. Bonilla-Silva outlines the central frames of reference.

4. Skyline High School's history is documented by Crain and Crain et al. 1969, who refer to Oakland as "The Montclarion" in coverage in *The Montclarion* and *Oakland Tribune*.

5. Pollock 2005: 46.

6. Self 2003: 166.

7. Roland 1965: 27, Kirp 1982: 217.

8. Heyman 1963: 42, Kirp 1982: 224.

9. "The School Board," *Montclarion*, Jan. 13, 1965.

10. Heyman refers to parent letters expressing concerns that might be diluted and fears of "violence," "disorder," and fears that their children would be bused to other schools (32).

11. "School Board Open Plan," *Montclarion*, Feb. 10, 1965, 9.

12. "School Board Hears Charge: Myth of Fearful Future," *Montclarion*, Oct. 22, 1969.

13. "Serious Racial Strife Could Develop Over the Line," *Montclarion*, March 3, 1976, 1.

14. Ladson-Billings 2004: 4.

15. Kirp 1982: 235.

16. Rhomberg 2004 and Self 2003.

17. The census tract near the high school (4000) is 40% Asian, with negligible numbers of Latinos. But there are different areas of this tract. Hillcrest Estates is 71% black and 50% white (U.S. Census 2000, American Factfinder).

18. Conley 1999: 1 and Oliver and Shapiro 1995: 1.

19. Votes were frequently split between the candidates. Rosynsky, "Pattern in Voting for Mayor Splits Party," *Oakland Tribune*, 18, 2002).

20. Pugh 2005: 8.

21. Between 1990 and 2000, Skyline's white population fell from 12% to 12%, continuing a trend from the 1980s (www.oakland.k12.ca.us July 2003]). All statistics for OUSD can be found in the 2003 report.

Volunteers, Now Is the Time for Support,”

schools to Cut 700 Jobs,” May 17, 2003, <http://www.ed-data.org> [viewed June 2003].

and Wallerstein 1992. Ann Stoler argues that the new but was always part of colonial racial

of color-blind liberalism (2006: 25ff).

mentioned in Kirp 1982: 217-50, Heyman 1963, and Lawndale. My account also relies on news from *Oakland Tribune*.

3, 1965, 10.

expressing worries that academic standards are different moral standards (especially sexual) applied to predominately Negro schools” (1963:

1, Feb. 3, 1965, 1. “School Board,” *Montclairion*,

“Privilege Provoked Violence at Skyline High,”

only at One High School in Oakland—Sky-

4081) is 48% white, 32% black, and 18%

that there is significant divergence between different block groups: 45% white, while another block group is 45% African American (American FactFinder).

1995.

hills and flatlands (Laura Counts and Paul Counts, “Hills, Flatlands,” *Oakland Tribune*, March

the student population declined from 23% to 17%. [www.ed-data.k12.ca.us/StudentTrends](http://www.ed-data.k12.ca.us/StudentTrends) [viewed June 2003] and at Ed-Data.

22. Nakao 1998.
23. Oakland History Clipping File, Oakland. Residents are organized into homeowners' associations. The Hills Homeowner Coalition unites these different developments in the hills.
24. Elmhurst has several parks, but most are small with a few trees and sometimes a recreation building. They exist outside of the hills, but are dwarfed by the hills (<http://www.cityofelmhurst.com/Parks/> [viewed Aug. 2008]).
25. Buses poorly serve the area, though the city does provide some subsidized transportation for low-income families serving low-income families.
26. Rieder explores the ways "talk collective" is used.
27. Davis 1992, Caldeira 2001, and Low 2003.
28. Cobern and Riley 2000.
29. Survey in author's files.
30. Gregory 1998 Sugrue 1998, and Hirsch 1998. Hirsch traces the post-World War II urban spaces through zoning and other policies.
31. See Hartigan on racial etiquette (1999: 110).
32. Gregory 1999: 110.
33. Hartigan 1999: 167.
34. Bonilla-Silva 2006: 25ff.
35. Frankenberg 1993: 147.
36. Pollock 2005: 44 and Pollock 2004.
37. Rieder 1995 and Hirsch 1983 document the process of bootstrapping.
38. Hartigan 1999: 241.
39. Self 2003, Oliver and Shapiro 1995 Conclusion.
40. Ed-Data <http://www.ed-data.k12.ca.us/S>
41. Bonilla-Silva 2006: 68, see also Hartigan 1999.
42. Rhomberg 2004: 167.
43. Ginwright 2004: 72.
44. Wilson 1987, 1996, Murray 1984. For critical analysis see Wilson 1992.
45. Collins 1989: 876-82.
46. Lawrence 1983: 50.
47. Gilroy 1987: 43.
48. Gilroy 1987: 43.
49. Schrag 1999. Sugrue 1998 traces the history of the cities to suburbs, while Howard 2006 details the middle-class homeowners and not the poor.
50. Gilmore quoted in HoSang 2006: 9-10.
51. Pugh 2005: 14.
52. HoSang 2006: 8.

d Hills, Skyline. Most hills neighborhoods  
for each separate development although a  
rent groups in fights against further devel-

the grassy areas between two and five acres  
building. A couple of larger 14-16-acre parks  
the open space in the hills (www.oaklandnet.

East Bay Regional Park District does try to  
low-income schools and organized groups

ized the experience of danger” (1995: 67).

93.

1983 all examine the ways race was built into  
urban redevelopment and national housing

57).

this kind of prevalent belief in ancestral

ey 1999, Katznelson 2005.

StudentTrends.

n 1999: 155.

critiques see Vincent 1993 Zinn 1989, Katz

ory of how U.S. policy transfers wealth from  
ails how the “invisible welfare state” benefits

53. Ed Source 2003, California Budget Project into account the high cost of living in California, means that the same funding goes less far.
54. Reported by school board member in a
55. "Census: Oakland among Brainiest Cities"
56. Cobern and Riley 2000: 10.
57. Cobern and Riley 2000: 10-11.
58. Cindi Katz 2001a: 51.
59. Ferguson argues that the mirror images of criminals both "frame black men as individually
60. These tracking patterns are common in (Street 2005: 82ff., Darling-Hammond 2004, 1
61. Here I draw on interviews and Nakao 19
62. Nakao 1998.
63. Ferguson 2000: 61.
64. Shah et al. 2009: 8-9.
65. Jill Tucker and Robert Gammon, "Teachers in Oakland Hills Earn an Average of \$10,000" *Tribune*, June 17, 2003. See also Education Trust
66. Ladson-Billings 2004: 9.
67. [www.decent.schools.org](http://www.decent.schools.org) [viewed July 2
68. Pollock 2005: 45. See Darling-Hammond
69. Fine 2004: 255.
70. California Budget Project 2001: 3-4.
71. Shah et al. 2009: 8-9.
72. Ferguson 2001: 80.
73. Ferguson 2001: 84, 90.
74. Ferguson 2001: 125.
75. NAACP Legal Defense Fund 2007, Adv Project 2000, Skiba et al. 2000.
76. Kids First 2000. Youth and parent activism for defiance of authority) so that by 2007 Oakland higher than the state average (Nanett Asimov *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 19, 2008).
77. Darling-Hammond 2004: 226.
78. Annie Nakao, "Peer Power: Blacks Can't Assume They'll Get the Same Education as W
79. Collins 1990.
80. See [www.naacpldf.org](http://www.naacpldf.org) and <http://www.c> these campaigns.
81. See Darling-Hammond 2004.
82. Pollock 2005: 45, 47.
83. Sanjek 1998: 300ff.
84. Sanjek 1998: 390.
85. See for example, Davis 1992, Smith 1996

ect 2007: 1. These rankings also do not take  
nia, which, because of higher teacher sala-  
r in California than in other states.

Beat 25X NCPC meeting, May 2000.  
es,” *Oakland Tribune*, Dec. 20, 2000.

f black men as an endangered species and as  
y responsible for their own fate” (2000: 80-82).  
public schools throughout the country  
Fischer et al. 1996).  
998.

thers Key to Top Schools: Senior Instructors  
More Than Those in Flatlands,” *Oakland  
st West* 2005.

009].

d 2004, Street 2005, and Kozol 2005.

ancement Project and Harvard Civil Rights

ism helped reduce suspensions (especially  
land had a suspension rate only slightly  
,” “Suspensions Point to Trouble in Schools,”

t Just Drop Their Kids Off at School and  
Whites,” *San Francisco Examiner*, June 9, 1998.

childrensdefense.org for information on

6, Parenti 1999, Mitchell 2004.

## CHAPTER 4

1. This portrait draws on the work of Rhoads.
2. Oral History Interview, conducted by C. ...  
[www.deepoakland.org/project?id=20](http://www.deepoakland.org/project?id=20) [viewed ...]
3. I draw on my observations of Eastmont.
4. Mall 2000.
5. This description draws on some of my ...  
(Sahagun 2005, Gammon 2005, Cielo 2005, a ...  
<http://www.safero.org/sideshow.html> [viewed ...]
6. Cielo 2005: 21.
7. The Richie Rich and the 415 song “Sides ...  
to celebrate the Sideshow. More recently, E-40 ...  
his video featuring lyrics and images of ghost ...
8. Cielo 2005: 21. The city mandated that t ...  
lock them at night to keep out cruisers (Gam ...
9. Krisberg et al. found similar phenomen ...  
also characterized as a “youth issue” (2009: vi ...
10. Matless 1995: 96. See also Valentine 200 ...
11. Youth activists defeated a proposed curf ...  
council members brought the idea back in 19 ...  
2009. Each time they were defeated because o ...  
they criminalized youth.
12. Mary Douglas 1966: 50. See also Lees 20 ...  
arguments drawing on Douglas.
13. Lees (2003: 613, 614), Smith 1996, Mitch ...  
Zukin 1995, who provided one of the earliest ...  
and culture in urban redevelopment.
14. Smith 2002: 439.
15. Peck and Tickell 2002, Merry 2001, Che ...
16. Merry 2001: 16, 20.
17. Merry 2001: 3.
18. Lees 2003 and Breitbart 1998 are signific ...  
Gilroy 1987, Katz 2005, and Gough 2002.
19. Miller 1998, Lasch 1977, Nasaw 1985.
20. Kett 1977, Fass 1977. Early urban redev ...  
juvenile delinquency, as well as race, as mark ...  
early-twentieth-century efforts did not sugges ...  
decline and that clearing youth off the street v ...
21. Valentine 2004, Cahill 1990.
22. Mitchell 2004: 4. I borrow the phrase “g ...
23. Parenti 1999, Sorkin 1992.
24. Kirkpatrick called this an “aggressively ...  
Rhomberg 2004: 190.
25. Michael Duffy, “Jerry Brown Still Wants ...  
Jerry Brown, Inaugural Address 2003.



...berg 2004: 120 and Self 2003.

...Oakland Living History Program, at [http://](http://...)  
...l Aug. 2008].

...Mall, as well as Mall 2000 and Cielo 2005.

...own observations, videos, and news reports  
...nd J. Douglass Allen-Taylor's articles at  
...d June 2007]).

...show" released in 1989 was the first of many  
...o boosted the popularity of the event with  
...riding in "Tell Me When to Go" in 2006.  
...he owners of parking lots erect fences and  
...mon 2005).

...a in Washington, DC, where all crime was  
...i).

...4, 1996b, Aitkin 2001.

...few in 1996, but African American city  
...98, 2000-2001, and, most recently, February  
...of youth activism and broader concerns that

...003: 625 and Gregory 1998, who make related

...nell 2004, Brenner and Theodore 2002, and  
...explorations of the new importance of image

...elsuk 2004, Sorkin 1992, Maskovsky 2001.

...cant exceptions. See also Gilroy et al. 1982,

...lopment efforts in Oakland sometimes used  
...ers of urban decline (Marr 1938). But these  
...st that youth on the street created urban  
...was necessary for urban renewal.

...geographic fix" from Mitchell 2004.

...entrepreneurial regime" (2007: 347).

...s Your Vote," *Time Magazine*, May 21, 2006.

26. Kirkpatrick 2007: 347. Ryan Tate, "Deal," *Deal Times*, March 24, 2006.
27. Logan and Molotoch argue that pro-growth argument, but that growth is often a "mixed blessing" (85).
28. Michael Katz 2001.
29. Smith 2002.
30. Kirkpatrick 2007: 349.
31. Kirkpatrick 2007: 347-48.
32. Chauncey Bailey, "Brown, Riles Clash in Oakland," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 1999.
33. Jobs and Housing Coalition, <http://jobsandhousing.org>
34. MacDonald 1999.
35. Chris Thompson 2000.
36. Rhomberg 2004: 190.
37. Alex Katz, "Empty Seats May Shut Down Oakland," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 2004.
38. Rhomberg 2004, Salazar 2006.
39. MacDonald 1999.
40. Wilson and Kelling 1982, Mitchell 2004.
41. On gated communities in Brazil and the United States, see Mitchell 2003.
42. For Jack London and Oak to 9<sup>th</sup> plans see <http://www.oaktown.org> [viewed June 2009] and <http://www.oaktown.org>
43. Smith 2002: 443.
44. Oakland Community Economic Development Corporation 2007.
45. Rhomberg (2004: 187) reports that in 1999, Oakland still had seven department stores, while ten years later only two of these closed with the decline of the Eastman store downtown (Oakland Community Economic Development Corporation 2007).
46. Lees 2002: 620.
47. Lees 2002: 614.
48. CEDA website (<http://www.business2000.org>)
49. Bill Picture, "In Oaktown, Unpolished Diamonds," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 2007, <http://www.sanfrancisco.com/news>
50. Ruddick 2003: 334.
51. Ruddick 2003: 353, 351.
52. Ruddick 2003: 344.
53. Picture 2007.
54. Burt 2007.
55. Shuman 2000. See Rose (1991: 276) for a discussion of rap.
56. Burt 2007.
57. Davey D, "How & Why Hip Hop Is Dangerous," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 12, 2007. [www.daveyd.com](http://www.daveyd.com) [viewed June 2008]
58. Bass 1998. Police harassment of black youth in the '50s, according to some of my informants and interviews.
59. Bass 1998: 232.

maker: Jerry Brown,” *San Francisco Business*

growth urban coalitions routinely make this “blessing” for low-income populations (1987:

n Debate,” *Oakland Tribune*, Feb. 18, 2002.  
andhousing.com/ [viewed Feb. 2009].

rn Schools,” *Oakland Tribune*, Oct. 23, 2003.

: 200.

e United States, see Caldeira 2000, Low

ee <http://www.jacklondonsquare.com/>  
.com [viewed June 2009].

ppment Agency 2005: 8-9.

77 the central business district downtown  
ears later the whole city had only four. Two  
ont Mall, and by 2005 there was only one  
Economic Development Agency 2005: 2).

akland.com/main/demographics.htm).

is the New Glam,” *San Francisco Magazine*,  
ode/2592 [viewed July 2008].

an analysis of the “institutional policing” of

akening Oakland’s Nightlife—or Is It?” Nov  
3].

outh at the Lake goes back into the 1940s and  
l to Bass (1998: 219).

60. Bass 1998: 214ff, Austin 1988. Bass argues of the haves and have nots” since young people of admission to the popular festival (1998: 223) black and 75-80% were between the ages of fifteen and twenty.
61. The city spent between \$400,000 and \$500,000 (Mike Martinez, “New Sources Eyed to Fund Sideshow,” *Oakland Tribune* 2003; Zusha Elinson, “City Steps In: Sideshow,” *Oakland Tribune* 2003).
62. Zusha Elinson, “City Steps In: Sideshow,” *Oakland Tribune* 1999, an Elmhurst community policing officer found closer to 50% of cars from out of the city.
63. City council person Desley Brooks, an African American, one of East Oakland’s flatland districts, accuses the city of compromising the safety and security of black children: “It’s unforgivable in my career” (Bobby Caina Calvan, “A Car Culture,” *Oakland Tribune* 10, 2005).
64. In 2007, the city settled a lawsuit and agreed to stop participating in the Sideshow (Henry K. Lee, “Seizure,” *Oakland Tribune* July 19, 2007).
65. Gammon 2005. The Sideshow slowed in 2005.
66. J. Douglas Allen-Taylor. “Applying Critical Theory to the Death,” *Berkeley Daily Planet* February 11, 2005.
67. Jim Herron Zamora, “Profiling a Dilemma: How the City Sacrifice Civil Liberties for Police, Protection,” *Oakland Tribune* Lakiesha McGhee, “NAACP Probe Reveals Profiling,” *Oakland Tribune* 18, 2002.
68. Peggy Stinnett, “Videos Heat Up Sideshow,” *Oakland Tribune* 2002.
69. An African American police captain who had recently concluded that he’d need an office in the city out of the city. By 2001, he supported exploring the possibility of moving out of the city.
70. Davey D., “Oakland’s Oppressive Sideshow,” *Oakland Tribune* daveyd.com [viewed June 2008].
71. LCAP website [www.support.net/lcap/information](http://www.support.net/lcap/information)
72. Goode and Maskovsky 2001: 9.
73. Youth scholars have often pointed to the fact that mall ban malls are constructed as threatening presences that are monitored and moved along by security guards (Shields 1989).
74. Steve Chawkins, “No Appetite for Class,” *Oakland Tribune* The Mosquito teen deterrent device is now marketed as a wonderful inversion, teenagers are now using this device to scare by adults ([www.mosquitogroup.com](http://www.mosquitogroup.com) [viewed June 2008]).
75. Matthews et al. 1996: 257, Shields 1989, Y. Shields 1989.
76. Lees 2002: 624, see also Wyn and White 2001.
77. Klein 2000: 311.
78. Dominguez 1994, also Stoler 1995.
79. Hall 1904: xv.

es that the festival turned into “a festival  
le often did not have the escalating price  
3). She estimated that 95% of cruisers were  
fteen and twenty-five (1998: 216).

1 million a year to disperse the Sideshow  
Cruise Patrol,” *Oakland Tribune*, Jan. 2,  
ws Could End,” *Oakland Post*, July 6, 2005).  
ws Could End,” *Oakland Post*, July 6, 2005. In  
r told me that a study he conducted in 1997  
ty.

African American woman who represented  
ed Brown of putting his career ahead of the  
ortunate you sacrifice *our* children for your  
Inflames a Culture War,” *Boston Globe*, June

reed to no longer seize and sell cars partici-  
re Lawsuit Settled,” *San Francisco Chronicle*,

n 2005-2006, but by 2009 was active again.  
ical Thinking to Another Oakland Shooting  
5.

ma for Oakland: Residents Don’t Want to  
,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 12, 2002.

problems with Police,” *Oakland Tribune*, April

ow Debate,” *Oakland Tribune*, June 27, 2005.

no worked in East Oakland told me that he  
cer “on every corner” to sweep the Sideshow  
ng legalized venues.

now Ordinance Passes,” July 20, 2005, www.

fo.cfm [viewed October 2002].

e ways groups of youth within subur-  
ences, potential shoplifters to be actively  
ds (Ruddick 1996, Matthews et. al. 1996, and

ical Music,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 28, 1998.

arketed in the United States, but in a won-  
s sound as a cell ring tone that can’t be heard  
Aug. 2009]).

Valentine 1996a: 214.

e 2000: 307.

80. Bennet et al. 1996: 18. Anthropologist Joanne Meyer's research time suggests that these temporal metaphors were used by anthropologists as they did anthropologists from racialized "Cultures of Politics."
81. Fleetwood 2004: 36.
82. Kelley 1996: 136.
83. Thorne 2003: 167. See also Aitkin 2000.
84. Zukin 1994: 5.
85. Valentine 1996a: 211-12, Cahill 1990. Valentine's research shows children's access to public play is reduced more than the availability of public play spaces.
86. Valentine 1996b: 590.
87. Lower-class and minority youth have long been subject to surveillance who required social control (Finn 2001: 171, Kohn 1985).
88. Valentine 1999.
89. Valentine 2004: 1.
90. Douglas 1966: 50.
91. Leslie Miller argues that the creation of the "Cultures of Politics" occurred at exactly the same time as the creation of the "Cultures of Politics."
92. Laws like Proposition 21 that transferred funding from schools were passed all over the country in the 1990s. See Steinhart 1991 for detrimental effects on recidivism.
93. See Jenks 1996, Wyness 2000: 24.
94. Mitchell 2004: 211.
95. Sally Merry argued that different strategies of "layering" one with another (2001: 25).
96. Devine 1997, Ayers et al. 2001.
97. See also Meucci and Redmon 1997, Ashley et al. 1997.
98. High schools were not eligible for Proposition 21. Charter schools received federal funding for after-school programs. See Sheet 2004 at <http://www.preventviolence.org> [viewed Jan. 2010].
99. Mitchell 2004: 33.
100. Safe Passages 2007: 29-30.
101. Hall et al. 1999: 506. See also Matthews et al. 1999.
102. Austin 1988: 678.
103. Hall et al. 1999: 512.
104. I borrow this phrase from Valentine et al. 2004. See also Meucci and Redmon 1997 for the importance of the social standings of their environments.
105. Ashley et al. 1997: 175.
106. Meucci and Redmon 1997: 5.
107. Youth activists published the result of a survey that documented these findings. But over ten years later, a survey and my own focus groups documented the importance of Kids First, which increased funding for youth programs. See my views with Youth Commission members and

Johannes Fabian's analysis of metaphors of "Others" (1983).

entine and John McKendrick 1997 argue that are by parental anxieties than by the avail-

ng been represented as "dangerous" kids (Kett 1977).

e concept of dangerous street and safe home of the idea of innocent, fragile children (1998). d kids to the adult criminal justice system (Feld 1999), see Barry Krisberg et. al. 1987 livism.

gies of governance often coexist, "interlock-

ley et al. 1997.

49 funding, and only 3% of California high school activities (After-School Programs Fact [g/press/articles/AfterSchool\\_factsheet.pdf](http://press/articles/AfterSchool_factsheet.pdf)

et al. 2000, O'Neil 2002: 64-65.

al. 1997. See Katz 2004, Stephens 1995, of paying attention to children's own under-

survey of three hundred youth in 1997 that s later, the Oakland Youth Commission d very similar comments, despite the passage uth programs (Ashley et al. 1997: 172, inter- staff).

108. Tilton 2009.
109. Sibley 1995.
110. Mitchell 2004: 211.
111. Bernard Harcourt, “The Broken-Windows Fallacy,” *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy* 24 (2001): 299–315. See also Harcourt 2001, Gregory 1998, Mitchell 2004.
112. Davey D, “Boots Heats Up on Oakland,” *Boots* (2003). [daveyd.com](http://daveyd.com) [viewed July 2003].
113. Cahill 1990: 398.
114. Feld 1999: 9.
115. Chang 2005.
116. Cf. Anderson 1990, 1999.

## CHAPTER 5

1. Ashley 2001.
2. Youth Rights Media in New Haven, CT, and the Youth Rights Media in Louisiana’s Incarcerated Youth, and Justice Center in Oakland, CA, engaged in similar kinds of campaigns.
3. Ginwright 2006, Ginwright and James 2002.
4. Comaroff and Comaroff 2000, Durham 2004.
5. HoSang 2006: 6.
6. Ginwright and James (2002: 27) have offered alternative youth development models, arguing for Social Justice Models that emphasize a “political understanding of power.”
7. Durham 2004.
8. On neoliberal spatial transformations generally, see Smith 2002, Peck and Tickell 2002, Calderia 2002, and Mitchell 2001.
9. Mitchell 2004.
10. Ashley 2001.
11. I use “counterpublic” in the tradition of Jameson (1991), which is critiqued and reframed Habermas’s work on the public sphere (1991, 2004, Gregory 1998).
12. Turner 1969: 178ff.
13. Van Jones, quoted in Ards 2004.
14. See Gregory 1998, Reed 1999.
15. HoSang 2003: 6.
16. The Kids First! Initiative youth research project examined the city budget on youth programs and recreation. HoSang 1997 argued that the city of Oakland had the lowest per capita rounding cities, only \$200,000 in 1995.
17. Kids First! Coalition 1998: 17–18.
18. Cindi Katz 2004: 159.
19. NAACP Legal Defense Fund 2007. The “cradle to prison pipeline.”



ows Myth.” *New York Times*, September 11,  
Mitchell 2004.

Mayor Jerry Brown,” Jan. 25, 2000, www.

Justice for DC Youth, Friends and Families  
4 Youth Coalition in New York all have

2002, HoSang 2003 and 2006.

2000, 2004, Sherrod et. al 2006.

ffered an important critique of mainstream  
al Justice Youth Development initiatives  
race, economic inequality and political

generally, see Brenner and Theodore 2002,  
2001, Davis 1992, Sorkin 1992, Maskovsky

f feminist and black scholars, who have cri-  
public sphere (Fraser 1989, Harris-Lacewell

ers found that the city spent only 1% of the  
n in 1995 compared to 15% in 1960 (1998: 2).  
spent far less on nonprofit services than sur-

Children’s Defense Fund renamed this the

20. Rios 2004: 50. See videos produced by C... ries of young people's experiences at <http://ur> [viewed July 2008].

21. For descriptions of youth activist politic... 2004, Ginwright 2006, HoSang 2003.

22. HoSang 2003.

23. See Ben Kirschner 2006 for an analysis... tance of not reifying the notion of "youth lead

24. Quoted in Martinez 2000.

25. Bennet, DiIulio, and Walters 1996: 39-50... Coming of the Super-Predators Should Scare... Crime a Lot Faster," *Chicago Tribune*, Dec. 15,

26. In fact crime rates plummeted as youth... (Macallair and Males 2000). Between 1991 and... Alameda County, felony arrests dropped 41%

27. Males 1996: 104ff, Zimring 1998, Macall

28. Rosser International originally develop... hall. Bart Lubow from the Annie E. Casey... "seem to be based on any sort of science."... tion construction business, Lubow commen... how many bombers the U.S. needs to prote... "Youth-Led Movement against Prisons Is G... 17, 2001).

29. Alameda County Chiefs of Police and S... (author's files).

30. Cecily Burt, "Oakland Moves to Trace... *Tribune*, July 24, 2002, Local section. In fact... recovered from arrested juveniles had been... communication).

31. Mike Males, "Oakland Murders Not Yo... 27, 2002.

32. Dorfman and Schiraldi 2001.

33. Youth Media Council 2002, Soler 2001.

34. Macallair and Males 2000: 5. Stereotype... Latino contribute to these disparities (Villaru

35. National Council on Crime and Delinq

36. See Ayers et al. 2001.

37. Comaroff and Comaroff 2004: 804.

38. Youth Media Council 2002.

39. We Interrupt This Message & Youth For... also drew on the work of Males 1996, Dorfma

40. Keith Carson quickly did, while Alice L... smaller facility and the larger juvenile hall (D... OK'd," *Oakland Tribune*, Oct. 10, 2001).

41. Quoted on Davey D's Hip Hop Corner... July 2007].

Oakland students for similar evocative sto-  
bandreams.ousd.k12.ca.us/video/index.html

cal education efforts in Oakland, see Rios

of apprenticeship models and the impor-  
tance of apprenticeship.”

6. See also John DiIulio, ”Moral Poverty: The  
U.S. is into Wanting to Get the Root Causes of  
1995, 31.

populations peaked in the early 2000s  
and 1998, as youth populations skyrocketed in  
(Rosser International 1998: 1-3).

Gender and Males 2000.

He supported the proposal for a 540-bed juvenile  
Foundation said their estimate didn’t  
Since Rosser was in the juvenile deten-  
tion center, ”That’s like asking Lockheed Martin  
to build itself” (Books Not Bars press release,  
”Gathering Steam San Diego,” Thursday, May

San Francisco Sheriff’s Association, October 18, 2001

”Sales of Guns to Minors,” *Oakland*  
report, the report had found that 60% of guns  
purchased in the Bay Area (personal

”Youth Violence,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, Nov.

”Racial Profiles of gang members as black, Asian, and  
Latino” (Lundberg and Walker 2002).

”Youth Violence” 2007: 37.

”Youth Violence” 2001. These youth media organizations  
are discussed in Lundberg and Schiraldi 2001.

”Mayor Bitker wavered between votes for a  
new facility,” Donna Horowitz, ”420-Bed Juvenile Hall

”Youth Violence” July 25, 2001 at [www.daveyd.com](http://www.daveyd.com) [viewed

42. Overall, the expanded juvenile hall would cost only \$33 million of which would be provided by the county. The rest of the money would come from the county's Emerald Green Fund, which would be used instead to rebuild mental health facilities (Donna Horowitz, "Surprise Vote for Smaller Sites, Options to Detention, Weighed," *Oakland Tribune*, 2002).
43. O'Neil 2002 and Jenks 1996 document the decline of the juvenile justice system (and the emergence of the "youth gang" and dependence in modern urban areas). See also Martinez 2006 for a set of academic and activist challenges to the system.
44. Ashley 2001.
45. Quoted in Ashley 2001.
46. Sean Ginwright and Taj James (2002), *The Color of Youth: A Journey from Oakland to the Edge*, Oakland, CA: University of California Press, have written extensively about this issue.
47. Ginwright 2006.
48. Shuman 2000.
49. Mitchell 2004: 4.
50. Mitchell 2004: 23.
51. Mitchell 2004: 182.
52. Harvey 2003: 939.
53. Kelley 1996: 206, Rose 1991, 1994.
54. Low 2003 and Holston 1999 also explore the relationship between youth and citizenship.
55. Youth Force flier "Fight Pete Wilson's War on Youth" (see [www.youthforcecoalition.org](http://www.youthforcecoalition.org) files).
56. Perkins 1996: 21.
57. Willis 1981, Fine 1991, Ferguson 2000.
58. Ginwright 2006. See also Rios 2004, who argues that the system transforms youth "from knucklehead to revolutionary."
59. Boots quoted in Ards 2004. Many hip hop artists have been vocal about hip hop's political awakening (Chang 2005, Kwon 2006).
60. Lipsitz 1998.
61. Representative Maxine Waters urged that the system be reformed during the gangsta rap hearings (Chang 2005: 454).
62. Kwon 2006.
63. Books Not Bars and Youth Force Coalition, "Youth Force Coalition: Know to Know to Stop the Super Jail for Kids" (author's files).
64. Kids First! Coalition 2000.
65. Books Not Bars and Youth Force Coalition, "Youth Force Coalition: Know to Know to Stop the Super Jail for Kids" (author's files).
66. Comaroff and Comaroff (2000: 303) note that the "teenager" in the modern world is racially marked as white and male.
67. Males 1996.
68. Le et al. 2001.
69. Kelley 1996, Ginwright 2006.
70. Quoted in Martinez 2000.
71. Comaroff and Comaroff 2000, Spady et al. 2000.

ld cost the county \$176 million to build, by a grant from the state. The rest of the ld Fund, which activists insisted should be s or to create youth centers in communities Juvenile Hall: Youth Activists Cheer as 2 and Tribune, Sept. 26, 2001).

links between innocence (seen both as igno- n concepts of childhood. See also Noguera et al. s to this idea that youth are incomplete citizens.

two theorists of youth activism with roots in new social justice approach.

e the links between the rights to public space

War against Youth,” February 2000 (author’s

no talks about Olin’s use of hip hop to trans- ary.”

hop scholars have looked eagerly for signs of itwana 2003, Perry 2004).

at adults engage hip hop in this way during

ion flier, 2001, “Inside: Everything You Need or’s files)

ion flier, 2001, “Inside: Everything You Need or’s files).

te that in much of the English-speaking and “youth” invariably as black and male.

al. 2006.

72. As in Gregory 1998, black political subject dominated meetings often defined “respectable” residents and renters of the “core black community.”

73. Ards 2004: 320.

74. As Durham has written, if “invoking yonic and political processes in which such neighborhoods are reconstructed” (2004: 592-93).

75. Mitchell 2004: 129.

76. Mitchell 2004: 9.

77. Mitchell 2004: 222.

## CONCLUSION

1. Between 2005 and 2008, one-quarter of Oakland's population experienced foreclosure (“Oakland Faces a Daunting Foreclosure Crisis”).

2. Kelly Rayburn, “Kids First! Group Says Foreclosure Is a Major Public Health Issue,” *Oakland Tribune*, June 9, 2008.

3. On a state level, the crises facing investment and education in California cut funding for education, children's services, and social services.

4. Safety First statement of principles and goals (<http://www.safetyfirst.com/> [viewed July 2009]).

5. Oakland Residents for Peaceful Neighborhoods.

6. HoSang 2006: 8.

7. Self 2003: 326, Peterson 1981.

8. Interview with Timothy Smeeting in San Francisco (<http://www.connectforkids.org/node/577> [viewed July 2009]).

9. Gordon 2009, Michael Katz 2001.

10. Gordon 2009.

11. Males et al. 2006.

12. Scott Duke Harris, “Listening to Oakland: Tough Laws Are Putting More Seasoned Criminals Behind Bars,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 6, 2003.

13. Lindsay 2009.

14. Youth Transitions Funders Group 2006.

15. Books Not Bars (<http://www.ellabaker.com/> [viewed Jan. 2010]).

16. Sean Maher. “Hometown Heroes: Community Organizers in Oakland,” *Oakland Tribune*, July 26, 2009.

17. Snyder 2008: 106.

18. An Evaluation of the Oakland New Small Schools Initiative: Autonomous Schools Evaluation 2007 at <http://www.oaklandca.gov/> [viewed Nov. 2009].

19. Katy Murphy, “Oakland Small Schools Transforming the City,” *Oakland Tribune*, July 26, 2009.

20. [Http://www.piconetwork.org/](http://www.piconetwork.org/) [viewed July 2009].

21. OCO 2002 Annual Report [viewed July 2009].

22. Chang 2005.

activities cultivated in these homeowner-  
ability” in ways that often excluded younger  
community.”

truth is a pragmatic act,” then “in the prag-  
matismings take place, the category itself is

Oakland’s single-family homes went into fore-  
closure Problem,” *Oakland Tribune*, Nov. 12, 2008).  
It Has Signatures Needed for November Bal-

problems in children looked even more dire as  
children’s health, and child care.

purpose, <http://safetyfirstoakland.blogspot>.

ors, [www.orpn.org](http://www.orpn.org) [viewed Jan. 12, 2010].

San Phillips, “Choosing Child Poverty,”  
[viewed Aug. 2009], See also Thorne 2003.

and: The City Is a Stark Example of How  
Dangerous Animals on the Streets of California,” *Los Ange-*

center.org/index.php?p=bnb\_peoples\_budget

Commissioned to Improve the Mean Streets of

Small Schools Initiative, Sept. 2007. New Small  
<http://www.bayces.org/article.php/nsaseval>

Ten Years Later,” *Oakland Tribune*, May 5, 2009.  
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[2004] [www.oaklandcommunity.org](http://www.oaklandcommunity.org).

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*nce, and the Moral Life of the Inner City*. New

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