Mayors, Slums, and Universities: Urban Renewal, Civic Leadership, and Community Response in Two Connecticut Cities

by

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<u>Abstract</u>

Mid-twentieth century urban renewal in the United States had a profound impact on both the physical and social landscape of urban America. The process of urban renewal literally reshaped American cities through the redevelopment and rehabilitation of entire neighborhoods, in some cases resulting in the destruction of entire city blocks in order to rebuild them as highways, parking lots, or retail centers. While less apparent than these physical changes, however, the social impacts of urban renewal were even more consequential. In implementing urban renewal policies in their cities, the ways in which civic leaders engaged with their communities was fundamentally altered. Depending on how community engagement was undertaken in different cities, the response of citizens to urban renewal projects could be drastically different. This thesis explores urban renewal in two Connecticut cities, Middletown and New Haven. While the cities have many parallels — in the postwar period, both were post-industrial university cities led by a young, ambitious mayor — the process of community engagement was ultimately carried out differently by civic leadership in the two cities. Consequently, the responses of the two communities to their respective city's urban renewal policy could be drastically different, depending on the methods of community engagement employed. By exploring the reasons for these differences, as well as the varying community responses to them, this thesis draws conclusions about the ways civic leadership and community engagement shapes the actions of citizens, the outcome of urban planning projects, and the historical memory of cities, neighborhoods, and their residents.

To New Haven and Middletown:

The two cities that shaped my youth

And that will always be home,

No matter where life takes me

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There are a great many people without whom this project would never have come tor fruition, and a great inability of language with which to adequately express my appreciation for all they have done for me. So I will simply preface my comments by quoting Mayor Richard C. Lee: "You are all my friends, and for that I'm grateful."

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Introduction

A Road Map to Urban Renewal

The urban renewal movement of the mid-twentieth century changed the urban landscape of the United States on a massive scale and in a dramatic way that, arguably, has not been seen since in the United States. The federal government channeled funding and support into the modernization and redevelopment of everything from large cities to small towns across the nation, funding projects that profoundly redefined the physical and social landscape of the American city. The physical results of this redefining national project were that entire neighborhoods across the country were razed to the ground and rebuilt from scratch, often reconstituted in new forms such as retail spaces, highways, or parking lots. Less visible but more long lasting, however, were the implications of urban renewal for the philosophy of American governance and the history of local communities. For, in the process of implementing urban renewal in local communities, these projects also redefined the nature of the relationship between municipal, state, and federal levels of government, as well as that between civic leadership and local communities.

This thesis explores the ways in which different philosophies of civic leadership in urban renewal created different outcomes within local communities. To do so, it uses the cities of New Haven and Middletown, Connecticut as subjects for a comparative study of urban renewal, civic leadership, and community response. In using these two cities, the following chapters specifically investigate how different leaders, political circumstances, demographic trends, and philosophies regarding civic

leadership and community engagement resulted in dissimilar (or similar, in some respects) outcomes of urban renewal on a local level. Connecticut is, and historically has always been, a state whose municipalities retain a strong local identity, both culturally and politically. As such, Connecticut is an ideal setting for looking comparatively at mid-twentieth century urban renewal. Comparing the varying urban renewal strategies of different cities — and the differing outcomes of these strategies — provides insight into the benefits and detriments of various models of civic leadership and community engagement.

In particular, urban renewal in New Haven and Middletown supplies an especially interesting comparative case study for a number of reasons: both were early adopters of postwar urban renewal, starting their renewal projects in the early 1950s; both are largely post-industrial New England cities that, in the postwar era, were attempting to reinvent themselves to meet dramatically changing economic and social circumstances; both are home to an elite university, adding an additional institutional element to considerations of municipal urban renewal policies; and both began their urban renewal projects under the direction of a young, ambitious, and energetic mayor who aimed to bridge the relationship between their cities and the universities located within them. By exploring the motivations behind specific urban renewal projects in these two cities in a comparative fashion, this thesis develops a historical understanding of civic leadership, community engagement, and urban renewal in a way that may be useful for informing future visions of renewal and development.

New Haven and Middletown are also ripe for comparative study due to parallels and distinctions between the key political leaders associated with the beginnings of postwar urban renewal in each city, and the philosophies of civic leadership they engrained in their cities' respective political culture. Specifically, Mayor Richard C. Lee of New Haven and Mayor Stephen K. Bailey of Middletown are particularly good subjects to compare: both took office roughly around the same time and at roughly the same age; both believed strongly in the cause of urban renewal, and took advantage of the resources offered by the state and federal governments to pursue that cause; and both led small cities with prominent universities as part of their socio-political landscapes. Yet, there are important contrasts between these two mayors as well: Mayor Bailey was fundamentally an academic, whereas Lee was fundamentally a politician; Lee was a product of machine politics in a largely Democratic city, whereas a much more politically diverse polity elected Bailey in a highly contentious three-way race; Lee was in office for sixteen years, whereas Bailey was only in office for two years before stepping down to focus on his academic career. Despite these differences, however, both mayors are widely associated with urban renewal in their respective cities, and the approaches they instituted in starting urban renewal in Middletown and New Haven continue to affect the politics of urban planning in both cities today.

Owing to the differing approaches to urban renewal and community engagement instituted by these two mayors and carried out by their respective cities, urban renewal was met with different reactions by affected citizens in each city — and, often, these reactions varied even between different neighborhoods and

communities within the same city, depending on the specifics of individual renewal projects. These community responses — which in some cases developed into community resistance — and the counter-responses of civic leadership ultimately revealed the underlying motivations of municipal urban renewal policies, which often included issues of class, race, commercial interest, and the mounting tension between urban America's cities and their growing satellite suburbs during this time period. In contextualizing and studying different examples of community response, this project exposes these underlying motivators, explores the nature of political enfranchisement within the system of civic leadership, and argues for the importance of community engagement in issues of redevelopment.

In order to achieve these goals, this thesis is divided into three parts, each comprised of one to two chapters. Part I, "The Context of Urban Renewal", provides historical contextualization for the urban renewal movement in Middletown and New Haven. It begins this process with Chapter I, "From Colonies to the Cold War: Regional History Prior to Urban Renewal", which provides an overview of Middletown and New Haven history, beginning from their colonial roots and continuing to the end of World War II. This historical overview takes a special focus on the role of civic leadership in the history of each city prior to urban renewal, as the nature of civic leadership in Middletown and New Haven throughout their histories helped situate each city for the arrival of urban renewal philosophy and policies in the postwar era. Chapter II, "State Liberalism, the Baby Boom, and Suburbanization: The Historical Moment of Postwar Urban Renewal", picks up where Chapter I leaves off, in a historical sense, but transitions from local and regional history to national history

by exploring the forces behind the national emergence of urban renewal philosophy and policies. As World War II came to an end, economic factors led to changes in American society, politics, and urban demographics that made urban renewal a matter of national concern, creating the political will to support the undertaking of redevelopment projects across the nation in order to meet the demands of a changing society. These changes also created the economic means to fund such projects, but simultaneously resulted in demographic trends that generated race and class tensions that would later make the implementation of many urban renewal projects problematic.

Part II, "The Dawn of Urban Renewal", discusses the beginnings of postwar urban renewal in Middletown and New Haven, with a specific focus on the influence of mayors Stephen Bailey and Richard Lee. Chapter III, "The Age of Mayors: New Civic Leadership in the Age of Urban Renewal", provides brief biographies of Bailey and Lee, elaborating on their personal histories, the differences in their academic and political training, and the ways in which their respective rises to office shaped the context of municipal politics in which they operated. In doing so, the chapter also explores the varying influences behind each mayor's philosophies about community engagement and urban renewal, laying the foundation for a deeper understanding of the differences in urban renewal policy in Middletown and New Haven. Chapter IV, "From Philosophy to Practice: Civic Leadership, Community Engagement, and the Cities' First Renewal Projects", then charts Bailey and Lee's philosophies in action through an exploration of the civic leadership and community engagement processes behind each city's first urban renewal project. As both mayors were pioneering urban

renewal with these early projects, the political processes they constructed would set the standards of best practice for urban renewal in their cities for decades to come.

Part III, "The Decline of Urban Renewal", consists of a chapter titled "Equal and Opposite Reactions: Urban Renewal, Civic Leadership, and Community Response". This chapter explores how, as urban renewal continued in the decades following the first projects, community response and resistance to urban renewal developed in reaction to new urban renewal tactics and a changing political atmosphere. The chapter discusses three stages of community resistance to urban renewal: early conservative resistance, coming mostly from small business owners and fiscal conservatives in the late 1950s; the intertwining of urban renewal politics and race politics as the two cities attempted to renew predominantly black neighborhoods in the 1960s, just as the civil rights movement was gaining national momentum and as racial tensions flared throughout urban America; and finally, the rise of the historic preservation movement in the 1970s and its acceptance as an authoritative alternative to redevelopment as a method of urban renewal by the late 1970s and early 1980s. The chapter closes with a consideration of what the various iterations of community response and resistance reveal about urban renewal. In comparing community resistance between cities, interest groups, and across time periods, this final chapter explores the means by which community groups are able to gain access to political dialogue and influence civic leadership, as well as the ways in which exclusionary leadership can lead to radical acts of direct action from dissenting communities.

The thesis concludes with an Epilogue, entitled "What You Do is Not More Important Than How You Do It", that provides a brief overview of the present state of urban renewal in New Haven and Middletown and applies the historical analysis laid out in the rest of the project to an understanding of the cities' current redevelopment efforts. In this way, the Epilogue lays bare the ways that the urban renewal philosophies and methods first created and implemented in the 1950s continue to affect the historical, social, and physical landscapes of the two cities. In doing so, the Epilogue also locates the story of mid-twentieth century urban renewal in the broader context of Middletown and New Haven's histories. As the history of each city dates back over three and a half centuries, however, the best starting point for understanding the place of postwar urban renewal in the broader history of these two Connecticut cities is to discuss their histories leading up to the era of urban renewal — that is, from their time as colonies up until the Cold War.

Part I

The Context of Urban Renewal

Chapter I

From Colonies to the Cold War: Regional History Prior to Urban Renewal

Mid-twentieth century urban renewal, civic leadership, and community engagement in Connecticut occurred at an intersection of multiple narratives of history. The national historical moment in which urban renewal was happening affected the course of events in Middletown and New Haven as well, and will be discussed further in the following chapter. This national historical moment of urban renewal, however, begs the question of why urban renewal happened in New Haven and Middletown specifically. For when urban renewal took hold in these cities in the postwar period, it was only the latest development in a region with over three centuries of history — history that provided its own context for undertaking urban renewal. It is therefore also important to locate the urban renewal efforts of Middletown and New Haven within the regional history of New England as well as the local histories of each city.

Economics has been the driving force behind much of southern New England's history. The region's history up until the moment of postwar urban renewal can be divided into two broad economic periods: a maritime period, predating the American Revolution and lasting through the early decades of the nineteenth century; and an industrial period, spanning from the end of the maritime period to World War II. Both these periods were bookended by times of rapid and drastic change, brought on largely by economic factors that, in turn, impacted other aspects of life — such as social fabric, material conditions, demographics, and politics — in southern New

England's cities. The end of southern New England's industrial period coincided with a broader national transition into the postwar period that will be discussed further in the following chapter and set the backdrop for urban renewal as it occurred in Middletown and New Haven. Yet, this transition differed from previous transitions these two cities had undergone, particularly in the degree and source of civic leadership guiding the transition. It is therefore necessary to understand the cities' previous economic periods and their accompanying transitions, in order to give a full context as to why urban renewal happened when and how it did.

New England's maritime period had its beginnings thanks in large part to the colonial economic strategies and trade regulations imposed by England on its North American and Caribbean holdings. Unlike the plantation colonies, New England lacked the ability to produce primary agricultural products and was therefore not as immediately economically productive as some of her sister colonies; however, New Englanders parlayed this initial deficiency into a long-term economic benefit. To remain economically viable, the New England colonies became the center of shipping, processing, financing and provisioning for the plantation colonies. As early as the mid-seventeenth century, England's mid-Atlantic and Caribbean colonies came to rely on New England merchants to supply them with basic provisions that their monoculture commercial agriculture failed to cultivate. New England came to dominate primary product processing, importing products such as raw sugar, molasses, and wheat and turning them into refined white sugar, rum, and flour.[1]

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[1] Margaret Ellen Newell, "The Birth of New England in the Atlantic Economy: From Its Beginning to 1770", in *Engines of Enterprise: An Economic History of New England*, ed. Peter Temin (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press,

While English merchants complained about New England's colonial trade dominance as early as the 1640s, the English government adopted a remarkably *laissez-faire* attitude towards New England's economic affairs. In fact, those restrictions England did place on colonial trade in the late seventeenth century primarily regulated foreign ships and goods, thereby giving New England merchants a competitive advantage in the colonial markets and creating a vibrant black market for smuggled goods. By 1700, these merchants had become a key hub in the English system of transatlantic trade, serving as both consumers and competitors to English manufacturers and merchants.[2]

Although the seventeenth century saw the emergence of New England's dominance of English Atlantic trade, Connecticut initially lagged behind its neighboring colonies Massachusetts and Rhode Island in developing its colonial merchant network. By 1708, Connecticut's neighbors had developed extensive overseas trade linkages, collectively sending hundreds of ships to various colonial trading ports. While Connecticut operated twenty oceangoing vessels from its ports in 1708, its merchants were still reliant on Massachusetts's ports for most of their international trade, and the colony could only independently sponsor two ships in overseas commercial ventures in that same year.[3]

In fact, neither Middletown nor New Haven began to emerge as a major trading port until the 1750s. At this time, Middletown's location as an inland deep-

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2000), 44-45, 46, 47. As a testament to New England's product processing prowess, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island combined had more rum distilleries than all other North American colonies combined — a fact that would remain true until the 1770s.

[2] Newell, 15, 50-52.

[3] Newell, 46, 50.

water port on the Connecticut River — a major commercial artery for the region — began to attract merchants who recognized its potential as a crucial trade link between interior New England and the West Indies. Connecticut cattle and timber were exported in exchange for Caribbean spices, sugar, fruit, and British manufactured goods.[4] The rise of Middletown as a merchant hub attracted many families who would become the city's ruling class of gentry "barons". It was during this time period, for example, that the Alsop family migrated from New York and that Middletown resident Elijah Hubbard was able to establish a great merchant dynasty.[5] This merchant boom would continue into the beginning of the nineteenth century, continuing to attract such men as Samuel Russell — whose merchant firm Russell & Company traded opium, silk, and tea between Middletown and China, India, Turkey, and Europe between 1818 and 1831[6] — to settle in the city.

The merchantmen of Middletown were able to acquire enormous fortunes during the waning years of New England's maritime period, between the mid-eighteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth century. For example, when Richard Alsop passed away in 1776, his estate was worth over £35,000 at a time when £50 bought a house and a small plot of land.[7] These new merchant empires saw the construction of wharves and warehouses along the banks of the Connecticut, and

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[4] Peter Hall, "Middletown: Streets, Commerce, and People, 1650-1981", in *Wesleyan University Sesquicentennial Papers*, ed. Joseph W. Reed (Lunenburg, Vermont: The Stinehour Press, 1981), 9.
[5] Ronald Schatz, "The Barons of Middletown and the Decline of the North-Eastern Anglo-Protestant Elite", *Past and Present* 219, no. 1 (2013): 165-166, http://past.oxfordjournals.org/content/219/1/165.full.pdf+html; Hall, 9.
[6] Elizabeth A. Warner, *A Pictorial History of Middletown* (Virginia Beach, VA: The Donning Company Publishers, 1990), 20-21.
[7] Warner, 20.

artisans and storekeepers began to build their businesses between Main Street and the river. [8] Mansions constructed with merchant money began spring up around Middletown — first by the river, such as deKoven House in the 1790s, and later along High Street, such as Russell House in the 1820s.[9] The influx of merchant wealth and migrants — coupled with ecological factors — began to shift the city away from its traditional focus on agriculture and toward trade, thereby shifting social power and political influence from the landed gentry, who had previously been regarded as the town fathers, to the merchantmen barons of Middletown:

> The economic revolution that had transformed Middletown from a sleepy farming village to a busy international port had overturned the whole order of society and values. The old landed families that had always led the town affairs…were being pushed aside by newcomers whose wealth was based in trade. The ownership of a farm, which had once been the goal towards which nearly all young men aspired, was becoming less and less possible as land became scarcer and farming itself became less profitable. By the first decade of the nineteenth century, Middlesex County was in the grips of a full-blown ecological disaster caused by overpopulation and intensive commercialized agriculture…The destruction of woodlands by money-hungry farmers supplying demand for cordwood in New York and timber in the West Indies, and the ruination of pasturelands by sheep — which New England farmers were raising in great numbers to

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[8] Hall, 9.

[9] City of Middletown, Connecticut Department of Planning and Zoning, "27 Washington Street — Clarence Wadsworth House; Benjamin Williams House / Residence / 1791-1797 (MHAR Card #277)", accessed January 24, 2015, http://www.middletownplanning.com/GMPT_HAR/GMPT_HAR_277.pdf; Warner, 21-22.

supply the nation's new and emerging textile industry
— were causing drainage and erosion problems.[10]

Thus while its arrival had been delayed compared to Massachusetts and Rhode Island, once the maritime period came to Middletown, it came in a profound way, reshaping the economics, social structure, politics, geography, and ecology of the city.

Unlike Middletown, New Haven was conceived by its founding fathers — Theophilus Eaton and Reverend John Davenport[11] — as a maritime trading colony from the outset. The situation of New Haven Harbor and its suitability for commerce — the harbor extends four miles in from Long Island Sound with a mouth about a mile across and was deep enough to accommodate merchant ships of the day — were, in fact, the primary reasons the first colonists who landed on April 24, 1638 chose to settle New Haven.[12] In short order, the colonists began establishing trade linkages with both the mother country and other English colonial holdings, including Boston, New York, Virginia, Barbados, the Azores, and the Dutch colony of New Netherland.[13] By 1641, merchant captains were even purchasing land in Delaware Bay, which was then under Dutch and Swedish control, on which to establish trading outposts for New Haven Colony. This venture was, however, short-lived. Despite pledging "all due allegiance" to the Dutch, by 1643 the New Haven merchants had

[10] Hall, 11-12.

[11] Henry Howe, *An Outline History of New Haven, (Interspersed with Reminiscences)* (New Haven: O. A. Dorman, 1884), 3.

[12] J. L. Rockey, *History of New Haven County, Connecticut*, vol. 1 (New York: W. W. Preston & Co., 1892), 98; Robert J. Leeney, *Elms, Arms & Ivy: New Haven in the Twentieth Century* (Montgomery, Alabama: Community Communications, Inc., 2000), 14.

[13] Rockey, 104; Thomas Rutherford Trowbridge, Jr., *History of the Ancient Maritime Interests of New Haven* (New Haven: Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor, Printers, 1882), 16.

been driven from their Delaware Bay outposts by force, at great financial loss to the fledgling colony. Subsequent attempts to arbitrate the matter with the Scandinavians failed.[14]

The failure of the Delaware Bay outpost marked the beginning of the end for New Haven's short-lived and unsuccessful first maritime period. In the words of late nineteenth-century New Haven historian Thomas Trowbridge, Jr.: "From the settlement of the colony till [the mid-seventeenth century], the history of New Haven's maritime interests is but little more than a sad detail of disaster, misadventure, and ill-fortune."[15] By fall 1646, New Haven's colonists were desperate to save their failing merchant venture. They gathered up "whatever was merchantable" and loaded it onto a 150-ton ship bound for England. The combined value of the cargo was worth some £5,000, a fortune Trowbridge estimates to have been worth one quarter of the colony's wealth at the time.[16] The ship was so heavily laden that it rocked from side to side, leading the captain to declare she would be their grave — a prediction that would sadly prove prophetic. After departing from New Haven, the ship was never heard from again, save for the apparition of a "phantom ship" in the harbor the following June that was taken by the colonists as a heavenly sign that their venture had ended in tragedy.[17] This last desperate endeavor had proved the most disastrous of all, literally sinking the grandiose ambitions of the fledgling colony and its founders. The loss of the great ship and its fortune left New Haven without the resources to undertake any further foreign trade ventures, forcing

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[14] Trowbridge, 13-15.
[15] Trowbridge, 16.
[16] Rockey, 105; Trowbridge, 17-18.
[17] Howe, 9.

the discouraged colonists to attempt agriculture. The colony's location had been chosen for its harbor, however, and not its soil, which proved so infertile that consideration was given to abandoning the colony.[18] New Haven's first maritime period thus came to a disastrous conclusion.

The city would not undertake significant maritime commerce again until well into the latter half of the eighteenth century, around the same time as Middletown began to develop its merchant dynasties. In the interim, life in New Haven was "poor, provincial, and raw".[19] Many of the ambitious founding merchantmen either died or left, and New Haven Colony was reluctantly merged with Connecticut Colony.[20] The founding of Yale College — named for Elihu Yale whose father, David, was one of New Haven's original settlers[21] — in 1701 and its relocation to the city in 1717 served as New Haven's only significant achievement during these "Lean Years".[22] While neighboring colonies such as Massachusetts and Rhode Island blazed ahead with their merchant endeavors, New Haven — along with the rest of Connecticut, as discussed above — lagged behind in its maritime pursuits.

The 1760s saw the dawn of New Haven's second maritime era, this time in earnest, paralleling the maritime fortunes of other places in Connecticut and throughout New England. The cession of Canada to Britain in 1763 following the Seven Years' War opened up a new trading market and helped the city redevelop its merchant maritime interests, and by the eve of the Revolution, some thirty ships were

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[18] Howe, 9; Trowbridge, 19.
[19] Elizabeth Mills Brown, *New Haven: A Guide to Architecture and Urban Design* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 1.
[20] Howe, 6.
[21] Howe, 9.
[22] Brown, 1.

departing New Haven annually bound for foreign ports. Accordingly, the volume of trade increased astronomically: in 1750, exports were valued at only a few hundred dollars; by the year ending May 1774, $142,000 in exports originated in New Haven. To paraphrase Trowbridge, the ambitious dreams of New Haven's founders were finally being realized.[23]

By the turn of the nineteenth century, in fact, New Haven had surpassed the wildest dreams of its merchant founders. While New Haven ships ventured primarily to the West Indies, they could be found plying the waters of "every sea", making the city a truly international port, and these international ventures proved hugely profitable. Indeed, possibly the most successful endeavor of an American ship during the time period was undertaken by the New Haven ship, the *Neptune*. Upon returning from a three-year around-the-world voyage in July of 1799, her customs duties alone totaled $75,000 — approximately 125 percent of the civil tax revenue of Connecticut at the time. All told, the *Neptune* netted a $200,000 profit from this expedition.[24]

The newfound trade wealth of both Middletown and New Haven would have implications reaching far beyond the maritime period. The prosperity of both cities attracted shopkeepers, artisans, and early industrialists to settle in the two cities. The landscapes of the cities, likewise, changed to accommodate their growing populations and diversifying commercial and social activity. As mentioned above, mansions, warehouses, and shops began to populate downtown Middletown, and new streets such as Broad Street were laid out to meet the new demands on the area.[25]

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[23] Howe, 11; Trowbridge, 34.
[24] Howe, 19.
[25] Hall, 22.

Meanwhile, New Haven began to expand during what architectural historian Elizabeth Mills Brown called "the formative moment in New Haven's physical history, a time of enormous florescence and urban creation which laid the base on which the 19th-century city developed."[26] All this growth and development, fueled largely from trade profits, would prove to be extremely fortuitous for the two cities, as the golden age of New England's maritime era was about to come to an end and the economic landscape of New England was about to shift dramatically.

New England's maritime era was reaching its peak around the turn of the nineteenth century. Liberated from the colonial trading restrictions of the British Empire, New England merchants now had unbridled access to a global market. From the wealth of this newfound merchant prosperity, however, were sewn the seeds of the decline of the maritime era. As early as the 1780s and 1790s, merchants and small traders were beginning to invest their earnings in industrial manufacturing.[27] By 1800, small industry was beginning to emerge throughout New England, including textile mills along the Connecticut River, wooden clock factories in New Haven, and metal works elsewhere in Connecticut.[28] As the maritime boom and developing industry attracted more people to places like Middletown and New Haven, crowding increased, further leading to the development of the industrial sector as the region's principal means of economic output, in turn encouraging more migration to New England. Meanwhile, New England cities that attempted to continue focusing on agriculture and remain "aloof" from industry soon found themselves falling behind

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[26] Brown, 2.
[27] Newell, 64.
[28] Winifred Barr Rothenberg, "The Invention of American Capitalism: The Economy of New England in the Federal Period", in Temin, 93.

their neighbors, as the younger generation migrated to centers of industry and commerce.[29] This investment in early industry would come to pay economic dividends as the sector matured throughout the nineteenth century: "By 1850, New England had invested 75 percent more capital, employed 75 percent more workers, and produced 45 percent more output per manufacturing firm than the mid-Atlantic region, which had three times the population."[30]

New England's burgeoning industry would prove to be especially crucial as maritime trade started to decline in the second decade of the 1800s. Westward expansion of the United States meant that the agricultural center of the nation shifted south and west, away from New England, and the domestic demand for manufactured goods increased to a market spanning the North American continent.[31] This shift to the interior as a market for manufactured goods spurred New England industry, competing with maritime trade for economic dominance of the region. While new international trade with East Asia helped New England shipping rebound from the Revolution,[32] looming trade conflicts with France and Britain, misguided Democratic-Republican responses to them, and eventually full-blown war helped deal a deathblow to the golden age of New England maritime trade.

During the late 1790s and early 1800s, both British and French naval forces harassed ostensibly neutral American shipping. While Federalist President John Adams increased the size and capabilities of the fledgling United States Navy (USN) to defend American shipping interests during the Quasi War with France (1798-1800)

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[29] Rothenberg, 91-93.
[30] Rothenberg, 93.
[31] Rothenberg, 107.
[32] Rothenberg, 105.

— with reasonable success, showing both the efficacy and importance of investment in protection of shipping against abuses by European powers[33] — the election of 1800 saw Adams lose the presidency to Democratic-Republican Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson and his fellow Democratic-Republicans viewed standing militaries with suspicion as tools of possible government tyranny.[34] Thus, despite the proven success of the USN in defending American shipping, one of Adams's last acts as president was to strategically reduce the size of the USN in order to prevent its wholesale dissolution by the incoming Jefferson Administration.[35]

Following the renewal of open hostilities between Britain and France in 1803, impressment of American sailors by the British Royal Navy (RN) increased dramatically: between the 1803 and 1812, approximately 6,000 Americans were forced into RN service, leading to a deterioration in trade and diplomatic relations between the two nations.[36] Despite the ever-increasing abuses of American shipping, President Jefferson and the Democratic-Republican Congress continued to weaken the USN, leaving American merchants with little protection on the high seas. Instead they passed the Embargo Act of 1807 in December,[37] prohibiting American exports to Europe.

The effects of the embargo were disastrous for the maritime-driven New England economy. For over a year after its passage, no merchant ships left New

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[33] Jeremy Black, *The War of 1812 in the Age of Napoleon* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009), 25; Jonathan R. Dull, *American Naval History, 1607-1865: Overcoming the Colonial Legacy* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012), 44.
[34] Black, 17.
[35] Dull, 45-46.
[36] Dull, 52.
[37] Howe, 19.

Haven. On the first anniversary of the Act's passage, an estimated 1,400 New Haveners — about one quarter of the city's population — participated in a procession mourning the death of American commerce, ending in a rally on the New Haven Green.[38] Middletown, likewise, suffered greatly from the effects of the embargo. For the entire two years the embargo was in effect, merchant ships were moored idly in the Connecticut River, cut off from their typical European markets. Consequently, some citizens began to look for labor outside New England, and entire families departed Middletown in search of non-maritime opportunities.[39] These economic hardships and the ensuing outmigration intensified underlying social tensions, and "Jefferson's Embargo" undoubtedly heightened previous discrimination against Democratic-Republicans in Middletown[40] — which, like much of New England, was heavily Federalist. Thus, the embargo not only hurt the economies of New England trading ports such as New Haven and Middletown, but stressed their social and political fabric as well.

The lifting of the embargo was met with great relief in New England's port cities. In one of his finals acts as president, Jefferson repealed the embargo in early 1809. This relief would be short-lived, however, as the nation was soon thrust into the War of 1812. The war proved to be extremely unpopular in New England, as it dealt a mortal blow to what little was left of the region's weakened maritime commerce.[41] Jefferson's successor, Democratic-Republican President James Madison, continued the party policy of dismantling the USN leading up to the war. By the eve of war, the

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[38] Howe, 19-20.
[39] Warner, 33.
[40] Hall, 12-15.
[41] Ibid.

Madison Administration had left the USN wholly unprepared for conflict. In December 1811, only three frigates were in active service, with five remaining frigates each taking an estimated six months and between $60,000 to $120,000 apiece to put into active service. Furthermore, Congress canceled a program to add ships of the line and more frigates to the USN's fleet as late as January 27, 1812.[42] This left the USN woefully unprepared to face the RN, the world's most powerful navy with 110 ships of the line, four 50-gun ships, and 134 frigates in service. Despite scoring some early naval victories, the USN was soon contained. By early 1813, over 100 RN ships patrolled the American coast; by November 1813, everything south of the Long Island Sound was blockaded; by April 1814, the entire American coastline was under British blockade.[43] The RN had quickly overwhelmed the USN's limited oceanic capabilities, nullifying it as a military threat on the high seas. With the elimination of the USN as a credible military threat and a British blockade of the entire American coastline, maritime trade — both foreign and domestic — became impossible for New England merchants until the war ended in 1815.

Ports such as Middletown and New Haven were all but ruined by the one-two punch of the embargo and the war, and New England's maritime trade would never again regain the success of its golden years. By 1816, capital investment started to shift away from the region's bruised and battered maritime ventures of trade, fishing, and whaling, and toward New England's growing import-substitution industries such

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[42] [42] Paul Hamilton, "Secretary of the Navy Hamilton to Langdon Cheves, Chairman of the Naval Committee", in *The Naval War of 1812: A Documentary History*, vol. I, ed. William S. Dudley (Washington: Naval Historical Center, Department of the Navy, 1985), 56-57; A.T. Mahan, *Sea Power in its Relations to the War of 1812*, vol. I (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1905), 261-263.
[43] Dull, 55, 57-58.

as cotton textiles.[44] This surge in industrial investment led to an appreciable gap between higher industrial wages and lower maritime wages. By 1830, "an unskilled seaman made about $8.66 a month, whereas cotton mill operatives earned an average of 58 cents a day at the time, which is about $14 a month for a six-day week and a four-week month."[45] This meant quality sailors were increasingly lured away from maritime ventures and toward the increasingly dominant industrial labor of New England, turning skilled and specialized seamen into an increasingly homogenous proletariat:

> As early as 1820, a marked deterioration was observable in the quality of crews, which signaled a measurable decline in labor productivity. Higher wages in manufacturing had begun to draw seamen back to shore, bridging the great cultural divide that has, since time immemorial, separated landlubbers and seamen, farmers and fishermen, sailors and factory hands. Which is to say that they became folded in the same, increasingly hegemonic labor market.[46]

The economic forces of national expansion, poor Democratic-Republican policy, and war had felled New England's maritime era, and the region was facing the transition from a maritime to an industrial economy.

The human and monetary capital acquired by the cities of New Haven and Middletown would be crucial to their transitions from commercial ports into industrial centers. Although Middletown had been Connecticut's leading city by 1790, with the largest population and the United States Customs port for the

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[44] Rothenberg, 105, 107.
[45] Rothenberg, 106.
[46] Rothenberg, 106-107.

Connecticut River, "[b]y the 1820s it had become clear that Middletown would never again be a major port — and perhaps not even a major Connecticut city."[47] While Hartford and New Haven both doubled their populations between 1790 and 1820, Middletown's only increased in size by fifty percent; by 1840, Hartford and New Haven each had about 14,000 residents, while Middletown had fewer than 7,000.[48] The city's new merchant elite — its "barons" — realized that serious efforts would be necessary to maintain the city's relevance within the state and the region, and Middletown's economy would need to be refocused to adapt to the new post-maritime period of New England industrialization. Thus, in 1833, Samuel Russell opened the Russell Manufacturing Company using money earned through his overseas maritime ventures. The company began to thrive in the 1840s, when it perfected industrial techniques for manufacturing elastic webbing. Russell Manufacturing would continue to be a leading industrial institution in the city for the next century of Middletown's history.[49] Other industries emerging in Middletown during the 1830s included the manufacturing of steam engines and cotton textiles, brownstone mining in neighboring Portland, and the founding of the Middlesex Mutual Assurance Company.[50]

The success of these early efforts began to pay off as Middletown's new industrial economy gained momentum: "Between 1850 and 1860, the value of Middletown's industrial output increased one hundred and forty-four percent, the

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[47] Warner, 33; Hall, 20.
[48] Hall, 20.
[49] Hall, 25; Warner, 37.
[50] Hall, 25-26; MiddleOak, "Welcome to MiddleOak", accessed January 26, 2015, http://www.middleoak.com/about.jsp.

value of capital invested in industry by one hundred and eighty-four percent, and the number of industrial workers from five hundred and sixty-six to almost twelve hundred."[51] These workers found employment at existing companies, such as Russell Manufacturing, as well as at new firms, such as Wilcox, Crittenden and Company. Founded in 1869, Wilcox, Crittenden and Company would be one of Middletown's largest employers for over seventy-five years. Specializing in marine hardware the company gained such a positive reputation that by the late nineteenth century they held an exclusive contract with the British Admiralty.[52] By the latter half of the century, the city's success began to attract more new industries, including locksmiths, silk textiles, hardware, rubber, wool, and tin. In turn, this growth saw hotels, theaters, banks, department stores, and shops emerge to meet the demands of a growing city.[53]

Middletown's barons also realized that diversification of the city's civil society would be crucial to maintaining relevancy within the state and the region. Thus, the city sought to attract a major educational institution— and the jobs, money, and prestige that would accompany it — to Middletown. These efforts, however, were not initially successful. An 1824 effort to attract the Episcopal Washington College (present day Trinity College) to Middletown was lost to Hartford, due in part to the Congregationalist biases of Middletown's population; this defeat was followed by the short but dismal tenure of Captain Alden Partridge's American Literary, Scientific and Military Academy, which failed to obtain a charter from the

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[51] Hall, 26.
[52] Warner, 65-66.
[53] Hall, 26-27.

Connecticut General Assembly (CGA) and subsequently relocated to Norwich, Vermont in 1829 where it still exists today as Norwich University.[54]

Thus, by the turn of the decade, the barons "were willing to make an offer to the once-despised Methodists[55] who were, by the late 1820s, seeking to open a college in New England that would do for their denomination what Harvard did for Unitarians, Yale for Congregationalists, Trinity for Episcopalians, and Brown for Baptists."[56] The city offered the Methodists the use of the two buildings previously occupied by Partridge's Academy — today known as North College and South College — and an endowment of $33,333.33 to match the church's contribution of $66,666.66. The Methodists accepted Middletown's offer at their May 1829 Conference in Troy, New York. By spring 1831 Wesleyan University had been chartered by the CGA, allowing it to begin classes in September of that same year.[57]

New Haven, too, began the process of industrialization around the turn of the nineteenth century, and increased its efforts as the maritime era came to a close. In 1798, Eli Whitney opened his arms factory in New Haven, which would become famous for introducing interchangeable parts in a uniform industrial production

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[54] Hall, 22-23.

[55] During this time period, the relatively new and radical sect of Methodism was generally considered offensive to broader society due to their "enthusiastic" style of worship and plain, uneducated manner of preaching. For more on early American Methodism, see Ann Taves, "Shouting Methodists", in *Fits, Trances, & Visions: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999), 76-117.

[56] Hall, 23.

[57] "Guide to the Laban Clark Papers, 1794-1935", accessed March 6, 2013, Special Collections & Archives, Olin Memorial Library, Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT, http://www.wesleyan.edu/libr/schome/FAs/cl1000-87.xml; Connecticut General Assembly, "An Act To Incorporate The Wesleyan University, Passed, May 1831", in *Charter And By-Laws Of Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn.* (Middletown, Conn.: Pelton & King, Printers and Bookbinders, 1894); Hall, 22-24.

model.[58] The opening of the Whitney Arms Company marked the beginning of the city's career as a center of arms manufacturing. In addition to arms manufacturing, the first half of the century saw a wide diversity of industries appear in New Haven. By midcentury, everything from clocks and matches to rubber boots and industrial hardware was being produced in New Haven.[59] Yet, of all these industries, the city's leading industrialist at this time was James Brewster, who founded his carriage company in 1827. Brewster's carriages became exceedingly popular, and "[b]y 1860 New Haven was carriagemaker to the world."[60] As Samuel Russell had in Middletown, Brewster used his wealth to improve the city: he helped bring the first railroad to New Haven in the 1830s,[61] for example, benefiting both his company and the city's economy as a whole.

By the latter half of the nineteenth century, New England's industrial period was in full bloom, stimulated by new technologies. Railroads had first come to New England in the 1830s, and had been built throughout the region by the 1840s. By the 1870s, "[r]ailroads had tied the country together," giving New England industrialists access to materials and markets around the country.[62] The continuing growth of industrial New England changed the demographic, social, and economic landscape of the region: "By 1880 the rapid growth of manufacturing industries had created an urban and industrialized economy substantially different from the rest of the

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[58] Brown, 2.
[59] Everett G. Hill, *A Modern History of New Haven and Eastern New Haven County*, vol. 1 (New York: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1918), 175-176; Brown, 2.
[60] Hill, 175; Brown, 2.
[61] Brown, 2.
[62] Peter Temin, "The Industrialization of New England", in Temin, 147, 152.

country."[63] New England accounted for over 20 percent of the nation's manufacturing workers — with 40 percent of the region's workforce in the sector, compared to the national average of 20 percent — despite being home to a mere 8 percent of the American population. The region's advanced level of industrialization compared to the rest of the nation led to greater economic prosperity. By 1880, the average income per person in New England was 34 percent greater than the national average, even after adjusting for regional differences in the cost of living. Consequently, New England's job market continued to increase, at least through the first two decades of the twentieth century. From 1880 to 1920, manufacturing employment in the region grew from 647,000 to 1.35 million.[64]

As with the rest of New England, Middletown and New Haven saw their industrial economies grow increasingly prosperous and diverse as the latter half of the nineteenth century gave way to the beginning of the twentieth century. New Haven's growth during this period stemmed from four primary sources, according to Brown.[65] The first was the growth of the city's arms industry, following in the footsteps of the Whitney Arms Company. In 1861, a former shirt maker named Oliver Winchester founded the New Haven Arms factory, later to be renamed the Winchester Repeating Arms Company. By 1870, Winchester was building "one of the largest factories in the state" — one of many New Haven factories that occupied entire city blocks, each employing hundreds of workers. The manufacturer of "the gun that won the West"

[63] Joshua L. Rosenbloom, "The Challenges of Economic Maturity: New England, 1880-1940", in Temin, 153.
[64] Rosenbloom, 155, 158, 160.
[65] Brown, 3.

soon grew to become the city's largest industry. Within a half-century, there were as many as five major arms manufacturers located in New Haven.[66]

The second driver of the city's growth was the consolidation of the regional railroad systems into a single company, based out of New Haven. In 1872, all the lines passing through the city were consolidated into the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad, colloquially known simply as the New Haven Railroad. The New Haven Railroad controlled the crucial rail lines through Connecticut that linked New York and Boston. As such, New Haven seemed a reasonable location between the two dominant northeast cities in which to headquarter the regional rail system.[67] In addition to providing jobs with the railroad itself, having the regional system based in the city presumably benefitted New Haven industry greatly as well, further stimulating the local economy.

The third source of growth was the establishment of the Southern New England Telephone Company. In the late 1870s, the world's first commercial telephone exchange was created in the city. The New Haven District Telephone Company opened on February 21, 1878 — with a mere forty-seven subscribers. From its meager start, the service grew quickly. By 1880, it had become the Connecticut Telephone Company, serving cities across the state. In 1890, the venture was reincorporated as the Southern New England Telephone Company, and by 1918 its subscription had grown beyond 130,000 using 146,164 telephones to place up to 705,564 phone calls a day.[68]

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[66] Brown, 3; Leeney, 20; Hill, 175.
[67] Hill, 175; Hall, 208.
[68] Hall, 211-213.

The final source of New Haven growth was the expansion of Yale. Throughout the nineteenth century, the once-humble college expanded into a national university, with the establishment of numerous graduate and professional programs throughout the 1800s and into the early decades of the 1900s, including medical, divinity, and law schools, the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (which, in 1861, awarded the first Ph.D. in the United States), and a nursing school. By 1887, an act of the CGA officially changed Yale's name from "Yale College" to "Yale University" as the combined student-faculty population quickly approached three thousand, making it one of the city's largest employers.[69] Thus, New Haven not only expanded in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but experienced growth in cutting edge sectors such as repeating firearms, railroads, telecommunications, and academia.

Middletown's civic institutions also thrived during this time. In 1895, Middlesex Hospital was incorporated. The hospital was initially slow to grow and gain resources, as at the turn of the twentieth century, many people remained skeptical of hospitals. By 1904, though, Middlesex Hospital had finally opened its doors and, on its opening day, was credited with saving the life of a local quarryman who had been trapped beneath a locomotive. Having earned the community's trust, the hospital quickly expanded. Its first addition — a surgical wing — was built a mere two months after it opened, and within sixteen years the hospital had added

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[69] Yale University, "History", accessed January 26, 2015, http://www.yale.edu/about/history.html; Yale University, *The Yale Corporation: Charter and Legislation* (New Haven: Yale University, 1976), http://www.yale.edu/about/University-Charter.pdf, 20; Brown, 3.

wards for contagious diseases, pediatrics, and x-ray facilities. In addition, the hospital added a training program for nurses in 1908.[70]

Another defining Middletown civic institution, Wesleyan University, was also expanding during this time. Under the tenure of President Joseph Cummings, who served from 1857 to 1880, College Row was completed, with the addition of Rich Hall (today the Patricelli '92 Theater), Memorial Chapel, and Judd Hall to the existing North and South College buildings. Additional construction continued through the turn of the century and into the 1920s, including Fayerweather Gymnasium, Scott Laboratory (today the Allbritton Center), Van Vleck Observatory, and Olin Memorial Library.[71] In addition to expanding its campus, Wesleyan expanded its academic offerings:

> Between 1858 and 1869, the curriculum was enlarged, more professors were hired (five more between 1871 and 1876), and advanced work in a number of subjects, such as science laboratories and modern languages, were offered. By 1872 three courses of study at Wesleyan were available: Classical (A.V.), Latin Scientific (Ph.B.), and Scientific (B.S.).[72]

Thus, while Middletown's expansion was perhaps not as advanced as New Haven's, it too was a city experiencing economic and institutional growth in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Attracted by higher standards of living and demand for industrial labor, the population of New England swelled around the turn of the twentieth century.

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[70] Warner, 69-70.
[71] Warner, 66-68.
[72] Warner, 67.

Between 1880 and 1920, the region's population grew from roughly 4 million to about 7.4 million, driven largely by an influx of foreign immigrants. By 1920, roughly one quarter of the region's population was foreign-born, about twice the national average. In some cities, such as New Haven, that proportion was closer to one third; in others, as much as 40 percent of the population was foreign-born. Yet, these numbers, while showing the massive influence of foreign immigration on New England demographics, discount the influence of immigrants' first-generation children. Factoring in that population, immigrants and their children represented a full 62 percent of New England's 1920 population, compared to 38 percent nationally. This influx of foreign immigration made southern New England's already densely populated urban industrial centers even more crowded. In 1880, prior to the influx of immigrants, 40 percent of Connecticut's population already lived in urban areas, significantly more urban than the national average of 28 percent. By 1940, 68 percent of Connecticut residents were urbanites.[73]

The economic boom attracted newly arrived European immigrants to both Middletown and New Haven, providing labor to the cities' great industrial factories. In Middletown, these immigrants began arriving at a time when such labor was needed to meet the demands of the city's growing industry. They did not yet, however, migrate in such large numbers as to upset the social, cultural, and political *status quo*. The immigrants were thus welcomed with open arms in Middletown, unlike in some other northeast cities.[74] As early as 1820, the Irish were the first ethnic group to arrive en masse, and by 1850 about one quarter of the city's population was

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[73] Rosenbloom, 173-175.
[74] Hall, 27-28.

Irish. [75] The Yankee barons of Middletown welcomed the new immigrants, encouraging them to form their own churches and other community organizations. The barons assisted their new Irish neighbors in these endeavors: in 1841, Henry deKoven willed land for St. John's Roman Catholic Church. The existence of St. John's served to further attract more Irish immigrants to Middletown, and by 1850 they had outgrown the original St. John's building. Aimee Alsop — wife of Richard Alsop IV and a Swiss-Catholic immigrant herself[76] — donated $500 for the construction of a larger Irish-Catholic church, and Charles Richard Alsop donated the necessary land. By 1852, the new St. John's — built from donated Portland brownstone — had been erected at the north end of Main Street.[77]

By the latter half of the nineteenth century, an increasingly diverse group of immigrants were arriving in Middletown, including Germans, Swedes, Jews, Poles, and Sicilians.[78] These new immigrants received the same warm welcome from the city's barons as their Irish predecessors. It is worth considering, however, that this hospitality and assistance may have also been an effort to keep order in a city beginning to show social strain under the weight of its new — and increasingly foreign — immigrant populations:

> 'The foreign population is increasing at a very rapid rate and the . . . overcrowding is likely to become a menace to our city, both morally and physically . . . Certain sections . . . are teeming with children and already the cry is raised of the lawlessness among the

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[75] Warner, 38.
[76] Hall, 28.
[77] Warner, 100.
[78] Warner, 101; Schatz, 173; Hall, 30.

growing boys,' declared Mrs. Samuel Russell Jr. the
year her son was elected mayor [1908].[79]

In response to the threat to social order these new immigrants presented, Mr. and Mrs. Russell founded the Social Service League, which provided charitable social support and advocacy for the city's immigrant populations.[80]

The welcome these new European immigrants received from average Middletown residents, however, was less hospitable than that of the barons. Some of the new immigrants, such as the Greeks and the Melillesi Sicilians,[81] did not necessarily come to Middletown with the intention of settling permanently, but rather of earning money to buy land and raise a family back in their homelands. They saw their residency in Middletown as temporary, and were therefore less inclined to assimilate into the community than other immigrants. This tendency of some immigrants against assimilation, combined with the fact that English was not their native tongue, meant that they were often passed over by employers in favor of Irish-Americans, who were more established in the city and did not have to overcome a language barrier.[82] The continued prejudice against these new immigrants led some to join the radical labor union Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), and Italian-American IWW members were responsible for a 1912 strike at the Russell Manufacturing Company.[83] Historian Peter Hall argues that the failure of this strike, somewhat counter intuitively, convinced the Melillesi to consider forming their own

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[79] Schatz, 173-174.
[80] Schatz, 173.
[81] Most of Middletown's Italian immigrants hailed from the town of Melilli, on the island of Sicily.
[82] Hall, 30-32; Warner, 101.
[83] Hall, 33-34.

enclave in Middletown: "The failure of the strike doubtless forced those involved to recognize that there were neither enough radicals nor enough Italians in Middletown for the Melillesi to make it their own on their own terms. If they were going to stay, they would have to do so as Americans."[84]

While many Melillesi did come to settle in Middletown permanently, the initial cultural divisions continued, as the transplanted Sicilians attempted to maintain their cultural connections to their hometown. Beginning in 1908, they began holding an annual celebration for the Feast of St. Sebastian, Melilli's patron saint. The event became the centerpiece of an effort to build an Italian-Catholic church in the city, distinct from the Irish-Catholic St. John's. By 1931, St. Sebastian's Church — a replica of the St. Sebastian's in Melilli — had been constructed on Washington Street. The completion of St. Sebastian's signaled that the Melillesi were in Middletown to stay, many of them living in the "East Side" between Main Street and the Connecticut River.[85]

Immigration to New Haven followed an outline similar to that in Middletown. A few Irish had settled in the city in the first half of the nineteenth century, but Irish immigration did not happen in earnest until midcentury, following the 1842-1844 potato famine.[86] By the 1860 census, 27 percent of the city's population were foreign-born immigrants, of whom slightly less than 70 percent — 7,391 all together — were Irish; likewise, in 1870, 28.2 percent of New Haven's population were immigrants, of whom about two-thirds — 9,601 residents — were Irish. By 1880, however, the tide

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[84] Hall, 34.
[85] Warner, 113.
[86] Hill, 216.

of Irish immigration to New Haven had slowed, with that year's census showing the Irish population to have grown by only 29 persons since 1870. The first trickle of Italian immigration, however, was evident in the 1880 census — though only represented by a meager 102 residents. That number expanded rapidly, however, growing to 1,876 in 1890 and 5,262 by 1900. Likewise, Russian Jews began to arrive in New Haven in this period, with 1,160 of them being reported by the 1890 census, increasing to 3,193 by 1900. By 1910, a full 32.2 percent of New Haven's population was foreign-born, and an even greater percentage was first-generation Americans. Put together, they made New Haven's 1910 population majority immigrant. Over 20 percent of the city's population was Italian, among whom roughly half had been born in Italy. According to estimates by contemporary historian and editor of the *New Haven Register* Everett G. Hill, about one-sixth of the city was Irish and another tenth of the population was Russian — although "the number of those of the Hebrew race and Jewish faith [was] considerably more than that." Among the 87,160 immigrant or first-generation residents of New Haven were people from Austria, Canada, China, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Japan, Norway, Lithuania, Poland, Scotland, Sweden, and Turkey, in addition to the city's Irish, Italians, and Russians. Indeed, in Hill's words, "New Haven awoke to the fact that it was a Babel".[87]

Many of these immigrant groups carved out their own enclaves within New Haven. By 1918, when Hill was writing, the city had "its Ghetto, its 'Little Italy,' its

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[87] Hill, 217-220.

'New Poland' and its own Lithuania."[88] Hill's own writings go on to reflect the attitudes of Yankee New Haveners toward these various ethnic groups. The Irish were initially acceptable because "[t]hey had come to escape famine, it was understood." By the 1910 census, it appears the Irish had assimilated into New Haven fairly successfully — as they had in Middletown — and their presence "no longer jars the old resident." Rather, "New Haven some time since lost the habit of regarding the Irish as immigrants…they had grown into the life of the people through a presence of fifty years, to the extent that their alien origin had almost been forgotten."[89] The Russian Jews were likewise held in reasonable esteem. They had settled in the lower portion of Oak Street and adjoining sections of Congress Avenue — a neighborhood this thesis will discuss extensively in later chapters. Though "sensitive citizens" used to avoid this neighborhood, Hill claims, "there are more savory and cleaner spots [there] today."[90] The Italians, on the other hand, are regarded by Hill as an "invasion which has in the years since disturbed many citizens too much." Hill goes on to complain that the Italians, "needing the most room", were strongly represented in seven of the cities fifteen wards, "[changing] the character entirely" of some neighborhoods: "There was a time when many agreed that it had changed for the worse, but," he laments, "it had come about that even some particular citizens no longer despair for New Haven's Fifth and Sixth wards."[91] Thus, at the time Hill was writing, it can be seen that a grudging acceptance of the Italian presence in New

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[88] Hill, 220.
[89] Hill, 218, 220-221.
[90] Hill, 220.
[91] Hill, 218, 220.

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Haven was beginning — a first step toward their integration to the city's culture and politics.

These waves of migration to urban New England put strain on the region's urban infrastructure, causing city centers to become more and more densely packed. Consequently, residents began to develop and settle surrounding areas, turning them from detached semirural areas to suburban satellites within the orbits of urban centers.[92] The introduction of electric streetcars helped this process along, giving birth to a movement of suburbanization similar to that which would occur nationwide in the post-World War II period, albeit on a smaller scale. Those with the means to afford transportation often took advantage of the new transit system to escape the inner city, while those without the means remained in urban slums in a pattern of urban outmigration that would become familiar over the course of the twentieth century. Those who remained in New England's slums often lived in crowded and unsanitary conditions that alarmed many reformers; they were housed in tenement apartments hastily built to accommodate their arrival.[93] Technological developments, however, helped alleviate some of the hardships of urban living, and the rising real incomes of New England urbanites gave them access to these new technologies. By 1890, 58 percent of urban households in the United States had access to running water; by 1940, that number had increased to 94 percent, and 85 percent of households had indoor flush toilets. Before 1900, most houses went largely unheated

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[92] Rosenbloom, 175.
[93] Rosenbloom, 177; City Plan Commission, City of New Haven, Connecticut, "Report to the City Plan Commission, Part II: Analysis", 31 December, 1941 in Maurice Emile Henri Rotival Papers (MS 1380), Box 160, "New Canaan, New Haven", Manuscripts and Archives, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT, 174.

during the winter months; after 1900, the development of coal-powered central heating made the harsh New England winter far more bearable. By the 1930s, most American households relied on oil heating, eliminating the physical, time-consuming, and messy burden of hauling coal. Electricity, too, began emerging as part of modern urban infrastructure. In 1920, 47 percent of urban households nationwide had electric lights, 10 percent had radios, and refrigerators were just being introduced; by 1940, those rates had increased dramatically, with 96 percent of urban households having electric lights, 81 percent having radios, and 44 percent having refrigerators.[94] Thus, even for those without the means to relocate to New England's burgeoning suburbs, quality of life was largely improving.

These improvements, however, did not reach all urban slum neighborhoods. By the 1950s, Middletown's East Side neighborhood — still largely occupied by the Melillesi and their descendants — was the city's most dense and underdeveloped slum. In the words of Mayor Stephen K. Bailey, "the concentration of our urban pathology was within the four block area that I could see from my office window. I knew that slums were cancerous."[95] Surveys conducted by the Department of Public Works in early 1954 quantified Bailey's personal observations of the living conditions in the East Side neighborhood: 74.9 percent of dwelling units had no central heat and 56.2 percent of them had no hot water. The Public Works survey further concluded that the neighborhood's average population density was 70.1

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[94] Rosenbloom, 183-184.

[95] Stephen K. Bailey, "Urban Renewal: Then And Now" (lecture, Greater Middletown Chamber of Commerce, Middletown, CT, June 21, 1971), Stephen K. Bailey folder, Vertical Subject Files Collection, Special Collections & Archives, Olin Memorial Library, Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT, 3-4.

persons per acre, exacerbating the lack of amenities with crowded conditions.[96] Likewise, in New Haven, Mayor Richard C. Lee recalled visiting Oak Street houses with no electricity or gas, lit only by kerosene lamps during his failed 1951 mayoral campaign.[97] Thus, even by the standards of a half-century earlier, the residences of neighborhoods such as the East Side and Oak Street could be considered substandard.

According to the mid-twentieth century politicians who advocated for urban renewal, these slum conditions attracted bad elements of society — an argument for urban renewal designed to appeal to the socially minded reformers. Mayor Bailey, on his occasional rides with the Middletown Police Department, witnessed firsthand as the city's officers "picked up derelicts and drunks" in the East Side.[98] In New Haven's Oak Street neighborhood, where the city's first urban renewal project happened, the supposed public health and safety risks were far more at the forefront as justification for slum clearance and urban renewal. Public hearings about the project featured extensive testimony — often scripted by the city's Redevelopment Agency — from expert witnesses including the Chief of Police, City Court judges, Department of Public Health doctors, and Welfare Office officials attesting to the "undesirable" sexual deviance and prostitution, crime rates, juvenile delinquency, alcoholism and drug usage, and sexually transmitted diseases (supposedly the cause of the residents' reliance on welfare) allegedly prevalent in the area. As urban historian Mandi Isaacs Jackson notes, these types of testimony were often presented

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[96] Redevelopment Agency for the City of Middletown, Connecticut, *Preliminary Redevelopment: Middletown, 1954*, Middletown Room, Russell Library, Middletown, CT, 11, 9.
[97] Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 120.
[98] Bailey, 3-4.

in place of any justification for the highway connector that would replace the Oak Street neighborhood, or any plan to relocate and rehouse the area's displaced residents after slum clearance had occurred.[99] While some slums such as Middletown's East Side clearly did have a material need for redevelopment, "moral" reforms were also used as to justify slum clearance, often in place of more concrete, less alarmist evidence for urban renewal.

The trials and tribulations of the Great Depression compounded economic contraction that was already underway in New England.[100] Although New England's early lead in industrialization had made it a desirable market for laborers in the latter half of the nineteenth century, that early advantage began to wane in the first half of the twentieth century as competing industries developed in other parts of the country. While in 1880, the region's average income per person was 34 percent above the national average, by 1920 the gap had closed to 18 percent, and by 1950 it was less than 10 percent.[101] As other parts of the country industrialized, New England manufacturers found themselves competing against cheaper goods from elsewhere in the United States. Furthermore, the region's far distance and relatively poor transportation links to the growing interior of the nation limited its market access, and its poor endowment of natural resources drove up the cost of industrial production relative to elsewhere in the country. As a result of this increasing domestic competition, New England industry began to rapidly shed jobs as the twentieth

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[99] Mandi Isaacs Jackson, *Model City Blues: Urban Space and Organized Resistance in New Haven* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008), 40-42.
[100] Rosenbloom, 194.
[101] Rosenbloom, 158.

century progressed: "Between 1920 and 1940, manufacturing employment fell by close to 400,000 workers, dropping to just 953,000."[102]

Although the combined effects of the New Deal in the 1930s and the war economy in the 1940s helped buoy industrial employment in New England as in the rest of the country, the region also faced greater anxiety about its economic future as the war drew to a close. While the transition to a postwar economy was of great concern to the nation as a whole, as the following chapter discusses further, such nervousness was especially pronounced in New England, as economists and historians looking back on the region's industrial decline realized that its roots predated the Depression.[103] Indeed, during the war many firms had relocated to other cheaper parts of the country. A report by the president's Council of Economic Advisers on the "New England Problem" traced the problem to the federal government's extensive investment in industrial infrastructure in the South as part of the war effort. This meant newer, more modern infrastructure, combined with a supply of cheaper, nonunion labor, made the South a formidable competitor — or attractive destination for relocation — for many New England industrial firms.[104] It was clear that New England was experiencing yet another period of transition, much as it had at the end of the maritime period. Yet, cities like Middletown and New Haven had previously had barons, inventors, town fathers, and other civic leaders to lead them through the transition from maritime to industrial cities, helping them build

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[102] Rosenbloom, 160.
[103] Rosenbloom, 198.
[104] Lynn Elaine Browne & Steven Sass, "The Transition from a Mill-Based to a Knowledge-Based Economy: New England, 1940-2000", in Temin, 202.

factories and settle immigrant workers. This would not be the case for the postwar transition.

By the dawn of the postwar era, the Yankee elite and merchant barons had long since either departed Middletown and New Haven or withdrawn from their roles as civic leaders. In New Haven, this withdrawal was largely a result of the massive influx of immigrants during the first two decades of the twentieth century. The sheer number of immigrants had overcome the Yankees' numerical advantage at the ballot box, and control of political parties and public offices shifted to ethnic politicians. The beginning of the twentieth century saw many of New Haven's famous nineteenth century industrial firms succumb to increasing national competition, and many were either absorbed by larger firms or closed down altogether. Thus, New Haven's Yankee gentry had lost both their political and commercial positions of leadership, and withdrew from the social scene of a city that was increasingly alien to them.[105] In 1945, the city elected its first Italian-American mayor, William Celentano.[106] By the end of World War II, New Haven was "a city that was showing its age" and it was under Mayor Celentano that the city's Redevelopment Agency was created and the first studies for urban renewal were undertaken.[107]

In Middletown, the barons remained in a position of civic leadership longer than the Yankee industrial merchants of New Haven. At the outset of the Great

[105] Allan R. Talbot, *The Mayor's Game: Richard Lee of New Haven and the Politics of Change* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), 62.
[106] Leeney, 58.
[107] New Haven Redevelopment Agency, *Redevelopment in New Haven, 1952* (January, 1953), Edward Joseph Logue Papers (MS 959), Box 38, Folder 126, "Annual Reports, New Haven Redevelopment Agency", Manuscripts and Archives, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT, Cover Page-4.

Depression, their leadership helped the city weather the economic storm better than most. Between 1929 and 1932, the employment rate in Middletown and Portland fell by only 3 percent, compared to losses of anywhere from 25 to 41 percent elsewhere in the state. Some of this was inherent to Middletown's employers: its non-profit organizations, such as Middlesex Hospital and Wesleyan University, maintained steady employment; meanwhile, "several of the major manufacturers in Middletown produced goods such as light bulbs and auto-brake linings that were less vulnerable than most to business fluctuation".[108] The Remington Rand Corporation — which by this point had replaced the Russell Manufacturing Company as the city's largest employer[109] — likewise saw demand for its typewriters remain high.[110]

For those who did lose their jobs or otherwise fall on hard times, the mayor appointed a Committee of Unemployment — consisting largely of wives of the baron families — to alleviate their hardships. This committee raised $50,000 from the community, which they used to put unemployed men to work chopping wood to heat the homes of impoverished families, pay unemployed women to make and mend clothes for needy children, and otherwise — as the mayor declared — "not only [relieve] hunger and distress, but [conserve] the morale and manhood of our citizens".[111] This initiative by the city's barons, coupled with the city's good fortune, helped the barons maintain their civic leadership and earn the continued goodwill of the city's populace. Thus, while the rest of the state — and indeed the country — was

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[108] Schatz, 175.
[109] Schatz, 179.
[110] Schatz, 175.
[111] Ibid.

voting Democrats into office, Middletown remained in the hands of the Republican

Party thanks to a coalition between the barons and the Melillesi:

> While Democrats trounced Republicans in mayoral
> contests in Hartford, New Haven and New Britain in
> 1934, Middletown voters elected a Republican — an
> Italian-American named Leo Santangelo — as mayor
> that year. His victory demonstrated the gentry's success
> in incorporating Sicilians into their party, thus ensuring
> continued Republican dominance.[112]

Yet, the fact that the gentry barons even needed to incorporate the Melillesi into their

coalition showed the first demographic cracks in their hegemony over Middletown.

Indeed, it could be said that Santangelo's election foretold the drama that was about

to unfold in the city.

1936 proved to be a crucial year of transition for Middletown, with dramatic

events leading to the end of the barons' respect and authority in the city. Yet, at its

outset, 1936 appeared to be another good year for Middletown, compared to the

Depression gripping the rest of the world. This would not last long, however: "As late

as January and February 1936, the barons' authority appeared secure. Unemployment

rates remained low; the labourers were fairly quiet, and Russell Manufacturing's

production and profits were on the rise. As 1936 proceeded, however, the city

suffered a series of calamities that undermined the barons' power."[113] The most

pivotal of these calamities was the strike of 1,350 machinists at the Remington Rand

Factory.[114]

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[112] Schatz, 175-176.
[113] Schatz, 176.
[114] Schatz, 179.

The strike, which began on May 26, was unlike anything Middletown had ever faced before. Previous labor disputes had been mitigated by the fact that most of Middletown's industries were owned by local barons. Thus, while the barons opposed labor unions, their personal commitments to the community and their neighbors had made them more willing to compromise with their workers. Remington Rand, on the other hand, was an international firm headquartered in Delaware and publically traded on the New York Stock Exchange. Owner James H. Rand was therefore far more aggressive and less compromising with labor than his Middletown counterparts.[115] Instead, Rand sought to crush the strikes occurring in his Middletown and upstate New York factories by hiring "detective" agencies to attempt to break the strikes. The strikebreakers arrived in Middletown on Memorial Day — visibly armed with pistols and rifles — and threatened the picketing workers. By mid-July, strikers, scabs, and Rand-employed detectives were openly fighting in the streets on a regular basis. Protestors picketed in front of Mayor Santangelo's home over his inability to settle the dispute, harassing him whenever he attempted to venture outside. Finally, on March 13, 1937, the National Labor Relations Board condemned Remington Rand's actions, ordering the company to rehire four thousand workers and accusing it of putting the lives of its employees — strikers and strikebreakers alike — at risk. Rand challenged the order in court and, when his appeals had been exhausted, closed the Middletown plant.[116]

The strike marked the final blow for Middletown's barons. They had been unable to mediate the labor dispute or, failing that, maintain order within the city.

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[115] Schatz, 182.
[116] Schatz, 182-186.

Given the hostility he had experienced during the strike, Santangelo declined to run for reelection in the fall of 1936. Attempting to maintain their baron-worker coalition despite the strike and the loss of Santangelo, the municipal Republicans nominated a Polish candidate for mayor and Italians for a plethora of other city positions.[117] Yet bitterness over the strike had caused an intractable divide in the city, and the October 5, 1936 municipal elections saw Democratic candidates win every single office "from the mayor all the way down to the town constable" in a city that had previously sided with the barons and elected Republicans.[118] The upset caused President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's campaign to reconsider Connecticut, which typically voted Republican and was one of only six states carried by Herbert Hoover in the election of 1932. Forty-eight hours after Middletown's municipal elections, the Roosevelt campaign announced the president would make late-October campaign stops in Hartford, Middletown, New Haven, Bridgeport, and Stamford. On November 3, 1936, Roosevelt captured the City of Middletown, the State of Connecticut, and was reelected to a second term.[119]

Though the barons had, for generations, successfully led Middletown through economic crises, political disputes, immigration influxes, manufacturing booms and labor disputes, the events of 1936 had brought an end to their guidance of the city. "Demoralized and defeated politically, Middletown's barons gave up, abandoning first their leadership posts and, soon after, the city itself."[120] Between 1935 and 1941, the barons either passed away or departed Middletown, leaving their mansions to

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[117] Schatz, 188.
[118] Schatz, 190.
[119] Schatz, 190-193.
[120] Schatz, 194.

Wesleyan and other civic institutions. By the city's tercentennial in 1950, none of the barons' descendants helped plan the festivities, much less returned to celebrate.[121] Middletown was left to face yet another historical transition, to a post-industrial postwar city, without the benefit of the barons' leadership.

The postwar era in New England thus represented both continuity and change for the region: continuity in that New England once again showed aggressive initiative to reinvent itself to meet new economic circumstances, much as it had done with in the past; yet also change in that the barons, Yankee merchants, and town fathers who had guided the region — and the cities of New Haven and Middletown, in particular — through previous transitions were no longer at the helm. Demographic, economic, and social shifts had caused them to lose political influence and withdraw from public affairs. Concurrent with this vacuum of regional civic leadership, the New Deal and the war effort were carving out a newly expanded role for government in the broader public life and culture of the United States, as the following chapter discusses. Thus, the responsibility for formulating and realizing a vision for the city's future fell to the public officials, municipal leaders, and elected officials of New England in a manner previously unknown to the region. Urban renewal and the postwar era would be yet another transition for Middletown and New Haven, but it would be unlike any previous historical transition. From their colonial beginnings to the Cold War, the two cities had never faced a transition quite like this before.

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[121] Schatz, 194, 196.

Chapter II

State Liberalism, the Baby Boom, and Suburbanization: The Historical Moment

of Postwar Urban Renewal

While the process of urban renewal affected each individual town and city it touched across the country differently — even ones less than thirty miles apart, like Middletown and New Haven — due to variations in local social, economic, and political contexts, one unifying fact is undeniable: these local projects of urban renewal were part of a national movement, supported by the federal government. Urban renewal projects in Middletown, New Haven, and countless other municipalities across the United States each had their own local concerns to address, but this does not mean that they happened in a historical vacuum; rather, various factors encouraged the federal government to sponsor a national program of urban renewal. In order to understand the forces behind the national push for urban renewal that began in the postwar era, it is crucial to review the economic, social, and demographic forces creating the conditions for urban renewal.

As the nation's World War II efforts drew down, so too did the war economy; at the same time, millions of veterans were transitioning back to civilian life. These simultaneous and large-scale economic and demographic shifts had a profound impact on the shape of the postwar United States, merging together — along with government actions in response to said changes — to create social changes that affected how and where Americans lived in and interacted with the urban landscape.

At the same time as economic and demographic shifts were combining to produce broad social changes, the place of the federal government in American life

was changing, too. The perceived success of the massive government efforts to lead the nation out of the Great Depression and to achieve victory in World War II marked the beginning of the mid-twentieth century heyday of state liberalism — an ideology in which the government is expected to utilize its unique resources and apparatuses to progressively promote socio-economic equality — in the United States. This trend toward state liberalism fostered a belief among both the public and many members of government that large-scale government-led programs could solve any (or, at least, most) of the material and social problems that faced the nation. Many credited the government with defeating both the Great Depression and the Axis powers, creating a broad sense of confidence in the government's abilities. Compared to these previous challenges, any domestic challenge seemed easily surmountable. Many Americans could point to the tangible benefits of such programs as Social Security and the G.I. Bill in their everyday lives for giving them faith in the effectiveness of government programs. [122] Thus, a program aimed at improving the physical and social infrastructure of the nation through urban renewal seemed well within the capability of government.

Into this socio-political context President Harry S. Truman introduced a broad platform of social programs and reform initiatives that would come to characterize his administration's domestic agenda. Seeking to continue the successes of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal and the economic stimulus of wartime spending, Truman proposed this series of programs in his January 1949 State of the Union address. Declaring "[e]very segment of our population and every individual

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[122] Glenn C. Altschuler and Stuart M. Blumin, *The G.I. Bill: A New Deal for Veterans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), Kindle edition, 109-110.

has a right to expect from our Government a fair deal," Truman presented his vision

for a series of government programs that would provide a basic threshold of living

standards and opportunity for all Americans. Truman's declaration also coined a

name that stuck, and the "Fair Deal" proposed reforms to many different segments of

society, including education, healthcare, Social Security, farm subsidies, and

housing.[123] Truman's broad platform of reforms was the first of a succession of

postwar programs of state liberalism proposed by Democratic presidents over the next

two decades: John F. Kennedy would propose a "New Frontier", and President

Lyndon B. Johnson would follow with his "Great Society" reforms. Thus, seeking to

continue legacy of the prewar New Deal, the Fair Deal began a trend of postwar

platforms of state liberalism that would come to define the role of the federal

government in the mid-twentieth century United States.

These broad programs of state liberalism sought to use Keynesian economic

models to improve America's home front. Keynesian theory argues that governments

can stimulate economic growth by investing in projects such as infrastructure in order

to inject capital into the economy through direct employment of workers. Access to

this new infrastructure increases business opportunity, which further stimulates the

economy.[124] The instrument through which Keynesian economic initiatives are often

coordinated and implemented at various levels of government is cooperative

federalism, whereby the federal government incentivizes actions by the state and local

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[123] Harry S. Truman, "Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union, January 5, 1949", *The American Presidency Project*, accessed May 13, 2013, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=13293.
[124] Alan S. Blinder, "Keynesian Economics", in *The Concise Encyclopedia of Economics*, Library of Economics and Liberty, ed. David R. Henderson, http://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/KeynesianEconomics.html.

levels of government through the granting of federal funds to support various projects. Keynesian programs of cooperative federalism, as shall be discussed throughout this chapter, were mobilized to address the broad changes occurring in the postwar United States.

The simultaneous increase in labor supply (i.e. returning soldiers) paired with a decrease in military-industrial production put the nation in a precarious economic position. Recognizing the possible dangers of this return to normalcy — and in the burgeoning spirit of American state liberalism — the federal government undertook various measures to walk the nation's economy back from potential disaster. Title II of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 — colloquially known as the "G.I. Bill" — provided the first stopgap measure in national economic risk mitigation by helping veterans gain access to higher education. By 1956, Title II benefits had helped about 2.2 million veterans attend college, and another 5.6 million to receive some other type of education such as vocational training, on-the-job training, or farm training.[125]

This mass program of education served three key purposes in forestalling a postwar economic crisis: firstly, the time it took for veterans to complete their educations prevented an immediate shock of surplus labor supply to the national economy by sequestering returning soldiers in the academic bubble. Studies of G.I.

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[125] Keith Olson, "The G.I. Bill and Higher Education: Success and Surprise", *American Quarterly* 25, no. 5 (Dec., 1973): 596, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2711698; John Bound and Sarah Turner, "Going to War and Going to College: Did World War II and the G.I. Bill Increase Educational Attainment for Returning Veterans?", *Journal of Labor Economics* 20, no. 4 (October 2002): 813, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/342012.

Bill beneficiaries have shown that, on average, they stayed in school at a much higher rate and almost three years longer than their non-beneficiary peers, despite 75 percent of veterans reporting they would not otherwise have been full-time students — if students at all — without the benefits of the G.I. Bill. Yet, once given the opportunity to pursue full-time higher education, these veteran-students took their studies seriously, earning higher grades and lower dropout rates than their civilian classmates.[126]

This educational program led to the second benefit of the G.I. Bill: the emergence of a more educated workforce to serve in the postwar economy. G.I. Bill students went on to join the ranks of the professional managerial class at a much higher rate than non-beneficiaries, and enjoyed greater social mobility as a result. All told, the G.I. Bill resulted in the training of an estimated 450,000 engineers, 180,000 medical professionals, 360,000 teachers, 150,000 scientists, 243,000 accountants, 107,000 lawyers, and 36,000 clergymen. Of the millions of Title II beneficiaries, fourteen went on to become Nobel Prize laureates, two dozen would win the Pulitzer Prize, three would sit on the bench of the Supreme Court, and another three would even occupy the White House — all owing to the G.I. Bill.[127] Thus, on the scale of individual workers, a growing class of professionals, and among cultural and political leaders of the nation, the G.I. Bill's educational benefits had a profound impact on the country.

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[126] Altschuler and Blumin, 107, 94-95. Many non-veteran students even complained that their new classmates were "grinds, every one of them" and "D.A.R.s (Damned Average Raisers)" who were "hogging the honor rolls and the Deans' lists."
[127] Altschuler and Blumin, 107, 86, 106.

Thirdly, the delay in veterans entering the workforce arguably allowed industries time to reconfigure themselves to meet the demands of a peacetime economy rather than the military-industrial needs of a war effort. At war's end, in the words of historian Kenneth T. Jackson, "the United States was no better prepared for peace than it had been for war [in 1939]…For more than five years military necessity had taken priority over consumer goods, and by 1945 almost everyone had a long list of unfilled material wants."[128] Being unprepared for peace, America's industry needed time to shift from a wartime posture to the type of production necessary to meet the demands of Americans' pent-up consumer desires. Staggering soldiers' reentry into the workforce not only allowed industry to do that without facing a crushing demand for jobs it could not immediately supply, but also eventually provided industry with the trained and able workforce it needed to meet the demands of a modern and increasingly globalized economy.[129] In short, Title II of the G.I. Bill forestalled the threat of an economic crisis and, in doing so, allowed both workers and industry to prepare for the postwar economy — all while making veterans generally more supportive of government and the government's programs of state liberalism.

The return home of World War II soldiers also had profound repercussions for the state of the nation's housing, since it was a primary — if not *the* primary — cause of the emerging housing crisis. This coming crisis could be seen, writ small, in the postwar effects of the G.I. Bill in creating a nationwide educational housing shortage. Of one hundred colleges polled by the American Council on Education in 1945 — the

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[128] Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 231-232.
[129] See footnote 125.

early days of the G.I. Bill, before Title II reached its peak — eighty-seven institutions reported housing shortages amounting to a combined need for 47,300 single rooms and 2,120 apartments for married students. The wave of soldiers-turned-students arriving on campuses throughout the country required the congressional appropriation of almost $450 million to purchase, construct, transfer from government ownership, and improvise enough housing to accommodate the mass of new students. Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, located in Troy, New York, even went so far as to lease ex-Navy landing ship transports in the Hudson River to help accommodate the influx of students. At the peak of G.I. Bill enrollment, an estimated 300,000 students were living in student housing built with federal assistance. Many more students were living in new housing built by colleges and universities themselves, with some colleges spending millions of dollars at a time to construct new residence halls.[130] As the Title II program wound down in the early 1950s,[131] newly graduated veterans emerged from college campuses and dispersed across the country to begin their careers, reshaping the nature of urban America in the same ways they had collegiate America, only on a much larger and more impactful scale.

The entrance of America's World War II veterans into the postwar workforce — having been staggered by the effects of G.I. Bill's Title II programs — signaled the beginning of an economic and industrial boom in the United States. By 1955, the aggregate personal income of Americans reached $307.5 billion, compared to a mere $78.5 billion in 1940, and foreign investment in the United States in the same period rose from $12 billion to $80 billion. National consumer debt rose from $27.4 billion

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[130] Altschuler and Blumin, 87-88.
[131] Altschuler and Blumin, 105.

to $42.5 billion dollars between 1952 and 1956 alone,[132] reflecting the release of pent-up domestic consumer demand in the postwar period. In addition to this domestic demand, American industry was meeting much of the world's manufacturing demand as well, as much of Europe and East Asia recovered from the ravages of World War II and American finance helped fund the process of rebuilding. Between July 1945 and the end of 1953, the United States government paid out $44.3 billion in grants and loans to foreign countries. Consequently, by the mid-1950s, the United States was producing two-thirds of the world's manufactured goods and exported almost $15.75 billion worth of goods in 1953 alone, compared to an annual prewar average export rate of less than $3.22 billion. Accordingly, national tax receipts steadily increased throughout this period as well, from $39.4 billion in 1950 to almost $92.5 billion by 1960.[133] This economic boom created a national atmosphere conducive to raising a family since jobs, credit, and manufactured goods were readily available and allowed the government to take in the tax receipts necessary to support its various programs of rebuilding in Europe and East Asia while also investing in the improvement of the United States.

This postwar economic prosperity helped spur the rapid postwar population growth known as the "baby boom", further exacerbating the national demand for

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[132] Landon Y. Jones, *Great Expectations: America and the Baby Boom Generation* (New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1980), 20.

[133] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1954* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1954): 899, https://www.census.gov/prod/www/statistical_abstract.html; Jones, 20; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract*, 908; Office of Management and Budget, *Historical Tables: Budget of the U.S. Government, Fiscal Year 2015* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2014): 23-24, http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/budget/fy2015/assets/hist.pdf.

housing that the return of America's veterans had started. The cultural and economic conditions were ripe for such a population boom, as millions of military wives and sweethearts had waited for soldiers to return home from the front. It should come as no surprise, then, that the jubilation of victory caused a bump in both marriages and births. In May 1946, almost exactly nine months after V-J Day, the national birth rate spiked — and continued growing throughout the year. On average, a baby was born every nine seconds in the United States during 1946. That same year, 2.2 million marriages occurred nationally, a record that would not be equaled until 1979. "Suddenly," as historian Landon Jones put it, "pregnancy was patriotic."[134] The nation's population grew from 141 million in 1946 to 152 million by 1950 to a whopping 180 million by 1960. Many Americans saw this fantastic growth as another sign of postwar prosperity, with magazines such as *Fortune*, *Time*, and *Life* declaring the baby boom "exhilarating", in part due to the economic possibilities promised by this crop of future workers and consumers.[135] Yet, with the nation's population was booming at an unprecedented rate, the nation's infrastructure struggled to keep pace.

The housing crisis caused by the returning veterans was only exacerbated by the demand of their growing families. The Great Depression and World War II had weakened residential construction for sixteen years, with new home construction averaging less than 100,000 units per year throughout the trials and tribulations of the 1930s and 1940s. Beginning in the late 1940s, this deficit in housing construction combined with the demographic impact of the baby boom caused the demand for affordable housing to grow vigorously. As Americans streamed out of colleges,

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[134] Jones, 11.
[135] Jones, 34, 36-37.

universities, and "temporary" defense area housing, they created an unprecedented demand for housing. All told, construction of single-family housing nationwide jumped from a mere 114,000 in 1944 to 937,000 in 1946 to a peak of 1,692,000 in 1950.[136] This included the constructed of such mass-produced, planned communities as Levittown, New York. Located on Long Island, more than half of the town's initial 2,000 units were sold within a day of being put on the market on May 7, 1947; Levittown would eventually expand to a total of 17,400 units — the largest housing development by a single builder ever constructed.[137] Helping fund this housing boom were the resources of the federal government: Title III of the G.I. Bill created Department of Veterans Affairs-backed home loans. Between 1946 and 1949, $8.8 billion in Title III loans and mortgages had been paid out — yet this only represented housing for less than 7 percent of World War II veterans, who were facing steep inflation in housing prices as demand quickly outpaced supply.[138] Meanwhile, individual towns and cities were taking initiatives to develop their own projects and strategies in an attempt to tackle the veteran housing crisis on a local scale, including New Haven as early as 1948.[139] Yet as the 1950s approached, it was becoming increasingly clear that action on a federal scale would be needed to address the nationwide housing crisis.

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[136] Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 232, 233.
[137] Tom Osenton, *Boomer Destiny: Leading the U.S. Through the Worst Crisis Since the Great Depression* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2009), 58; Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 235.
[138] Altschuler and Blumin, 182, 181.
[139] James F. Cribbins, Mayor's Housing Committee of the City of New Haven, Connecticut, "Report on Springside Farm, Revision No. I" (February 13, 1948), Richard Charles Lee Papers (MS 318), Box 116, Folder 2064, "Biography 1949", Manuscripts and Archives, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT.

Truman's Fair Deal stepped into the breach to address this crisis, among other social issues facing the postwar nation. One of the issues Truman specifically highlighted in his 1949 State of the Union address was the poor state of housing in the United States. Citing the statistics that "Five million families are still living in slums and firetraps [and] Three million families share their homes with others",[140] he called for the government to spearhead an initiative to provide more plentiful and affordable housing for its citizens. In response to the President's concerns, Congress passed the Housing Act of 1949 a mere six months later. A major part of the Housing Act was its provisions for slum clearance — referred to as Title I — that would enable local governments, with cooperation and resources from the federal government, to clear the "slums and firetraps" that were seen as a social and material blight on the nation's urban communities: "[The Housing Act] equips the Federal Government, for the first time, with effective means for aiding cities in the vital task of clearing slums and rebuilding blighted areas."[141] Title I would be an especially important tool for urban renewal in northeastern cities such as Middletown and New Haven that were attempting to reinvent themselves to meet a new postwar, largely postindustrial reality.

The provisions of the Housing Act, specifically Title I, were archetypal of the state liberalism nature of Fair Deal programs. In utilizing funding initiatives from the federal government to incentivize and encourage local governments to implement

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[140] Truman, "Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union, January 5, 1949".

[141] Harry S. Truman, "Statement by the President Upon Signing the Housing Act of 1949", *The American Presidency Project*, accessed May 13, 2013, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=13246.

Fair Deal policy and clear slums, a structure of cooperative federalism was used by the federal government to extend federal policy through the lower levels of government in order to have a greater impact on the ground.[142] "Realizing the nation-wide need for urban redevelopment," the provisions of Title I encouraged cities "(1) to clear slums, and (2) to make cleared land available for immediate rebuilding" by providing "the means whereby any loss resulting from acquiring and clearing slum areas and making these available for redevelopment will be shared two-thirds by the Federal government and one-third by the City…"[143] Furthermore, the municipal one-third contribution to the project cost need not be in cash; rather "cities can contribute already contemplated capital budget improvements which serve the project area instead of cash to make up their one-third share of the redevelopment 'write-down' cost", a policy that helped dictate which sections of cities were seen as ripe for Title I slum clearance.[144] In providing this enormous incentive to municipalities, the federal government was not only able to extend Truman's mission of improving the nation's urban infrastructure to the local level through the mechanisms of cooperative federalism, but also to steer it into targeting certain types of "slum" neighborhoods. Yet, extending the material and social reach of federal policy was not the sole

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[142] United States, *Statutes at Large, Containing the Laws and Concurrent Resolutions Enacted During the First Session of the Eighty-First Congress of the United States of America and Proclamations, Treaties, International Agreements Other Than Treaties and Reorganization Plans, 1949*, vol. 63 (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1950), 413-416.
[143] New Haven Redevelopment Agency, *Redevelopment in New Haven, 1952* (January, 1953), Edward Joseph Logue Papers (MS 959), Box 38, Folder 126, "Annual Reports, New Haven Redevelopment Agency", Manuscripts and Archives, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT, 6.
[144] New Haven Redevelopment Agency, "Part I: General Background", in *Annual Report 1953* (January, 1954), Edward Joseph Logue Papers (MS 959), Box 38, Folder 126, "Annual Reports, New Haven Redevelopment Agency", Manuscripts and Archives, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT.

concern behind the provisions of the Housing Act and other Fair Deal era projects of state liberalism — they also sought to realize an economic goal as well.

The cooperatively financed projects of the Housing Act were intended to inject federal funding into local economies and thereby stimulate and sustain economic growth in an economy that had been largely fueled by the Keynesian policies of the New Deal and the massive governmental spending of the war effort for the better part of two decades as it transitioned to a postwar framework. Thus, the aim of the Housing Act was to kill two birds with one stone by simultaneously improving the physical and social infrastructure of the nation's cities while also fueling the postwar economy's housing industry:

> The Congress hereby declares that the general welfare and security of the Nation and the health and living standards of its people require housing production and related community development sufficient to remedy the serious housing shortage, the elimination of substandard and other inadequate housing through the clearance of slums and blighted areas, and the realization as soon as feasible of the goal of a decent home and suitable living environment for every American family, thus contributing to the development and redevelopment of communities and to the advancement of the growth, wealth, and security of the Nation. The Congress further declares that such production is necessary to enable the housing industry to make its full contribution toward an economy of maximum employment production, and purchasing power.[145]

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[145] *Statutes at Large*, 413.

Proponents of the Housing Act argued that such government-funded economic activity would not only directly keep the housing industry strong, but also indirectly support the secondary industries the housing industry relied on while simultaneously allowing the government to rein in the high cost of housing production.[146] In short, the Housing Act was one component of the federal government's Fair Deal efforts to use the apparatuses of cooperative federalism to support the economy by implementing Keynesian methodologies of economic influence.

The need to eliminate slums, renew cities, and inject federal money into urban economies appeared especially necessary in the face of a broad shift away from cities and towards suburbs in the wake of the baby boom. The mass construction of single-family houses in the latter half of the 1940s and into the 1950s was overwhelmingly focused on the suburban areas of the metropolitan periphery:

> A Bureau of Labor Statistics survey of home building in 1946-1947 in six metropolitan regions determined that the suburbs accounted for at least 62 percent of construction. By 1950 the national suburban growth rate was ten times that of central cities, and in 1954 the editors of *Forbes* estimated that 9 million people had moved to the suburbs in the previous decade. The inner cities did have some empty lots — serviced by sewers, electrical connections, gas lines, and streets — available for development. But the filling-in process was not amenable to mass production techniques, and it satisfied neither the economic nor the psychological temper of the times.[147]

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[146] *Congress and the Nation, 1945-1964*, vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1965), 479.
[147] Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 238.

Part of that "temper" was a shift of priorities toward family and domestic life, as baby boom nuclear families sought to settle down and build their American dream. To the millions of young, white, suburban families of the baby boom, the racial diversity of cities was not seen as friendly or conducive to raising a family. Particularly after the landmark 1954 Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education* declared segregated education unconstitutional, many families moved to the suburbs — with their smaller and more homogenous school systems, which were educationally stronger due to the greater resources provided by a suburban tax base — "for the kids".[148] This migration of primarily white, middle-class, baby boom families to the suburbs constituted the phenomenon of "white flight", and can be seen clearly in the demographic shift experienced by cities such as New Haven, which saw tens of thousands of white residents leave the city over the course of the mid-twentieth century.[149] On the suburban side of the equation, developers such as Levittown's

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[148] "Suburbanization", in *The Reader's Companion to American History*, ed. Eric Foner and John Arthur Garraty (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2014), accessed December 16, 2014, http://search.credoreference.com.ezproxy.wesleyan.edu/content/entry/rcah/suburbanization/0.

[149] U.S. Bureau of the Census, "General Characteristics of the Population, for Standard Metropolitan Areas, Urbanized Areas, and Urban Places of 10,000 or More: 1950—Con.", *Past Census Information about Middletown, Connecticut*, accessed October 27, 2014, http://www.middletownplanning.com/documents/Census/1950_CensusPop_middletown007.pdf; U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Household Population, By Age, Race, and Sex, for Selected Urban Places and Counties: 1960", *Past Census Information about Middletown, Connecticut*, accessed October 27, 2014, http://www.middletownplanning.com/documents/Census/1960_CensusPop2_middletown006.pdf; U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Age, Race, and Sex of the Household Population: 1970", *Past Census Information about Middletown, Connecticut*, accessed October 27, 2014, http://www.middletownplanning.com/documents/Census/1970_CensusPop2middletown007.pdf.

eponymous William Levitt actively refused to sell their houses to minority homeowners, citing the impact their arrival would have on property values and sales within a community. In Levitt's words, "We can solve a housing problem, or we can try to solve a racial problem but we cannot combine the two."[150] Meanwhile, the trend of white urban mass out-migration to the suburbs was not unique to New Haven — it was occurring nationwide. As early as 1950, 48.6 percent of the nation's population growth was occurring in the suburbs. "Quite simply," as historians Eric Foner and John Arthur Garraty put it, "the United States had become the world's first suburban nation."[151] For many citizens of this suburban nation, the rhythm of work-life balance became increasingly geographically dichotomized between the suburbs — where the domestic sphere of the home and family was located — and cities' central business districts — to and from which they commuted each day to engage in the professional sphere of jobs and offices.

Facilitating this suburban dichotomy of work-life balance was the growth of an automotive "car culture" that venerated the car's ability to allow commuters to easily travel between their suburban domestic enclaves and their urban professional enclaves. The suburban lifestyle became indelibly tied to the automobile, with the daily commuter pilgrimage from metropolitan periphery to urban center and back again coming to define the American residential experience.[152] In this respect, the automobile made the suburban lifestyle possible: "The advent of the car…gave access

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[150] Quoted in Tom Lewis, *Divided Highways: Building the Interstate Highways, Transforming American Life* (New York, New York: Viking, 1997), 78-79.
[151] David J. St. Clair, *The Motorization of American Cities* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1986), 127; Foner and Garraty.
[152] Foner and Garraty.

to a workforce that lived far outside urban boundaries: carchitecture added the dormitory town to its growing inventory of urban typologies."[153] Accordingly, the rise of the suburbs saw the sales of cars increase dramatically: "In 1955, national spending on automobiles was $65bn, GM produced its millionth car and became the first company to earn a billion dollars in a year."[154] This dramatic growth in automobile sales was explicitly built on a marketing strategy targeted towards the independent, individualistic, middle-class, consumer-driven norms of suburban life, with model names appealing to this new lifestyle: Chevrolet, for instance, introduced the Nomad and the Suburban, Chrysler had the Town & Country, and Ford had the Galaxie Country Squire. By 1960, seventy percent of American families owned at least one car, and twelve percent owned two or more.[155] In short, the car had become a crucial element of the suburban lifestyle. Yet, for all the urban out-migration and rise in automobile sales, suburban workers still needed infrastructure to enable transit to and from the urban centers where their offices were located.

Once again, federal action stepped in to meet the demands of an expanding postwar economy and society and the demographic and cultural shifts begotten by these expansions. It did so by undertaking the nationwide construction of highways. As originally envisioned in 1944, the interstate highway system was not concerned with urban access or alleviating urban congestion; rather, "[t]hat plan called for bypassing cities in an effort to provide long-haul travel between cities and states. It

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[153] Jonathan Bell, "The American Dream", in Jonathan Bell et al., *Carchitecture: When the Car and the City Collide* (Boston: August, 2001), 38.
[154] Bell, 37.
[155] Bell, 37; Lewis, 81.

was not planned for the local commuter traffic we see today."[156] By the time the interstate highway system was finally enacted into law with the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, it had transformed into the largest public works project in human history. The funding process for the network of highways set to crisscross the nation was to follow a classic structure of cooperative federalism: the federal government would contribute 90 percent of construction costs for every 10 percent contributed by state governments. In the intervening twelve years between the interstate highway system's conception and its enactment, the baby boom and all its associated trappings of suburbanization and car culture had begun taking hold of the nation. The promise of 90 percent federal funding for the construction of interstate highways — as well as a 50-50 funding ratio for primary and secondary state roads — gave politicians and highway officials the political incentive and financial backing they needed to build highways leading directly into cities, catering to the needs of the suburban automotive commuter and further encouraging "urban sprawl" into the metropolitan peripheries.[157] With national infrastructure making commuting by car ever easier, the lure of suburbia became increasingly more attractive for American who had the means (and the right skin color) to escape the city.

Thus, what were gains for America's suburbs represented losses for the nation's cities. Often, these urban losses to the suburbs became structurally self-reinforcing in what amounted to a negative feedback loop of urban decline:

> Once begun, big-city population decline sets in motion
> certain self-reinforcing forces likely to perpetuate it.

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[156] Helen Leavitt, *Superhighway—Superhoax* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc, 1970), 2.
[157] Leavitt, 1, 4, 2.

These include the disproportionate withdrawal of high- and middle-income households from cities, rising local taxes and deteriorating public services there, city-suburban disparities in the percentage of older housing, losses of economies of agglomeration and scale as activities decrease, [and] the tendency of physical deterioration to induce poorer maintenance by owners of surrounding properties…[158]

Cities suffered a further strike against them in meeting the challenges of urban decline. Many of the very factors causing urban decline were seen as positives to the rest of American society:

Moreover, population losses in large cities are rooted in certain persistent long-range social trends that many people regard as desirable. These include rising real incomes, greater use of cars and trucks, widespread desire for living in relatively new, low-density settlements, economic advantages of homeownership, and strongly entrenched tendencies for people to segregate themselves socioeconomically and racially by neighborhood.[159]

The broader forces of suburban-driven national progress, it seemed, were inherently at odds with the interests of cities and their residents. The very forces defining the postwar United States were the same forces causing urban decline. It was clear something needed to be done to address this situation, or American cities faced the possibility of a permanent decline.

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[158] Katherine L. Bradbury, Anthony Downs, and Kenneth A. Small, *Urban Decline and the Future of American Cities* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1982), 12.
[159] Ibid.

This tension of an urban-suburban progress dichotomy would prove to be a continual factor motivating urban renewal. Thus, while the historical moment of urban renewal's beginnings was one of national progress, that progress came at the expense of the nation's cities. It was, however, also a historical moment when the government and its citizens believed the federal government had both the ability and the responsibility to address national dilemmas such as urban decline. As we shall see, the success or failure of the government's attempts to do so would be highly dependent upon local factors of history, economics, demographics, and — most significantly of all — local leadership.

Part II

The Dawn of Urban Renewal

Chapter III

The Age of Mayors: New Civic Leadership in the Age of Urban Renewal

The decline of New England's traditional civic leaders — its town fathers, barons, and Yankee industrialists — left a vacuum of community leadership in cities such as Middletown and New Haven. Simultaneously, the national shift to a new trust and confidence in government positioned a new generation of elected officials to take on the mantle of civic leadership in these cities. These new leaders would bring with them new ideas about the relationship of government to its citizens, as well as grand visions for the future of their cities. In Middletown and New Haven, two young, ambitious mayors would be the harbingers of change. By utilizing the new degree of civic trust in government and the resources made available to them through cooperative federalism, these leaders exerted a new form of political power that would, quite literally, change the shape of things to come in their cities.

It was against this historical and political background that Stephen Kemp Bailey, then a Professor of Government at Wesleyan University, was elected Mayor of Middletown on the Democratic ticket in 1952, at the age of thirty-six. Bailey served just one two-year term as mayor, declining to stand for reelection before departing Wesleyan and Middletown for a post at Princeton University. [160] Nevertheless, his leadership during this brief tenure was instrumental in the approval

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[160] "Mayor Plans 'Courtesy' Call in Connection With N.J. Job Offer", March 10, 1954, in *Mayor Stephen K. Bailey Scrapbook, Middletown, CT, 1952-1954*, Special Collections & Archives, Olin Memorial Library, Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT; "Bailey Will Resign To Accept Job At Princeton", April 27, 1954, in *Bailey Scrapbook*.

of the Court Place renewal project, the first urban renewal project in Middletown. Thus, his life experience and the personal and political philosophies it shaped were essential in determining just what form urban renewal took in Middletown.

Bailey's life experience was largely characterized by his formidable academic accomplishments and prowess. Bailey earned his B.A. in Economics in 1937 from Hiram College in Hiram, Ohio, before winning a Rhodes scholarship to Oxford University, where he earned his M.A. in 1939. Bailey then served in World War II as a United States Navy officer assigned to the Office of Strategic Services — the precursor to the Central Intelligence Agency — mostly in the Mediterranean theater. Following the war, Bailey earned the first of many professorships, teaching at Wesleyan from 1946 to 1954. During his early years at Wesleyan, Bailey also earned a Ph. D. in Government from Harvard University. His doctoral thesis, *Congress Makes a Law*, was awarded Harvard's Topan Prize for the most distinguished thesis in Political Science and the American Political Science Association's Woodrow Wilson Prize in 1952.[161] As William J. Dillon described Bailey, "He came into the office of mayor with impressive credentials, perhaps the most impressive that any mayor of Middletown has ever had."[162] Armed with this impressive academic resume, Bailey's tenure as mayor served as a crucial proving ground where his political theories were tested as actual policy.

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[161] Hiram College, "Stephen K. Bailey", accessed May 13, 2013, http://alumni.hiram.edu/?awardbailey; "Stephen Bailey, Noted Educator, Dies at Age 65", *Harvard Crimson*, April 5, 1982, http://www.thecrimson.com/article/1982/4/5/stephen-bailey-noted-educator-dies-at/; William J. Dillon, "Redevelopment in Middletown: How It All Began" (M.A. Thesis, Wesleyan University, 1977), Special Collections & Archives, Olin Memorial Library, Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT, 43-44.
[162] Dillon, 43.

Prior to his election as Middletown's mayor, Bailey cultivated connections within the political machinery of the city's Democratic Party. He served on the Democratic Town Committee for four years, during which time he made connections with men such as John Tynan, the most powerful political boss in the city since the age of the barons.[163] His connection with Tynan not only gave the young Bailey backing from an established political force in the city, but — as will be discussed in the following chapter — it would prove essential in forging the community ties necessary for Bailey's later implementation of urban renewal.

Even with Tynan's support, however, Bailey's election to the office of mayor was by no means a foregone conclusion. In fact, Bailey was not elected with a majority of the votes cast in the October 1952 mayoral election. Running in a three-way race, Bailey received a plurality of 4,924 votes, barely more than one third of the 12,886 total votes cast. By a remarkable coincidence, the difference of 943 votes between those cast for Bailey and his Republican opponent, Clarence C. Lincoln, was exactly equal to the difference between the Republican and the independent incumbent, Lester M. Gowin, who came in third. This was largely because, upon failing to obtain the Republican endorsement, Gowin opted to run as an independent and siphoned off potential support for Lincoln, which Bailey capitalized upon.[164] Or, as Bailey himself would put it years later, "When asked, for example, how I happened to be elected Mayor of Middletown in the first place, I frequently note with pride, first, my winning personality, and second my remarkable intellectual powers. Only if pressed do I add that I was running against two opposition candidates rather than

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[163] Dillon, 46-47.
[164] Dillon, 45.

one."[165] Yet, despite not earning the mandate of a majority vote, Bailey would depend heavily on the community's popular support for his urban renewal initiatives.

Although urban renewal was legally based in the national legislation of the Housing Act of 1949, and despite the fact that Bailey was not elected by a majority of the electorate, through his leadership urban renewal in Middletown was initiated as a community project with broad popular support. This was consistent with Bailey's most deeply held philosophies regarding the fundamental relationship between the government and the governed in a democratic system. As Bailey wrote in his doctoral thesis titled *Congress Makes a Law*, "Whether the American system can long endure depends upon a number of factors, but surely one of the most important ingredients of survival is a responsible political system which will reflect the will of the majority and which will enable the citizens to hold identifiable rulers accountable for policy decisions."[166] Although Bailey was writing about the national political system, he brought this philosophy of popular assent and public accountability to his responsibilities as a small-city mayor by seeking the electorate's consent for his urban renewal decisions.[167] To that end, he worked tirelessly to attain the community's approval for the Court Place project.

This is not to suggest that Bailey did not subscribe to the principles of large-scale programs of cooperative federalism. On the contrary, he felt that broad local

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[165] Stephen K. Bailey, "Leadership in Local Government" (First Annual Wherrett Lecture on Local Government, Institute on Local Government, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA, 1955), Stephen K. Bailey folder, Vertical Subject Files Collection, Special Collections & Archives, Olin Memorial Library, Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT, 1.
[166] Stephen K. Bailey, *Congress Makes a Law* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), 239.
[167] Bailey, "Leadership in Local Government", 10.

assent from both citizens and private entities was crucial to the schema of cooperative federalism. Although state liberalism is often characterized as a top-down federal process (and, indeed, often manifests as such), Bailey believed that it should be a cooperative approach to governmental power, and that a mayor's role in this the process was to bring all parties — local, state, and federal as well as public and private — to the table in order to foster such cooperation in the community:

> What I am talking about then, is a partnership. When I use the term local government, I am talking about every possible resource, local, state, and national, private and public, which is capable of being mobilized in a common struggle to build a more prosperous, more beautiful, and more humane local society. The first job of leadership in local government is to identify the resources of this partnership…It seems ridiculous to pit one level of government against another, or to attempt to work out tight jurisdictional lines. The federal government and the respective state governments have done an incalculable amount of good in our local communities: through grants-in-aid, through insisting upon high standards of administration, though uniform laws, through informational programs, through the loaning of technicians, through public works, through scores of services which local communities have not been able to provide by themselves. One job of leadership at the local level is to encourage and foster programs at higher governmental levels which will help local officials do their job better. We can guard against over-centralization and bureaucratic domination, not by attempting to keep higher levels of government from concerning themselves with local issues, but by helping those higher levels of government to understand the kinds of activities which will release rather than deaden local initiative and local enterprise, public and private.[168]

In Bailey's view, the relationship between levels of government ought to be one of dialogue, wherein each level benefits from the input of the others. With this view of

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[168] Bailey, "Leadership in Local Government", 3-4, 7.

cooperative federalism in mind, and with popular support from the local electorate secured, Bailey and the city's newly created Redevelopment Agency could begin to plan an urban renewal project in which federal, state, and local government worked together with the community to transform what they saw as a blighted section of the city into one that they hoped would improve the city.

Richard Charles Lee, like Bailey in Middletown, was a young and ambitious local leader when he took office. When first ran for Mayor of New Haven in 1949, he was the youngest candidate ever to seek that office in the city's history. Although Lee narrowly lost both the 1949 and 1951 mayoral elections to Republican incumbent William Celentanto, Lee was still a fresh-faced thirty-seven-year-old when he finally won the election of 1953 and became mayor in 1954.[169] The similarities between Lee and Bailey, however, largely ended with their young age. Unlike Bailey, Lee's political philosophy was molded not by an extended academic career but rather by the institutions of the city in which he was born and raised, and of which he would ultimately become mayor. If Mayor Bailey was a product of academia, then Mayor Lee was a product of New Haven. This is evident in their disparate levels of education: while Bailey could boast of his Rhodes scholarship, Oxford M.A., Harvard Ph. D., and Wesleyan professorship, Lee — who was the son of a Winchester factory worker and grew up in a cold-water apartment in a "decrepit" neighborhood near the

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[169] Allan R. Talbot, *The Mayor's Game: Richard Lee of New Haven and the Politics of Change* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), 8, 12.

arms plant — had no formal schooling beyond his diploma from New Haven's Hillhouse High School.[170]

Yet after his graduation from Hillhouse, Lee matriculated in a variety of New Haven institutions from which he earned an experiential education that was arguably more useful for a politician than any of Bailey's degrees. In 1935, after working various odd jobs, Lee bluffed his way into a job at the *New Haven Journal-Courier* — the city's morning daily paper — by claiming to be a trained typist and teaching himself the skill over one weekend.[171] In short order, Lee was assigned to report on City Hall for the *Journal-Courier*, an assignment that exposed him to city politics and allowed him to make connections with figures such as Mayor John Murphy and Director of Public Works John Golden. This exposure quickly turned Lee into a political figure. By the age of twenty-one, he had become a member of the Democratic Party. Two years later, in 1939, Lee ran his first campaign and was elected alderman from New Haven's 17th ward, the youngest person ever to serve on the city's council.[172]

As a young politician, Lee quickly gained public recognition for his outspokenness. On the Board of Aldermen, Lee spoke his mind in support of liberal legislation, setting him apart from his more reserved and conservative colleagues —

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[170] Talbot, 10; Paul von Zielbauer, "Richard C. Lee, 86, Mayor Who Revitalized New Haven", *New York Times*, February 4, 2003, http://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/04/nyregion/richard-c-lee-86-mayor-who-revitalized-new-haven.html.

[171] Mandi Isaacs Jackson, *Model City Blues: Urban Space and Organized Resistance in New Haven* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008), 38; Von Zielbaurer.

[172] Talbot, 6; Von Zielbaurer; "R.C. Lee Biography" (1949), Richard Charles Lee Papers (MS 318), Box 116, Folder 2064, "Biography 1949", Manuscripts and Archives, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT, 1.

though failing to see many of his initiatives actually pass into local ordinances. While serving as an alderman, Lee left his post at the *Journal-Courier* and was eventually hired by Yale to write and edit the *Yale News Digest* under the supervision of the university secretary, Carl A. Lohmann. Under Lohmann's mentorship, Lee learned two crucial skills: how to interact comfortably with the Ivy League segment of New Haven's society, and how to give "tasteful expression" to his outspoken views.[173]

The skills Lee acquired while working under Lohmann would soon find a productive arena. In 1945, Lee supported John Golden in a major power dispute within the city's Democratic Party leadership. This support quickly paid dividends as a victorious Golden mobilized party support behind Lee, and Lee soon became a major voice in city politics as the youngest minority leader of the Board of Aldermen in New Haven history.[174] By 1949, Golden's support had enabled Lee to win the Democratic nomination for the mayoral election. Although it would ultimately take Lee three campaigns to become mayor of New Haven, each election brought him closer to his goal: in 1949, Celentano bested him by 700 votes; in 1951, a recount and court order resulted in Lee losing by a mere two-vote margin. While other politicians might have found these two elections frustrating or even exhausting, Lee's youthful optimism and energy allowed him to view these twin defeats positively: "At that time his resilience could be defined as his ability to interpret his two close defeats not as an omen that he was not fated for politics but as an arithmetic progression at work… He would run again."[175]

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[173] Talbot, 6-7.
[174] "R.C. Lee Biography", 1.
[175] Talbot, 8, 5, 12.

Lee's 1953 campaign would differ from his previous two campaigns, however. In his 1949 and 1951 campaigns he had relied on the party machine to mobilize the Democratic vote; yet the party had proven inefficient, resulting in the subsequent defeats. Lee realized that to capture the crucial difference necessary to put him over the electoral threshold and into office, he would need to complement the backing of the Democratic political machine with independent sources of support. Doing so would require a specific cause to draw in independent supporters. While Lee's previous campaigns had focused on doing the job of mayor better than Celentano — more efficiently, and with less conflict of interest and corruption in City Hall — Lee had not found a specific policy issue on which to differentiate himself from his opponent.[176]

The Housing Act of 1949, however, presented urban renewal to New Haven's Democrats as the political wedge issue they needed to distinguish their platform from that of their Republican opponents. Robert A. Dahl traces the genesis of urban renewal in New Haven back to a fellow Yale political science professor, Henry Wells, who also happened to be a Democratic alderman and a member of the City Plan Commission. Wells had carefully studied the new act and realized that Title I offered a political opportunity for the Democratic majority to take the initiative away from the Republican mayor. With Lee's backing, Wells obtained Celentano's assurance of support for the creation of a Redevelopment Agency. Given this political power play, it might at first appear puzzling that the Republican Celentano did not oppose urban renewal; yet, his political calculus was more multi-dimensional than

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[176] Talbot, 9.

that of his Democratic opponents. On the one hand, urban renewal served the Democrats' interests. The creation of a whole new political endeavor at the behest of the Democrat-controlled Board of Aldermen gave the city Democrats the chance to take the initiative and control the political dialogue. Urban renewal also represented the political risk of an untested new policy initiative, and any mistakes or failures of the initiative — as well as any negative press the displacement of residents generated — would likely be blamed on the mayor and his administration. On the other hand, however, the Republican Party's backers in New Haven's business community supported the endeavor, feeling that a renewed downtown would attract more commerce to the city's central business district. Caught in this dilemma, Celentano urged his Republican colleagues on the Board of Aldermen to support the Democrats' new initiative, and the creation of the New Haven Redevelopment Agency was approved in the summer of 1950. The conflicted Celentano, however, did not make urban renewal a political priority for his administration. Although he did get the Board of Aldermen to approve a plan to raze the Oak Street slum, redevelopment under Celentano did not proceed much beyond that. No state or federal funds were secured and the plan was only in its nascent stages when the election of 1953 occurred.[177]

For Lee, meanwhile, urban renewal was evolving into a defining political issue. According to Lee, that evolution began with his doomed 1951 campaign efforts, which had taken him into some of the city's allegedly worst slums. As Lee

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[177] Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 117-118.

later described it, the experience made a visceral impression on him, inspiring him to take up the cause of urban renewal:

> I went into the homes on Oak Street and they set up neighborhood meetings for me…And I came out from one of those homes on Oak Street, and I sat on the curb and I was just as sick as a puppy. Why, the smell of this building; it had no electricity, it had no gas, it had kerosene lamps, light had never seen those corridors in generations. The smells…It was just awful and I got sick. And there, there I really began…right there was when I began to tie in all those ideas we'd been practicing in city planning for years in terms of human benefits that a program like this could reap for a city…In the two-year period [before the next election] I began to put it together with the practical application…And I began to realize that while we had lots of people interested in doing something for the city *they were all working at cross purposes. There was no unity of approach.*[178]

It is hard to objectively determine to what extent Lee was personally motivated to support urban renewal, as he claims, beyond the political goals it allowed him to achieve, which his earlier involvement with the issue seems to suggest. While his recollection of campaigning on Oak Street is quite vivid, the fact remains that Lee and fellow Democratic aldermen had supported urban renewal policies in pursuit of partisan gain as early as 1950. It seems reasonable to speculate that perhaps experiencing the state of some Oak Street residences firsthand in 1951 crystallized what had previously been a mere policy position into a new sense of political purpose for Lee. Regardless, he had found his core policy issue.

Lee's 1953 mayoral campaign — and, indeed, the rest of his political career — would be heavily based on urban renewal, a policy that truly set him apart from

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[178] Dahl, 120.

Celentano.[179] Thus, in 1953, Lee ran a very different campaign from his two previous

efforts. Instead of focusing on how he could do Celentano's job better, as he had

previously, he focused on how he could do Celentano's job differently — namely, by

putting urban renewal at the focus of a Lee Administration. In order to do so, Lee

promised to appoint a Citizens Action Commission of prominent residents to study

the issue of urban renewal within sixty days of taking office.[180] (However, as will be

discussed in the following chapter, "prominent residents" were not necessarily

representative of the city's population or their views.) Simultaneously, also learning

from his previous mistakes, Lee used his new focus on urban renewal to attract new,

untapped sources of political support, especially among the Yale faculty. This new

base of political support formed a group called "Independents for Lee", which

attacked Celentano as "indifferent to the critical problems of city planning and urban

redevelopment". Their support enabled Lee to pledge to put "the best brains in the

city" to work on his urban renewal initiatives. With his new focus on urban renewal

and the independent support it attracted, Lee defeated Celentano by 3,582 votes — a

far more decisive victory than either of the previous contests between the two

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[179] Although some scholars, notably G. William Domhoff in his book *Who Really
Rules? New Haven and Community Power Reexamined* (New Brunswick, New
Jersey: Transaction Books, 1978), dispute the extent to which urban renewal played a
central role in Lee's 1953 campaign, most accounts of the election support the notion
that Lee made urban renewal a central tenet of his campaign, whereas for Celentano it
was merely a peripheral issue. Domhoff's methodology shows that urban renewal was
certainly an issue in the 1953 election, even if — as Domhoff claims — it was not the
central issue at hand.
[180] Dahl, 120.

candidates.[181] Urban renewal, it seemed, was a winning political issue for Richard Lee.

While Stephen Bailey and Richard Lee were both young mayors who would go on to champion urban renewal, in their political biographies it is apparent that there were fundamental differences in political philosophy between the two. Stemming from his background in academics and political theory, Bailey was more concerned with a cooperative approach to urban renewal, viewing government accountability and community support as key and necessary steps in the process of urban renewal. Lee, by contrast, was fundamentally a product of urban machine politics, initially viewing urban renewal as a winning platform of partisan politics. Nor was Lee a transient academic visitor to his city, as Bailey would ultimately prove to be, but a life-long resident, from cradle to grave. Thus, while his career path had brought him in contact with the academic circles of Yale — even garnering their political support — leadership was not an experiment in academic political theory for Lee, as it was for Bailey; instead, it was the attainment of a lifetime of political ambition. Having learned that urban renewal was an issue that could be molded to the political benefit of himself and his party, Lee was less inclined to disperse the political power urban renewal offered him and his administration and more inclined to leverage the issue to his political advantage. These key differences in life and political experience between the cities' respective fathers of urban renewal would result in very different political methodologies of urban renewal in the years and decades to come.

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[181] Talbot, 12, 13.

Chapter IV

From Philosophy to Practice: Civic Leadership, Community Engagement, and

the Cities' First Renewal Projects

After taking office, both Mayor Bailey and Mayor Lee put their mayoral support behind their cities' first urban renewal projects. Before the physical processes of urban renewal and redevelopment could begin, however, the more delicate political process of gaining approval for the projects was necessary. Approval from the federal and state government would be crucial, but from the perspective of exploring the relationship between civic leadership and the community, the most vital group's approval was that of the affected communities themselves. It was in the process of gathering community support — or the appearance of community support, as the case may be — that put the mayors' political philosophies on community engagement into action. Studying this process therefore illuminates the stark contrast between Bailey's and Lee's philosophies that shaped the political precedents and mechanisms of urban renewal they created in their cities, setting the tone of urban renewal in both Middletown and New Haven for years to come.

For Bailey, urban renewal presented an opportunity to put his philosophies about government cooperation and accountability into action. Urban renewal in Middletown was to be, accordingly, not only a government effort, but also a community effort. Although urban renewal issues affected the interests of retail business owners and immigrant groups, as well as the city's tax revenue stream and concerns about public health and safety, Bailey ultimately turned the decision of

whether to pursue urban renewal over to the voters of Middletown. In doing so, he adhered to the belief he had outlined in *Congress Makes a Law* by working to create "…a responsible political system which will reflect the will of the majority and which will enable the citizens to hold identifiable rulers accountable for policy decisions."[182] Bailey certainly personally advocated for urban renewal — making him the accountable, identifiable ruler — but ultimately the decision would reflect the will of the majority through the most primal mechanism of a democracy: the referendum.

Urban renewal in Middletown thus began in December 1953 with a meeting of 196 key community leaders at the old Middletown High School in which Bailey introduced and advocated for an urban renewal project in the city. Bailey's vision was to raze much of the slums on Middletown's East Side and replace them with civic buildings, commercial areas, and off-street parking lots. By the end of the presentation, not a single voice of dissent had been raised by the assembled group, a six-member Redevelopment Agency had been created, and a referendum vote to attain the broader community's support for the project was set for January 11, 1954.[183] Citizen participation in the referendum was particularly crucial to realizing Bailey's political vision of "a responsible political system which will reflect the will of the majority", as it would give the community's majority the crucial means of

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[182] Stephen K. Bailey, *Congress Makes a Law* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), 239.

[183] William J. Dillon, "Redevelopment in Middletown: How It All Began" (M.A. Thesis, Wesleyan University, 1977), Special Collections & Archives, Olin Memorial Library, Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT, 47; "Not a Dissenting Hand Raised In First Test of Civic Center", December 16, 1953, in *Mayor Stephen K. Bailey Scrapbook, Middletown, CT, 1952-1954*, Special Collections & Archives, Olin Memorial Library, Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT; "On The Way", December 16, 1953, in *Bailey Scrapbook*.

expressing their will directly to their civic leadership. Thus, in the interim between the community meeting and the referendum, Bailey and other civic leaders — including many prominent figures from Wesleyan, such as President Victor Butterfield — lobbied for public support for the project by holding meetings, bringing Republican leaders into the conversation and obtaining their endorsement of the project, commissioning preliminary artist's sketches of the completed project, and forming bipartisan commissions to study the proposal and its finances.[184]

Leading up to the referendum, Bailey went on a public relations blitz, appearing in every available form of media to encourage support for the proposal and increase public awareness of the referendum. As the election neared, Bailey made himself publicly available on multiple occasions to answer residents' questions personally. On December 27, 1953, invitations were issued to the residents of the East Side neighborhood where the proposed redevelopment project would occur asking them to attend a December 30 meeting with the mayor at the Sons of Italy Hall.[185] This choice of venue crucially reflected the fact that Melillesi immigrants and their descendants inhabited much of the neighborhood in questions. Being aware of this, Bailey had already secured the support of important Italian-American community leaders, and probably chose the Sons of Italy Hall to put the community at ease by meeting on "their turf". In the week before the election, Bailey held public meetings for the rest of the city's residents at public schools and community centers around the

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[184] Stephen K. Bailey, "Waterfront Development Statement by the Mayor", December 16, 1953, in *Bailey Scrapbook*; "Cambria Indicates GOP Backing for Civic Center", December 30, 1953, in *Bailey Scrapbook*; "Group Named to Study Civic Center Finances", December 31, 1953, in *Bailey Scrapbook*; "East Side Civic Center Is Endorsed By Leaders", January 4, 1954, in *Bailey Scrapbook*.
[185] "Mayor to Talk On Development", *Middletown Press*, December 28, 1953.

city, and appeared on television, radio, and in the *Middletown Press* to address questions and promote participation in the referendum.[186]

The efforts of Bailey and other city leaders would not go unrewarded: on the night of the referendum vote, 2,801 Middletown citizens battled their way through the season's worst blizzard to cast a nearly three-to-two vote in favor of the project.[187] This turnout, however, showed only marginal success in the mayor's effort to prompt citizen participation: the 18 percent voter participation paled in comparison to participation rates in the 1952 election that put Bailey in office, in which a record 81.9 percent participation rate was recorded; even for a referendum the turnout was underwhelming, since "[a] good vote for a Middletown referendum is 5,000".[188] These disappointing voter numbers — especially in comparison to the 1952 election — were undoubtedly at least partially due to weather. On October 6, 1952, "[e]lection day was mostly sunny and unusually warm, and favored the heavy vote." On January 11, 1954, however, "…citizens braved the worst snowstorm of the season to express their opinion about the future of this city…" and, by Bailey's estimate, participation would have been double were it not for the inclement conditions. Regardless of hypothetical participation, however, it was clear that Middletown residents were lukewarm, at best, in their response to the referendum. "As the polls closed in the

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[186] Dillon, 48-49; "Mayor to Give Finance Plans", *Middletown Press*, January 4, 1954.
[187] Stephen K. Bailey, "Statement by the Mayor", *Middletown Press*, January 12, 1954; "Voters Approve a Civic Center", *Middletown Press*, January 12, 1954.
[188] "Voters Approve a Civic Center"; "Democrats Sweep City Election", *Middletown Press*, October 7, 1952; Claudia Center, "Urban Renewal and Citizen's Groups in Middletown, Connecticut" (1987), *Student Papers About Middletown Collection*, Paper 20, Special Collections & Archives, Olin Memorial Library, Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT, http://wesscholar.wesleyan.edu/middletownpapers/20/, 11.

Town Hall promptly at 8 p.m.," in fact, "there was little of the excitement that normally prevails at an election. Aside from election officials, the workers, three newspapermen and one or two onlookers, few remained to learn the result."[189] While hundreds of citizens had called the offices of the *Middletown Press* to inquire about the 1952 election results once the polls closed, a mere 173 did so for the results of the 1954 referendum — and most were apathetic about the outcome, merely calling to "learn the score." Furthermore, a significant proportion of those who did vote had voted against the proposal, as Bailey was forced to concede in promising to take a cautious approach to in the pursuit of the redevelopment plan.[190] Turning to a referendum had allowed Bailey's proposal to get the public support he wanted, if only just barely.

Nevertheless, for the young mayor, this appeal to direct democracy was the culmination of his political philosophy. As he would later remark of the vote: "To see thousands of fellow citizens fighting their way through a storm to cast a ballot to tax themselves for the sake of some intangible values, is an experience not easily forgotten. I am glad it was snowing so that my tears of incredulity and joyousness were hidden."[191] Bailey put his philosophy to a true test of its mettle in insisting that voter approval be obtained in order to proceed, even though a referendum was not

[189] "Democrats Sweep City Election"; Bailey, "Statement by the Mayor"; "Voters Approve a Civic Center".

[190] "Democrats Sweep City Election"; "Main St. Quiet During Evening", *Middletown Press*, January 12, 1954; Bailey, "Statement by the Mayor".

[191] Stephen K. Bailey, "Urban Renewal: Then And Now" (lecture, Greater Middletown Chamber of Commerce, Middletown, CT, June 21, 1971), Stephen K. Bailey folder, Vertical Subject Files Collection, Special Collections & Archives, Olin Memorial Library, Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT, 5.

legally required for the project to move forwards,[192] and his approach had resulted in the popular assent he viewed as ethically necessary for implementation of the renewal he championed. In putting urban renewal directly in the hands of his citizens and appealing to them to decide the neighborhood's fate through direct democracy, Bailey not only made government action accountable to the public, but wholly dependent on the public — including those constituents who were to be directly affected by the renewal project.

Bailey's philosophies, citizens' interests, and the arguments for slum clearance all coalesced around the Court Place project area. This project area roughly encompassed the area today bordered by deKoven Drive, Washington Street, Court Street, and Main Street.[193] Prior to its redevelopment, this neighborhood on Middletown's East Side was a dense residential slum that city leaders saw as a major problem area for public health and safety. Bailey was easily able to observe this area from his office in the old City Hall located on Main Street. For him, "the scene was a daily depressant" as it reminded him of the conditions he observed there during fire inspections of the area he accompanied, when he "had seen and smelled the dismal overcrowding" firsthand, and of police patrols of the area he had ridden along with, when they "had picked up derelicts and drunks." (Not to mention the dilapidating state of the old City Hall building itself, where, in Bailey's words, "Large chunks of plaster used to fall on the heads of the just and the unjust alike.") In short, the Mayor "knew that the concentration of our urban pathology was within the four block area

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[192] "Clew Hits Doubting Thomases", January 11, 1954, in *Bailey Scrapbook.*
[193] Redevelopment Agency for the City of Middletown, Connecticut, *Preliminary Redevelopment: Middletown, 1954*, Middletown Room, Russell Library, Middletown, CT, Map 1.

that I could see from my office window. I knew that slums were cancerous.”[194] Surveys conducted by the Department of Public Works in early 1954 quantified Bailey's personal observations of the living conditions in the project area: 74.9% of the dwelling units within the project area were considered substandard, the same percentage had no central heat, and 56.2% of them had no hot water. In addition, the area was densely populated with an average residential density of 70.1 persons per acre, yet also highly congested with automotive traffic due to its adjacency to the central business district of Main Street and its narrow streets. Thus, the City of Middletown characterized this neighborhood to the state and federal levels of government as a prime candidate for redevelopment under Title I. Redevelopment, the city argued, was the only means to eliminate the hazardous living conditions “whose improvement is deemed beyond the power of ordinary enforcement and regulatory measures.”[195] In doing so, the clearance of the slums in the Court Place project area would fulfill the first part of the Housing Act: to eliminate dangerous living conditions and improve the material condition of the city.

All this is not to deny that the Court Place project had a deeply engrained commercial and economic element to it as well. Indeed, the redevelopment of the project area was conceived in direct relationship to the adjacent Main Street central business district of Middletown. While the existing business district was seen as economically strong, it was argued that for it to strengthen and remain competitive in the regional economy, room for commercial expansion and for infrastructure such as

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[194] Redevelopment Agency for the City of Middletown, Connecticut, 2-3; Bailey, “Urban Renewal: Then And Now”, 3-4.
[195] Redevelopment Agency for the City of Middletown, Connecticut, 11, 9, 12, 3.

parking lots to support the existing retail commerce must be made available.[196] The economic threat of competing commercial and retail developments that were under construction in neighboring towns at the time was, therefore, a significant driving force behind Bailey's drive to support and expand the central business district of downtown Middletown through the Court Place development: "From an economic point of view, Middletown is at the crossroads. Unless we stabilize and improve our position as a merchant-trading center for central and southern Connecticut, gigantic rural shopping centers will be created outside of Middletown."[197] Although Bailey framed this statement in the future tense, economic competition was not some hypothetical threat. Rather, it was becoming very real and very concrete in the form of development projects actively being built in other towns in the region: "Unless Middletown undertakes to increase the values and facilities of its downtown shopping area, new, convenient, rural shopping centers will be created outside the center of our city. Hamden is already planning a $7,000,000 shopping center providing for more than 2,300 cars."[198] The development that would become Hamden Plaza and other similar suburban malls and strip malls were seen as a direct threat to the viability of Middletown's retail interests. The pre-redevelopment slum status of the project area and its adjacency to the existing Main Street central business district made it, in the view of the Redevelopment Agency, ideal for the expansion of commercial properties

[196] Redevelopment Agency for the City of Middletown, Connecticut, 13-14.
[197] "Bailey in TV Plea for Plan".
[198] "Group Named to Study Civic Center Finances", December 31, 1953, in *Bailey Scrapbook*. Hamden is a suburb of New Haven, located about 20 miles south of Middletown.

and infrastructure in downtown Middletown and, thereby, a site important to the future of Middletown's economy.[199]

While the razing and replacement of a densely residential area of the city with purely municipal and commercial redevelopment may seem problematic both politically and socially, the preliminary redevelopment proposal not only argued the advantages as a model of commercially-minded redevelopment, but in fact made extraordinary efforts to meet the needs of displaced residents. Due to the project area's primarily residential usage pre-redevelopment, a feasibility study for incorporating residential elements into the redevelopment plan was made; however, this study found such a plan to be not only prohibitively expensive in the short-term, but one that would also detrimentally impact future commercial activity in the area and would yield lower tax revenues for the city than could be expected from purely commercial uses. Consequently, extensive measures were developed for financially facilitating the relocation of displaced residents and businesses in the project area.[200] These plans, however, primarily dealt with the details of financially aiding residents in the process of relocation, rather than improving their existing living conditions. Contrary to what the physical condition of the project area's pre-renewal dwellings and the characterization of the neighborhood as problematic would suggest, however, a survey conducted by the Redevelopment Agency found that of the 183 families living in the project area in 1954, 89 (over 48%) had annual family incomes in excess of $4,500 in 1953 at a time when the median family income nationwide was

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[199] Redevelopment Agency for the City of Middletown, Connecticut, 14.
[200] Redevelopment Agency for the City of Middletown, Connecticut, 14, 17-23.

approximately $4,200.[201] When considering that an additional twenty-five project area families reported earning between $4,000 and $4,449 in 1953,[202] it is not at all unreasonable to assume that most of the families living in the project area were actually earning more than the median American household income at the time. Thus, the extensive relocation assistance program of the Redevelopment Agency's preliminary redevelopment plan was actually quite extraordinary, possibly even excessive, given that most of the families living in the project area arguably had the financial means to relocate and probably even secure housing superior to the residences from which they were being displaced.

While it may have been unnecessary to financially support the relocation of displaced residents, the fact that the means to do so were made available to those affected serves to highlight Bailey's philosophy of governmental accountability. In that spirit, Bailey acknowledged that slum clearance "is not simply a matter of money. We are dealing here with human beings, human habits, human roots." Therefore, "[u]nder no circumstance will any family be disposed unless adequate housing is available or can be made available for that family."[203] This commitment to the displaced residents not only illustrated Bailey's recognition and commitment to the human element of urban renewal, but it also helped fulfill the housing-oriented intentions of the Housing Act by improving the living conditions of Middletown residents.

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[201] Redevelopment Agency for the City of Middletown, Connecticut, 19-20; U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Family Income Equals 1953 Level; Up 7 Percent Over 1952", *Current Population Reports: Consumer Income* Series P-60, no. 18 (October 7, 1955), accessed May 13, 2013, http://www2.census.gov/prod2/popscan/p60-018.pdf.
[202] Redevelopment Agency for the City of Middletown, Connecticut, 20.
[203] Bailey, "Waterfront Development Statement by the Mayor".

Finally, Bailey made much of the prestige the new development would bring to the City of Middletown. He often spoke of "the irrepressible beauty in the area" of the area along the banks of the Connecticut River, and believed that such natural beauty had the potential to make the new development the crown jewel of the city — not merely the most beautiful city center in Connecticut but, indeed, in the whole country. Bailey hoped that such a project would be a culminating achievement for the city, one that "puts in focus a series of dreams dreamed by scores of Middletown leaders over the past twenty years and more…to regain for our City the historic beauty of the river and waterfront."[204] Thus, in addition to the social and economic benefits that the project promised, Bailey hoped the Court Place project would restore something less quantifiable to Middletown: a dual sense of aesthetic beauty and civic pride in a city built to meet the demands of the modern age.

Thus, while the Court Place project stood at the nexus of many varying interests — the commercial strength of Middletown's central business district, housing and relocation concerns for the slum's residents, public health and safety concerns, and the beautification of the city — the single most important interest to Bailey was the consent of the governed to undertake the project. In holding a referendum on the Court Place project, Bailey ensured that the citizens of Middletown had a direct and decisive impact on their city's urban renewal. While not required by law to hold a referendum, Bailey made it a self-imposed requirement. In doing so, he put his own words from *Congress Makes a Law* into political action —

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[204] Bailey, "Urban Renewal: Then And Now", 3; Dillon, 53; "Bailey in TV Plea for Plan"; Bailey, "Waterfront Development Statement by the Mayor".

and, in the process, Bailey created a community standard that would impact future urban renewal projects in the city as well.

As described in the previous chapter, urban renewal policy in New Haven started largely as a political power play by the city's Democrats to seize the initiative from the Republican Mayor William Celentano. Accordingly, even after the Democrats captured City Hall in 1953 and Richard Lee took office as Mayor of New Haven in 1954, urban renewal in New Haven continued to be a primarily political issue. Despite urban renewal power play beginnings, the program itself was largely a bipartisan issue in municipal politics. Urban renewal politics did, however, divide what Robert Dahl calls the city's "political stratum" — that is, those with the business, institutional, or social influence to be concerned with and have an effect on urban renewal — on the one hand and the city residents actually affected by urban renewal on the other hand. In stark contrast to Bailey's community-based referendum approach, the Lee Administration aimed to appease the interests of the political stratum — an approach that necessarily robbed the community itself of political agency. Urban renewal politics in New Haven thus became a two-tier political system, something that becomes readily apparent in a close examination of the Oak Street renewal project.

The Oak Street project area roughly encompassed the area between George Street, Grace-New Haven Hospital (today Yale-New Haven Hospital), and the intersection of Water and State Streets. This 42-acre area was often described by

proponents of urban renewal as the worst slum in the city, if not the whole state[205] —

"a hard core of cancer which had to be removed," in Lee's words[206] — and therefore

ripe for urban renewal. Yet, at least in terms of the age of housing, Oak Street did not

have the poorest conditions in the city. A 1941 City Plan Commission report revealed

that over 40 percent of the housing in the city dated to the nineteenth century, while

much of Oak Street's tenement housing was constructed in the twentieth century

during two "boom" periods in 1912 and 1926.[207] Although the report acknowledges

that tenements built quickly and cheaply during these periods to accommodate an

influx of immigrant works might be in poorer condition than older yet better made

and maintained structures, it also shows that nearby Wooster Square — another

heavily immigrant neighborhood adjacent to downtown New Haven — had housing

universally dating to the nineteenth century;[208] yet instead of facing slum clearance

like Oak Street did, Wooster Square was "rehabilitated" — that is, instead of

demolition, its buildings were renovated and modernized in order to be brought up to

code.[209] The reasons why Oak Street was renewed while Wooster Square was

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[205] Mandi Isaacs Jackson, *Model City Blues: Urban Space and Organized Resistance in New Haven* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008), 37; Michael Sletcher, *New Haven: From Puritanism to the Age of Terrorism* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2004), 132; Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 118.
[206] Rob Gurwitt, "Death of a Neighborhood", *Mother Jones*, September/October, 2000, http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2000/09/death-neighborhood.
[207] City Plan Commission, City of New Haven, Connecticut, "Report to the City Plan Commission, Part II: Analysis", 31 December, 1941, Maurice Emile Henri Rotival Papers (MS 1380), Box 160, "New Canaan, New Haven", Manuscripts and Archives, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT, 53, 175, Map A7: "Age of Houses".
[208] City Plan Commission, 174, Map A7.
[209] Stanley W. Penn, "Cities Try Renovation Of Run-Down Sections Instead of Demolition", *Wall Street Journal*, May 10, 1962, Richard Charles Lee Papers (MS

rehabilitated are many — and will be further discussed in the following chapter — yet a significant factor was the interests of New Haven's political stratum.

Certainly, however, neither a sense of apathy among Oak Street's residents nor a lack of vibrancy in the neighborhood's culture was a factor in its destruction. While the Oak Street neighborhood was densely packed with tenements, it was also a neighborhood with a diverse community and lively street life, being "crowded with open-air markets, mom-and-pop shops of every variety, restaurants, tenements, and ethnic and cultural organizations."[210] The Oak Street neighborhood was home to a closely-knit community of immigrants and minorities — Jews, Italians, African-Americans, Poles, Russians, Ukrainians, Irish, Greeks — who formed such strong bonds that displaced residents continued to hold reunions into the twenty-first century. At these reunions, former residents nostalgically reminisced about a neighborhood that was not the desolate, hopeless slum that city officials described. To former residents, such as Barry Vine, "[the neighborhood] was alive, it was exciting, it was always uplifting, and we all felt that it belonged to us. It was our neighborhood. Sunday mornings on Legion Avenue were unbelievable: the hustle, the bustle, people came from all over to shop, to eat, to socialize...." Sid Bruskin, another former resident, even went so far as to say that "It was a sacred spot. A world. A universe." Thus, the demolition of Oak Street was not something that many former residents took well. Nick DiMassa, who grew up in another neighborhood but played ball with

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318), Box 115, Folder 2053, "Urban Renewal (General)", Manuscripts and Archives, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT.
[210] Jackson, 18.

a lot of Oak Street kids, summed up the sentiments of many in saying, "They screwed over New Haven. They made a parking lot of the city."[211]

The Oak Street Connector was the first element of a city plan first envisioned for New Haven in 1941 by French planner and Yale professor Maurice Rotival. Rotival's ideas had clearly been influenced by the urban planning philosophies of fellow French architect Le Corbusier, whose theories of urban planning arose from social, demographic, and political circumstances in post-World War I France that were quite similar to those gripping New England after World War II: "His hypotheses were worked out in reaction to pressing social problems of the immediate post-war years in France: the shortage of housing…the overcongestion of traffic in Paris, the need to regenerate industry and attract foreign capital, but also to accommodate radical reforms."[212]

The first of Le Corbusier's urban planning proposals designed to respond to France's post-World War I needs was Ville Contemporaine, first exhibited in 1922:

> It examined the general case of an industrial town including management, manufacturing, transport, habitation and leisure, each function in its own zone. Density was generated by building upwards using steel, concrete and mass-production techniques. The spaces left between buildings were then to be turned over to unimpeded traffic and vast parks. The "essential joys" of light, space and greenery were thus to be made available to all, but without resorting to suburban or

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[211] As quoted in Gurwitt.
[212] William J. R. Curtis, *Le Corbusier: Ideas and Forms* (New York: Rizzoli, 1986), 60.

decentralized development which Le Corbusier felt
were anti-urban and wasteful of good land.[213]

Yet, the conditions of post-World War I France to which Ville Contemporaine was reacting were as strikingly different from those of post-World War II New England as they were similar. Crucially, although Ville Contemporaine did, in a sense, have its own "suburbs", the urban conventions of Paris had the upper class dominating the city center, with the lower class relegated to the outskirts of the city — quite the opposite of postwar American urban development. This European pattern of urbanism was reflected in Le Corbusier's vision: "The Ville Contemporaine was for white-collar workers — managers and bureaucrats; manufacturing and the lower classes were sequestered in separate areas beyond a green belt." Yet, in the peripheries of the urban landscape, Ville Contemporaine's hypothetical working classes would inhabit something akin to urban America's suburbs: "Although the workers are banished from the white-collar paradise, there is no class conflict, for each worker has a decent family house with a garden…."[214] Further, in removing the working class to the suburbs, Le Corbusier replaced the clutter of nineteenth-century slums with open spaces for air, light, greenery and thoroughfares for automotive traffic, much to the pleasure of his clients automaker Citroën and tire manufacturer Michelin:[215]

> Unlike present day urbanists who make a fetish of the
> piazza and the street defined by facades, Le Corbusier
> wanted to space the majority of his buildings far apart.
> The metaphor was one of liberation from the
> constriction of slums and from the choking effect on

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[213] Curtis, 61.
[214] Curtis, 62, 63.
[215] Curtis, 65.

traffic of the traditional artery. Le Corbusier saw the matter in almost medical terms, as if he were cutting out a cancer. The Paris of the 1920s still had stinking alleyways and diseased areas. All that was to be replaced by a new hierarchy of circulation running from freeways for fast traffic to straight roads lined by trees in residential areas. As much as possible, cars were separated from pedestrians. At intersections there were roundabouts.[216]

Thus, Le Corbusier's influence emphasized spacing out buildings and prioritizing the needs of automobile traffic, yet also worked to create a livable city for the white-collar workers who inhabited the city centers of Paris and other European cities. Due to the socio-economics of American suburbanization, however, American adaptations of Corbusian urban planning saw more of an emphasis placed on the transportation elements, often replacing Le Corbusier's green spaces with vast tracts of off-street parking. City slum dwellers would be left in the city center, displaced from their demolished tenements, living in Corbusian urban landscapes that had been stripped of their creature comforts to appeal to the automotive sensibilities of white-collar suburban Americans, and denied the luxury of living in the garden cities that Le Corbusier himself had envisioned for them. In the words of architectural historian William J. R. Curtis, "Even in such cases where Le Corbusier's influence has been certain, crucial areas of his original theorems — such as private terraces, communal facilities, and parks — have often been left out."[217] This was often the case in

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[216] Curtis, 63.
[217] Curtis, 66.

American adaptations of Ville Contemporaine, and New Haven was certainly one such case.

Le Corbusier's influence on Rotival was clearly evident in the 1941 plan for the city, and would later become even more apparent in the buildings and infrastructure that would replace the Oak Street neighborhood. Rotival's original master plan for the city showed, from an aerial perspective, the original "nine squares" of downtown — the original settlement laid out by New Haven's Puritan founders — surrounded by concentric circles of express roads connected by roundabouts and terminating at on-ramps to either of two great superhighways that encircled the city.[218] When the interstate highway system was signed into law in 1956, the two superhighways in Rotival's plan became Interstate 91 and Interstate 95 — rather than the mere Connecticut Turnpike that had been planned before — bringing further state and federal resources to the construction of the Oak Street Connector.

By April 1951, Rotival had been formally hired by the city's Redevelopment Agency as a consultant and had set his sights on the clearance of the Oak Street neighborhood.[219] Despite the closeness of the Oak Street community, the socio-economic weakness of the slum made it a target for Rotival's Corbusian vision. In the words of Yale architectural historian Vincent Scully:

> But since [Oak Street] was all too obviously not WASP
> or suburban or middle-class, it was not recognized as a

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[218] For an illustration of Rotival's original plan, see Vincent Scully, "Modern Architecture at Yale: A Memoir", in Vincent Scully et al., *Yale in New Haven: Architecture & Urbanism* (New Haven: Yale University, 2004), 296.

[219] G. William Domhoff, *Who Really Rules? New Haven and Community Power Reexamined* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1978), 79.

community by the political powers of the period, nor apparently by Yale's sociologists either. Its inhabitants were scattered, pushed into other neighborhoods where they didn't want to be, and a process of disintegration — more truly a "domino effect" than the fanciful phenomenon which the Johnson administration was projecting upon Southeast Asia in those very years — began to work its way through the less affluent neighborhoods of the town.[220]

Scully is indeed correct that race and socio-economics were factors in selecting Oak Street for redevelopment into a highway. He is also correct in highlighting the "domino effect" that the displacement of Oak Street's residents would have on the city, as some families would be relocated from neighborhood to neighborhood by urban renewal as many as four or more times over the coming decades.[221] Yet the mere fact that poor ethnic and racial minorities inhabited the neighborhood is only one element of Oak Street's selection for the connector. Strong business and institutional interests were also deciding factors in its renewal. As early as the summer of 1951, Rotival met with members of the New Haven Chamber of Commerce, who made him aware of the concerns of the city's business leaders in ensuring a linkage between the highways and the downtown.[222] Thus, what set Oak Street apart from Wooster Square was its immediate adjacency to downtown New Haven, making it the ideal site for a highway connecting the city's central business district to its suburban customers and white-collar workers. The Chamber of Commerce was also concerned about the trend the city's development had begun

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[220] Scully, 297.
[221] Jackson, 22.
[222] Domhoff, 79.

taking, northeastward along Whitney Avenue towards Hamden.[223] It is clear that

Rotival took these concerns made into consideration, as his July 1951 draft report

clearly addressed the Chamber of Commerce's concerns, in which he wrote:

> [The Oak Street neighborhood] also is the diseased area
> most closely adjoining the center of the city; it is part of
> the redevelopment area designated as No. 3, which
> extends along the entire south western border of the
> Nine Squares, and even penetrates within them. The
> rat's nest of small streets within this area, none of
> which line up in any way with the main downtown
> streets, is the barrier which has prevented healthy
> growth of this side, and is one of the causes of the
> creeping decay which has penetrated into the heart of
> the city…The cleaning up of Area No. 3, desirable in
> itself, will be most effective, therefore, in rehabilitating
> the core of the city and be getting a realization of the
> objectives of the Master Plan.[224]

Yale, too, had an institutional interest in the redevelopment of the Oak Street

neighborhood. In January 1950, the university had released a special report entitled

Yale and Her Needs, detailing the institution's projected growth during the coming

decades, as well as concerns that would arise from such growth. One such concern

was the foreseen need for additional housing for graduate students, particularly

medical students: "Because of the shortage of all kinds of housing in the community,

the students at the university's professional schools have to put up with some

demoralizing makeshifts. This is particularly true of medical students, often housed

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[223] Domhoff, 80.
[224] Ibid.

far from the hospital where they have night duty."[225] Although Rotival did not consult

with the university in any formal sense before releasing his draft report, as a Yale

professor it is not unreasonable to conclude that he was aware of the university's

special report and, more specifically, the medical student housing concern. As the

northern part of the Oak Street project area was located between Yale's campus and

Grace-New Haven Hospital, Rotival's draft proposal also included a proposal for

residential redevelopment specifically aimed to meet this institutional concern.

Rotival presented this housing portion of his proposal to a meeting held with

university officials in October 1951 to garner their support for the project. Getting

Yale to support the construction of student housing served two purposes: first, it

satisfied the Housing Act's housing-oriented aims for urban renewal projects; second,

the backing of a private community agency helped give the renewal proposal stability

in the eyes of the federal government.[226] In this way, Yale's institutional concerns

shaped the selection of the Oak Street neighborhood for redevelopment, much as the

concerns of the Chamber of Commerce had influenced the decision.

Thus, even before Lee's election as mayor, urban renewal in New Haven was

taking a much more corporate shape than it had in Middletown, with institutions such

as the Chamber of Commerce and Yale University shaping the city government's

redevelopment proposals. As the momentum behind urban renewal increased and the

Oak Street Connector proposal made demonstrable progress toward realization

following Lee's election in 1953, the need to attain some form of community assent

— actual or manufactured — became an increasing political necessity. Lee's

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[225] Domhoff, 81.
[226] Domhoff, 80-83.

promised Citizens Action Commission (CAC), part of his 1953 campaign platform, came to serve this role. Conceptually, such a committee could provide a platform for those community members affected by urban renewal; in practice, however, the committee members were carefully selected to represent the interests of the city's political stratum, selling the idea of urban renewal to the community on behalf of the Lee Administration while simultaneously allowing the mayor to present their views as community involvement and support. Thus, while the CAC was ostensibly giving voice to New Haven's citizens, it actually continued to serve the interests of the city's political stratum and thereby silence those actually living with the consequences of urban renewal.

Lee had promised that within sixty days of taking office, he would appoint a special committee of prominent citizens to consider the needs of the city and help create a common vision of redevelopment for New Haven. In actuality, though, it would take Lee five months to find a chairman to head up the CAC, and almost a year before he could publicly announce the committee's formation.[227] Sources differ on the reason for this delay: some claim local business leaders were hesitant to appear so close to the political business of City Hall, or disliked Lee for various reasons; other sources claim that the mayor was wary of giving the overeager (and traditionally politically conservative) business leaders too much control over urban renewal.[228] The outcome of this delay, however, is undisputed: Carl Freese, the president of a local bank, was appointed as the committee's chairman, and Yale University

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[227] Dahl, 120; Domhoff, 97; Allan R. Talbot, *The Mayor's Game: Richard Lee of New Haven and the Politics of Change* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), 64.
[228] Talbot, 64; Domhoff, 97-101.

President A. Whitney Griswold was appointed as a vice-chairman. Other members of the CAC included the president of the New Haven Chamber of Commerce; the dean of the Yale Law School; John Golden, now a Democratic national committeeman; the president of the State CIO Council and the secretary-treasurer of the State Federation of Labor; leaders of New Haven's most prominent manufacturers; an investment firm president; the chairman of the power company; the manager of a large chain store; the Italian-American president of a construction company; an elder statesman of the Jewish community; prominent members of the city's legal profession; and individuals who had special status in housing, welfare, education, and industrial development.[229] "In addition to the CAC itself," writes Dahl, "there were six special committees; these in turn had nearly thirty subcommittees. Altogether the CAC and its subcommittees had over four hundred members, drawn mainly from the educated, activist, middle-class segments of the community, the very people who ordinarily shunned direct participation in partisan politics."[230] Thus, the CAC did encompass a broad cross-section of New Haven's citizenry; yet, it was still led by men who represented the business and institutional interests to which Rotival had catered his redevelopment plans back in 1951.

Even among those rank-and-file members of the CAC's myriad subcommittees, however, this broad cross-section of New Haven citizens was not

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[229] Talbot, 64; Dahl, 131. It should also be noted that, with regard to labor leaders, manufacturers, and retail businesses — groups whose interests are not necessarily traditionally aligned — a prosperous central business district and increased commercial activity in the city actually served all their interests. In terms of bringing business to New Haven, for unions, management, and ownership alike, a rising tide would truly raise all ships, as more business meant more income for all three groups.
[230] Dahl, 131.

necessarily representative of the views of the residents of urban renewal project areas. Firstly, as Dahl notes, most were "educated, activist, and middle-class" — a far cry from the poor minority immigrants living in neighborhoods such as Oak Street. Secondly, as the members of the CAC and its subcommittees were appointed by the Lee Administration, they were essentially political appointees — selected either because they were seen as allies of City Hall's urban renewal efforts, or because courting their loyalty with an appointment would favor the political cause of renewal. Finally, membership on a CAC subcommittee was a largely nominal position. Most of them rarely met, and when they did, few members attended.[231] Thus, while the Lee Administration and the CAC leadership were politically strategic in which community members they chose to become part of their rank and file, there was little operational risk for City Hall in subcommittee appointments but much potential political gain. As a result, despite the wide diversity of CAC members, none were chosen to give voice to any potential opposition to urban renewal — and even if they had been, there was little they could have done within the subcommittees to make any opposition actionable.

As a whole, then, from its top leaders to its lowliest subcommittee members, the CAC was a political tool of City Hall. Although the CAC was marketed to New Haven voters as a way to give citizens a role in the consideration of the city's needs and the creation of an urban renewal plan, this was far from the truth. The CAC had no initiatory function in urban renewal, nor was it ever intended to have one.[232] Indeed, "[e]xcept for a few trivial instances, the [CAC] never directly initiated,

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[231] Dahl, 134.
[232] Dahl, 120; Domhoff, 97, 101-102.

opposed, vetoed, or altered any proposal brought before them by the Mayor and his Development Administrator."[233] According to multiple former members, urban renewal plans were usually fairly extensively developed by the Redevelopment Agency and the Lee Administration by the time they were presented to the CAC. In fact, most members could not recall a single program they had modified, much less opposed or vetoed.[234] This was because, from its start, the CAC was intended to be only a nominal form of citizen participation. In the words of one former CAC member, "The CAC was the Mayor's creation. He initiated it, picked its members, provided the staff support, and sat in on its meetings which were held in his office. He and sometimes [Development Administrator Edward J.] Logue would speak; we listened, and then reacted."[235] And the intended reaction of the CAC was to extend the legitimacy of citizen support to any project that the Lee Administration wanted to pursue:

> Its functions in urban redevelopment seem to have been roughly equivalent to those performed by the democratic rituals of the political parties in making nominations for public office; citizen participation gave legitimacy and acceptability to the decisions of the leaders, created a corps of loyal auxiliaries who helped to engender public support for the program and to forestall disputes.[236]

The CAC's approval of any given urban renewal project, then, was a formality of engineered political theater — albeit one carefully choreographed to manufacture

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[233] Dahl, 131.
[234] Dahl, 131-132.
[235] Talbot, 65.
[236] Dahl, 133.

public support from a diverse but calculated sample of New Haven's various interest groups.

The illusion of widespread citizen support the CAC's charade created, however, did more than forestall dispute from within New Haven — it helped make urban renewal in New Haven a story of national curiosity. In the early days of the city's urban renewal programs, the CAC was the subject of lead or feature stories in national publications such as *Harper's Magazine*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, and *Architectural Forum*. These stories praised the CAC as a model of community involvement:

> The *Forum* writer, for instance, represented the CAC as a "resurgence" of community and business activity, and went on to suggest that it was "…far more than a sounding board…The commission may assume a planning function by making specific recommendations on a proposed project, or it may help set policy by charting the lines the city should follow in attacking its problems."[237]

While it was technically true that the CAC "may assume" such functions, in actuality it never did, nor was it ever actually intended to do so. Yet the addition of positive national press generated by the CAC to its effects of "social osmosis" helped give urban renewal in New Haven "an aura of invincibility."[238] Throughout the planning stages of the Oak Street renewal project, the CAC would serve this purpose without fail.

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[237] Talbot, 65.
[238] Ibid.

For those who did dare to challenge the leviathan — in both the allegorical and Hobbesian sense — of urban renewal and attempt to make their voices heard over the hegemony of the CAC, the Lee Administration took pointed and directed action to silence their dissent. This was most apparent in the ways they handled the legally mandated public meetings on urban renewal. These public meetings could, potentially, become forums for dissent, so they were carefully managed by the city. As few meetings as legally required were held, as were the public notices of the meetings, which were often limited to a small notice in either the *New Haven Register* or the *New Haven Journal-Courier*. Little, if any, attempt was made to reach out to the affected residents directly. Notices were often posted, however, in the newspapers of surrounding suburbs such as the *Branford Review*, *East Haven News*, *Hamden Chronicle*, and *West Haven Town Crier*, reflecting the extent to which projects such as the Oak Street Connector were designed to meet the needs of Greater New Haven's suburban residents, rather than the City of New Haven's urban residents. The scheduling of these public meetings also played a crucial role in mitigating the risk of effective dissent. Meetings were often scheduled for times when working people could not attend — usually in the early afternoon — but businessmen with an interest in the project could. These efforts appear to have been effective. For example, one newspaper story reporting on a public meeting held by the highway commissioner reported that the audience of 300 attendees consisted of "mostly business people" and characterized the non-attendance of the residents as apathy or tacit approval of the project on their part.[239]

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[239] Jackson, 39.

Despite these precautions, measures were also taken to ensure that any dissenters who did manage to attend the public hearings were silenced, or their dissent made irrelevant. The meetings were usually scheduled so far into the legislative or budgetary timeline of the project that modification of the project would be practically impossible.[240] In terms of the way the meetings themselves were conducted, various strategies were employed to maintain the manufactured semblance of consensus:

> The three most common tactics were identifying the State Highway Department (rather than the city) as the responsible part for redevelopment concerns, arranging the agendas to frontload the city's experts, placing the opportunity for public comment at the very end of an extremely long meeting, and using the expert testimony — which often took up the bulk of the public meeting — to focus public attention on the "undesirable" elements in neighborhoods or blocks slated for demolition.[241]

Any dissent was thus put through a Kafkaesque bureaucratic runaround by the first process, silenced altogether by the second process, or dehumanized by the third process.

In support of the first effort, Mayor Lee, his staff, and the New Haven Redevelopment agency all took pains to emphasize that the meetings were organized by the State Highway Department — albeit at the city's invitation. Furthermore, in October 1955 the mayor suggested the Highway Department open a local office in the Oak Street neighborhood to answer residents' questions, although "[t]he mayor was

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[240] Ibid.
[241] Jackson, 40.

unclear as to what this office should say to or do with concerned Oak Street residents, since the state was not legally obligated (nor was it willing) to take any responsibility for residents or business owners displaced by the highway connector, but he was clear about the need to give the office 'widespread publicity.'"[242] Thus, the mayor was intent on fostering confusion as to which responsibilities fell to which level of government in order to deflect blame from the city onto the state and to discourage dissent through frustration.

In support of the second effort, Redevelopment Agency leaders such as executive director Ralph Taylor understood that "it would be bad publicity relations for the various official agencies to utilize so much time that opponents could claim they were shut out." Recognizing the need to allow some nominal space for dissenting voices, that space was then tightly controlled to limit the possibility of damage to the city's agenda and to turn public opinion against any possible opposition within a meeting. This was accomplished by having the open public comment portion of the hearings held after expert testimony, often "late enough to have the audience restive if an opponent gets too long-winded, but not so late everyone couldn't be heard even if the hearing lasts until midnight."[243] Dissent was thus given a small outlet, but one strictly controlled by city officials in order to marginalize dissent and ensure that as few people as possible were audience to it. This was designed to forestall direct action against urban renewal, thus preventing dissent from gaining much traction with the public.

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[242] Ibid.
[243] Jackson, 40-41.

Finally, in support of the third effort, redevelopment officials carefully scripted the testimony of expert witnesses to focus on the supposed moral vices of the neighborhood in order to dehumanize its residents. For example, in the course of one public hearing held on December 1, 1955, testimony was heard from multiple city officials that forwarded this agenda. Chief of Police Francis V. McManus testified that Oak Street attracted "the worst elements. The bad eggs — the dope pushers — the vice rings — the numbers racket operators — the prostitutes — all gravitate toward the area." Having characterized the residents of Oak Street in broad strokes as members of the criminal class, he referred to the benefits of clearance and renewal of the area in saying, "If you turn a flashlight on a rat, he'll run. The same is true of criminals and that's just what we'll do — we'll keep them on the run until they learn that New Haven is no longer a comfortable place for their kind."[244] His testimony was joined by that of City Court Judge Charles Henchel, who testified about the prostitution and sexual deviancy allegedly prevalent in the neighborhood; Dr. Clement F. Batelli of the Department of Public Health who chose to highlight, among other things, venereal disease in the neighborhood with his testimony; and expert testimony from officials of the welfare office, which cited the high rates of sexually transmitted diseases in the neighborhood as the predominant reason for its residents' reliance on welfare. Having appealed to moral panic, the city could more easily make a case for clearing a neighborhood of "rats" — criminals, prostitutes, deviants, and welfare abusers — on an emotional basis of "public health and safety" than having to address the actual logistical concerns of resident displacement and relocation, or the

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[244] Jackson, 41.

more conceptual concerns of justifying the need for a highway connector in the first place.[245] The neighborhood's residents were therefore not community partners in renewal in the eyes of the Lee Administration and his redevelopment staff, but rather were obstacles in the way of an urban vision.

In contrasting the differences between how Mayor Bailey interacted with the community in Middletown and how Mayor Lee and his administration interacted with the community in New Haven, it becomes evident that very different interests were driving urban renewal in each city, shaping the relationship between civic leadership and community members. In Middletown, commercial concerns were certainly a driving force behind urban renewal, and the institution of Wesleyan University certainly took an interest in the mayor's urban renewal plan. Yet Bailey's insistence on putting urban renewal to a referendum, his willingness to have open meetings with residents every night in the week leading up to the referendum, his proactive stance in reaching out to the affected residents specifically, and his promotion of these measures on television, radio, and in the newspaper reflected his philosophical belief in the role of government in relation to the governed. It made accountability to the community will and identifiable responsibility of civic leadership the standard operating procedure of urban renewal in Middletown, and made urban renewal an endeavor driven by community interest above all else. In New Haven, on the other hand, it is clear that as far back as 1951 that urban renewal as designed by Rotival was intended to serve the commercial interests of the central business district and the institutional interests of Yale University above all else. Thus, once urban renewal in

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[245] Jackson, 41-42.

the city gained momentum under Mayor Lee's leadership, the standard operating procedure of urban renewal became one of manufactured public consensus. This was created by means of the CAC, which to the casual observer appeared to be a mechanism of community inclusion but that, on closer inspection, was stacked with business, political, and institutional leaders — the city's political stratum — and merely served the purpose of fulfilling the "democratic ritual" of manufactured public assent. Once that "assent" was established, it was built into a maintained sense of consensus by systematically marginalizing, silencing, and dehumanizing any possible sources of dissent. This created the type of "aura of invincibility" around urban renewal in New Haven that is commonly associated with the power of political machines, the tradition that Lee had risen to power in and represented.

As will become evident in the following chapter, these differing approaches would lead to very different processes of urban renewal in each city. And, as Newton's Third Law of Motion states, "For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction." This would prove to be as true for the relationship between civic leadership and community members as it is for physical bodies. While neither city's urban renewal process would be completely devoid of community challenges, it would be a much smoother process in Middletown, where less force was applied on the community by civic leadership. In New Haven, however, where the civic leadership applied much more force on the community, the voiceless residents upon whom urban renewal was afflicted could only remain disenfranchised and placid for so long — and when they pushed back, it would be with an equal and opposite reaction.

Part III

The Decline of Urban Renewal

Chapter V

Equal and Opposite Reactions: Urban Renewal, Civic Leadership, and

Community Response

As urban renewal progressed beyond its first projects in Middletown and New Haven and the realities of the urban renewal process — the relocation of residents, the dispersion of neighborhoods, and the social and monetary costs of renewal itself — became apparent to the cities' citizens, community resistance against urban renewal began to arise. The forms that community responses against urban renewal took were shaped in part by national movements such as the civil rights movement and, later, the rise of the historic preservationist movement. Yet the intensity with which resistance occurred was often in reaction to the policies of local civic leadership, leading to movements in Middletown and New Haven that in some cases shared similar concerns but that ultimately manifested differently in each city. In this way, the response to urban renewal in both cities was reflective of developments on both the national scene and in the specifics of local urban renewal projects.

Resistance to urban renewal in both Middletown and New Haven appeared soon after the first renewal projects, and only continued to grow and develop as urban renewal continued. From the late 1950s and early 1960s through the 1980s, resistance to urban renewal occurred in three general stages. Initial resistance came from conservative forces, in both the political and social senses of the word. In New Haven, these conservatives were largely small business owners whose businesses had relied on the community *status quo* of the Oak Street neighborhood to support their

livelihoods. Having been rendered voiceless in the demolition of their neighborhood and the relocation of their customer base, some of these business owners turned against urban renewal. In Middletown, the conservatives who first opposed urban renewal were of a more political stripe, led by Republicans who opposed the cost of urban renewal projects to Middletown's taxpayers and, subsequently, the Redevelopment Agency's implementation of Bailey's referendum system. The second stage of resistance in both cities was associated with the northern iteration of the civil rights movement and arose out of the growing racial tensions in urban America that focused on the racial motivations — both perceived and actual — behind urban renewal projects. This second stage played out in a much more dramatic and extended way in New Haven, a city that — owing to the demographic effects of white flight — had a much more heavily black population and experienced higher levels of racial tension. The third stage of urban renewal resistance was the rise of the preservationist movement and, in the late 1970s and into the 1980s, its eventual inclusion in the process of urban planning in both cities. This stage of resistance was the most successful in affecting a paradigm shift in urban planning, due in large part to the authority that academics from Yale and Wesleyan brought to their cities' respective preservation movements in the eyes of civic leadership.

The varying methodologies of resistance utilized in these different stages, and the varying levels of success these methodologies achieved in affecting both specific renewal projects as well as the broader paradigm of urban renewal, correlate with the ways in which civic leadership and community members interacted. On the one hand, those citizens who were increasingly both impacted by urban renewal policies and

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excluded from the policy-making process often became the ones who, in equal and opposite fashion, turned to increasingly radical methods of organized resistance. On the other hand, those citizens who were ultimately able to affect the policy-making process were often given agency on account of their education, social influence, and wealth, illustrating the ways civic leadership often granted agency to resistance movements on the basis of class, education, and race.

The first signs of citizen resistance to urban renewal appeared as the Oak Street project moved from conception to implementation. As clearance of the neighborhood, relocation of its residents and businesses, and construction of the Connector got underway and the realities of the process of slum clearance became increasingly tangible, the city started to face resistance from both the press and from citizens. The August 5, 1956 headline of the *New Haven Register* declared that the renewal of Oak Street was "Making a Business of Being Destructive", and compared the desolation of the demolished neighborhood to "the open areas found in many bomb ravaged cities of Europe after the last war." To combat these criticisms, the Citizens Action Commission (CAC) undertook a public relations campaign of newspaper ads, billboards, and radio spots promoting "The *New* New Haven."[246] Yet, as the project progressed and increasing skepticism was focused on the city's renewal efforts, the efficacy of the CAC as a force for creating a sense of unified support for the project began to falter. As the Commission's director, H. Gordon Sweet, later recalled:

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[246] "Making a Business of Being Destructive", *New Haven Register*, August 5, 1956; Jackson, 45.

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The CAC was basically a sales group, and it did a good
selling job. But there comes a time to stop selling and to
deliver a product. Dick [Lee] and Ed [Logue] had some
problems starting in 1958 with the downtown program.
All the releases and reassuring statements in the world
by the CAC just could not change that…There should
be a burial ground for organizations once they outlive
their original purpose, as they all eventually do. The
CAC deserved a dignified, respectful burial. Instead, it
was kept breathing.[247]

Turning away from the increasingly ineffectual CAC, Richard Lee and his
administration opened the Progress Pavilion on the corner of Church and Chapel
streets, in the heart of downtown New Haven. Inspired by exhibits at the world's
fairs, the Pavilion was a 2,500-square-foot concrete hall that served as a dedicated
display space for the city's vision of "The *New* New Haven". It also allowed the
mayor to monitor the community for any signs of brewing dissent through the use of
a guest book and the employment of Progress Pavilion receptionist Anita Palmer,
who reported on visitors' questions and comments to Lee in weekly internal
memos.[248] In this sense, the Progress Pavilion not only promoted urban renewal to
New Haven's citizens, as the CAC was struggling to do, but also allowed the mayor
and his administration to conduct surveillance of the community's views in a more
candid way that the politically designed nature of the CAC inherently could not
facilitate.

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[247] Allan R. Talbot, *The Mayor's Game: Richard Lee of New Haven and the Politics
of Change* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), 66-67.
[248] Jackson, 45-49.

Indeed, the continued existence of the CAC at this stage of the Oak Street renewal project did not produce a unified base for urban renewal, as it was intended to and had initially done; instead, it served to highlight the division between the commercial interests within the city's political stratum — which had influence on the CAC and stood to benefit from the construction of the Connector — and the small businesses that were being forced to grapple not only with the reality of their stores' relocation, but also with the dispersal of their customer bases. While some more enterprising and sophisticated business owners took advantage of relocation as an opportunity to improve their business prospects, many "mom and pop" businesses closed down in the face of relocation. Likewise, many of these businesses' customers who rented rather than owned their homes suddenly found themselves displaced from their homes without the benefit of compensation their landlords received. Neither the CAC nor the mayor and his officials could smooth the fear and anxiety relocation inspired in the small business community. Having been rendered voiceless throughout the planning process of the Oak Street Connector, many of the displaced businesses began to protest their dislocation in the pages of the local press, in the streets, and in the courts.[249] Indeed, between 1958 and 1960, the New Haven Redevelopment Agency was the named defendant in at least four lawsuits in state courts.[250] Nevertheless, at this stage the only legal remedies plaintiffs could hope for was

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[249] Talbot, 67-69.

[250] See Jones v. New Haven Redevelopment Agency, 21 Conn. Supp. 141 (1958); Moss v. New Haven Redevelopment Agency, 146 Conn. 421 (1959); M & S Lesser Inv. Co. v. New Haven Redevelopment Agency, 21 Conn. Supp. 404 (1959); and Del Vecchio v. New Haven Redevelopment Agency, 147 Conn. 362 (1960).

monetary compensation for their former properties and businesses. Construction of the Connector continued unimpeded.

Governor Abraham A. Ribicoff officially opened the Oak Street Connector on Monday, October 26, 1959, in a rainy afternoon ceremony attended by a crowd of 2,000 and presided over by New Haven Chamber of Commerce President Gerald G. Hotchkiss. The ceremony included a declaration by Yale University president and CAC vice-chairman A. Whitney Griswold "who lauded the connector for cultural value to be derived from its completion." By Friday of that week, the Connector was opened to the public so motorists could "reach their destination quickly and directly" by driving in and out of downtown New Haven at highway speeds.[251] Thanks to the efforts of the CAC, the Connector had come to fruition, and what community resistance there was to the project came too little and too late to prevent it. Despite the beginnings of community resistance, the aura of invincibility (and inevitability) about New Haven urban renewal was preserved, at least for the time being.

At the same time as New Haven's renewal efforts were first encountering resistance from small business owners, urban renewal in Middletown was experiencing its first resistance as well. Stephen K. Bailey served just one two-year term as mayor before refocusing on his academic career by accepting a position as director of graduate programs at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School and

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[251] "Further Delays Loom on Connector Work", *New Haven Register*, October 27, 1959; "Oak Street Connector is Dedicated by Gov. Ribicoff", *New Haven Register*, October 27, 1959; "Cars Travel on Connector After Delay", *New Haven Register*, October 30, 1959.

departing from Wesleyan, Middletown, and politics.[252] Following Bailey's departure, urban renewal continued under the procedures of community involvement that he had pioneered in Middletown. Yet, while City Hall and the Middletown Redevelopment Agency initially continued to adhere to the letter of Bailey's methodology, they did not necessarily continue their efforts in the spirit of his philosophy.

Following the Court Place project, passed under Bailey's mayoralty in the January 1954 referendum, Middletown's civic leadership continued to redevelop the city's East Side. The next phase of this plan, redevelopment of a site south of the Court Place project area, was labeled the Center Street project. On June 23, 1958, the city held a referendum on whether or not to approve a bond of up to $850,000 to fund the Center Street project.[253] Leading up to the referendum, the issue was the subject of intense debate. Mayor Harry T. Clew campaigned for the project, claiming that it would not cost the city's taxpayers any money but that a failure to renew Middletown's central business district could necessitate increased taxation in the future. The *Middletown Press* and the League of Women Voters both endorsed the Center Street project, echoing Clew's argument. In its May 27, 1958 endorsement of the project, the *Press* argued that "[t]he alternative to progress is stagnation." In a full-page ad supporting the bond, published in the *Press* on June 20, 1958, the League

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[252] "Mayor Plans 'Courtesy' Call in Connection With N.J. Job Offer", March 10, 1954, in *Mayor Stephen K. Bailey Scrapbook, Middletown, CT, 1952-1954*, Special Collections & Archives, Olin Memorial Library, Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT; "Bailey Will Resign [From Wesleyan] To Accept Job At Princeton", April 27, 1954, in *Bailey Scrapbook*.
[253] Bishel v. City of Middletown, 21 Conn. Supp. 212 (1959).

of Women Voters invoked Bailey's legacy: "Remember what Mayor Stephen K. Bailey said, 'A community cannot stand still; it either goes forward or it dies.'"[254]

On the opposing side of the debate was a group of conservative leaders, small business owners, and city residents who formed the Taxpayers Association. The Taxpayers Association's arguments represented the interests of all three of its constituent interest groups. The group's small business owners — naturally adverse to change for many of the same commercial reasons as Oak Street's small business owners were — worried the Center Street development would displace their customer base and introduce competing businesses to the city's central business district. The group's political conservatives made a fiscal argument against the project, challenging Clew's claim that the project would not cost Middletown's taxpayers any money. The Center Street project, they argued, would thus bring harm to the city's taxpayers while also displacing 171 families from the project area. Advocates for residential reuse, who argued for residential construction rather than purely commercial renewal, joined the group in this concern. Chief among these advocates was Republican leader Max Corvo, publisher of the newspaper *The Middletown Bulletin*, which primarily served the city's Italian community.[255] His advocacy suggested that perhaps some members of the city's Italian community had come to regret their displacement under the Court Place project.

Middletown's voters apparently found the Taxpayers Association's arguments

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[254] Claudia Center, "Urban Renewal and Citizen's Groups in Middletown, Connecticut" (1987), *Student Papers About Middletown Collection*, Paper 20, Special Collections & Archives, Olin Memorial Library, Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT, http://wesscholar.wesleyan.edu/middletownpapers/20/, 10-11.
[255] Center, 9-10.

convincing. In a referendum with a higher-than-expected turnout of 6,316, the project was voted down 3,555 to 2,761. Following this defeat, Mayor Clew conceded that the project was a "dead duck", though he held out hope for future renewal projects. Following the fall's municipal elections, however, the Democrat-controlled Common Council revived the Center Street issue. On November 3, 1958, the Council passed a resolution calling for a second referendum on the project to be held on January 26, 1959.[256] The Taxpayers Association was outraged. Their president, former mayor Lester M. Gowin, declared, "On June 23, 1958, the voters of Middletown expressed the views of the majority in a referendum vote on the proposed Center Street redevelopment plan. In complete disregard of the results of this referendum vote the Redevelopment Agency is ignoring the decision of nearly 4,000 citizens who voted against it and another referendum date has been set."[257] As characterized by Gowin, the city was deviating from Bailey's philosophy of responsiveness to the majority by holding the second referendum.

The Taxpayers Association appealed to the state courts, seeking an injunction against the second referendum. On January 23, 1959, state Judge John C. Cotter handed down his decision. Although Cotter acknowledged that "[t]here is no question that there is hardship upon the part of landowners, tenants and others when more than one election is held…but this is inherent in any substantial public project, whether it be schools, sewers or any public undertaking. The exercise of legislative power

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[256] *Bishel* at 212; Center, 11.
[257] Center, 11-12. Gowin was the incumbent mayor and one of two candidates defeated by Bailey in the election of 1952.

cannot be limited by an assertion of economic hardship."[258] Furthermore, he declared,

barring a clear legal violation of election laws, the state courts were not the

appropriate remedy for electoral "dissatisfaction":

> The necessity for legislative action, like the expediency
> and wisdom of an enactment, is a question which lies
> beyond the judicial realm. Dissatisfaction, if any exists,
> with the action of the legislative body can be expressed
> by the electorate at the proper time rather than by the
> courts, unless a clear violation of the law can be found.
> No charter or statutory restriction has been placed upon
> the common council with respect to the frequency of
> submitting such a question to the voters. A measure
> defeated at the polls without such a restriction may be
> resubmitted to the people at the will of the legislative
> body. The court cannot by its opinion create a
> restriction which does not so exist. To create a standard
> as to time within which resubmission may take place
> would be to legislate by judicial decree. This it cannot
> do.[259]

The Democrat-controlled city government, having overcome this legal hurdle,

proceeded with its second referendum. The second referendum, much like the one

held five years earlier under Mayor Bailey, occurred in the midst of a snowstorm,

depressing voter turnout. Additionally, the referendum was marred by a voting

scandal in which 486 votes were called into question, although this number was

ultimately not enough to affect the outcome of the election. Despite these setbacks in

the second referendum, the Center Street project was approved by a vote of 1,730 to

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[258] *Bishel* at 213.
[259] *Bishel* at 213-214, internal quotations and citations omitted.

1,071.[260]

While the influence of Stephan Bailey's philosophy of community inclusion and assent can still be seen in Middletown's urban renewal procedures, it is clear that the spirit of his philosophy was eroding without his guidance to oversee the process. While no evidence suggests that any protests of the sort some displaced Oak Street business owners had resorted to occurred in response to the city's second referendum, the political maneuvering undertaken by the Middletown's redevelopment supporters had disenfranchised the winners of the larger first referendum and had, in turn, provoked the first significant legal challenge to urban renewal in Middletown. Thus, while proponents of urban renewal ultimately prevailed, it is worth noting that as their tactics became less inclusive, resistance from other community groups resulted. The first stage of urban renewal resistance, in this way, foreshadows future challenges, which would emerge in response to even greater acts of political disenfranchisement and exclusion.

Despite the emergence of early strains of conservative business and political resistance to urban renewal in both New Haven and Middletown, the Oak Street Connector and the Center Street project were both considered urban renewal successes in their respective cities. This encouraged redevelopment proponents in each city to continue pursuing their visions of reshaping urban space, one renewal project at a time. Indeed, in New Haven, easy access to the newly constructed Connector was presented as a selling point in marketing the next urban renewal

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[260] Center, 12-13; City of Middletown, Connecticut Department of Planning, Conservation and Development, "Redevelopment in Middletown, Connecticut" (January, 2009), http://www.middletownplanning.com/temporaryfiles/RDA_History.pdf, 4.

project, which targeted the lower Dixwell Avenue neighborhood.[261] The area of Dixwell Avenue under consideration for renewal was "one of the densest, busiest thoroughfares in the heart of the city's black community",[262] including what the New Haven Redevelopment Agency considered the "worst two blocks" of the neighborhood surrounding the Elm Haven housing project.

The ways in which the Redevelopment Agency would reimagine and redevelop Elm Haven and the surrounding neighborhood laid bare the racial tensions of urban renewal policies in a city experiencing white flight. In 1940, the black population of New Haven was 6,235, representing a mere 3.88 percent of the city's population. By 1960, less than a year after the completion of the Oak Street Connector and as the clearance and redevelopment of Elm Haven and the surrounding neighborhood was being planned, New Haven's black population had increased to 21,700 or 15.09 percent of the city's population. In this same period, the white population of New Haven had decreased by 32,646, representing a proportional drop of 11.4 percent. As the 1960s brought turbulence and racial conflict to the nation's urban centers, and as suburbanization continued to draw whites away from cities, this demographic trend in New Haven intensified. By 1970, the city's black population had increased to 35,606 or 27.65 percent of the city; white population, meanwhile, decreased by an additional 29,905, leaving only 71.23 percent of New Haven's population white.[263]

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[261] Jackson, 59.
[262] Jackson, 55.
[263] U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Race and Age by Sex, With Rural-Farm Population, For Minor Civil Division, By Counties: 1940 — Con.", *Past Census Information about Middletown, Connecticut,* accessed March 17, 2015,

In the face of such dramatic demographic change, black neighborhoods such as lower Dixwell and, in particular, low-income housing such as Elm Haven represented what was, for some white residents, a threat to the white elite's vision of the city:

> [Elm Haven] was built in 1939, expanded in the 1950s, and by 1960 had become…a terrifying example for alarmist white New Haven of what a "black" city would look like. More than 600 of the project's 855 units housed black families — many of them considered "problem families" by New Haven's social service agencies. It was a pocket of concentrated poverty in the backyard of Yale University, and was seen as both an embarrassment to Mayor Lee and a threat to "Old Blue."[264]

The neighborhood's proximity to "Old Blue", in particular, complicated the relationship between the Dixwell community and the institutional interests of Yale as a bastion of white, male affluence.[265] This proximity lent the Dixwell project its name, after Redevelopment Agency employee Eric Sandahl noticed its location and created promotional brochures for "University Park Dixwell". This name, in many ways, reflected what Lee called in September 1961 "a new type of urban

http://www.middletownplanning.com/documents/Census/1940_CensusPop_middletown002.pdf; U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Household Population, By Age, Race, and Sex, for Selected Urban Places and Counties: 1960", *Past Census Information about Middletown, Connecticut*, accessed October 27, 2014, http://www.middletownplanning.com/documents/Census/1960_CensusPop2_middletown006.pdf; U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Age, Race, and Sex of the Household Population: 1970", *Past Census Information about Middletown, Connecticut*, accessed October 27, 2014, http://www.middletownplanning.com/documents/Census/1970_CensusPop2middletown003.pdf.
[264] Jackson, 56-57.
[265] Jackson, 76.

construction" his administration was "pioneering" in Dixwell — a type that was "by most accounts, a *suburban* type, in which expansive parking lots fronted widened streets, and horizontal shopping plazas interrupted formerly vertical mixed-use arrangements of apartment buildings, shops and offices, and single- and multifamily housing."[266]

In Dixwell, specifically, the plan called for the demolition of more than 200 buildings including Elm Haven, necessitating the relocation of approximately 500 families — over 400 of which were black, according to the city's Housing Authority director. All this demolition was planned despite the fact that a 1958 survey found only thirty-six of the houses in the area were "unfit".[267] Clearly, the aim of urban renewal in Dixwell was not the elimination of materially substandard housing, but rather the reshaping of an entire neighborhood in both purpose and demographic make up. The 200 demolished buildings were to be replaced by fewer yet more expensive housing units and retail development. Twenty-two buildings, representing 500 units of primarily low-rent housing, were replaced by a $2 million commercial center christened "Dixwell Plaza". This wholesale destruction of low-income housing was typical of the Dixwell renewal project. In the name of reducing overcrowding, by 1967 the Lee Administration claimed that "[a]bout seven hundred slum dwellings have been cleared and slightly more than four hundred new ones are scheduled to be built, half of which are already up and occupied."[268]

Not only were almost half of the residents to be displaced from their

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[266] Jackson, 51.
[267] Jackson, 55-56.
[268] Talbot, 146.

neighborhood, mathematically speaking, but the other half could not afford to buy the housing that was to replace their "slum dwellings". While most of the housing that was targeted for demolition was in good condition, it was almost universally low-income housing; the row houses that were to replace them, however, were mostly co-op housing intended for moderate income households, with high pricing and required down payments.[269] A black resident named Lula Parker who, like many other black residents, was told by a co-op manager that she "wasn't making enough money" to buy into the new development, summed up the sense of betrayal felt by many of the displaced residents in a letter to Mayor Lee written three weeks before being vacated from her low-rent apartment: "I would like to know why people with low income can't get into the co-ops. I thought the reason these co-ops are being built was so that people with low income could live in them."[270] Others voiced their concerns more publicly, as local attorney Sherman Drutman did when he wrote an open letter to the mayor published in the *New Haven Register* on August 6, 1960. "Where are the 500 families that will be forced to move from this area to go?" Drutman asked. "When you told the audience [of Dixwell residents] assembled at the Winchester School that they stood 'at the threshold of creating a new and finer Dixwell neighborhood,' did you also tell them how much it might cost them to live there?"[271]

The city presented these costs as a novel method of integration, ostensibly carried out at the behest of the Dixwell community. As former Lee Administration adviser Allan R. Talbot explains, the project was undertaken by Dixwell community

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[269] Jackson, 57-59.
[270] Jackson, 59.
[271] Jackson, 62.

organizations with the specific aim of integrating the neighborhood:

> The first new development, called the Florence Virtue
> homes after one of the long-time residents of the
> neighborhood, consists of a hundred and twenty-nine
> units sponsored by the Dixwell Congregational Church
> as a [moderate-income] cooperative. In an effort to
> integrate its project, the church undertook a low-key
> promotion pitch for tenants with liberal organizations,
> other churches, and Yale.[272]

According to Talbot, after the church's efforts "failed to attract white buyers", the

Redevelopment Agency brought in Sandahl to advertise the development to the

intended market demographic. His brochures, rebranding the overall project as

University Park Dixwell, depicted young, white, middle-class nuclear families

enjoying various tasks of domestic life and boasted of such suburban amenities at

Florence Virtue as "private entrances, patios, off-street parking, and attractive

landscaping."[273] Talbot goes on to claim that this rebranding of the project as

University Park Dixwell by the Redevelopment Agency, combined with the relatively

low housing cost (for new middle-class residents, anyway, if not the displaced low-

income residents) resulted in a 60-40 split of black and white families at Florence

Virtue. He continues:

> The Dixwell Congregational Church and the planners
> are encouraged by the results of the first housing
> development. There is a strong hope that the new
> elementary school in the Dixwell area will be integrated
> as the other new housing is opened and more white
> families move in. There are few cities genuinely

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[272] Talbot, 146-147.
[273] Jackson, 55, 58.

attempting to use renewal as a means of transforming a Negro ghetto into an integrated neighborhood with integrated schools.[274]

In the eyes of the white, ruling elite of the city, who oversaw urban renewal from City Hall and represented the interests of Yale and the central business district, this novel means of integration was a resounding success. Indeed, Mayor Lee even claimed in a March 8, 1962 letter to Jackie Robinson that relocating almost 3,000 families throughout the city constituted a civil rights victory.[275] Yet this "integration" was accomplished by suburbanizing the neighborhood in order to attract white, middle-class families, a move that did not sit well with the existing black, lower-income community.

The problem with this suburban type of construction lay in the way the associated phenomena of suburbanization and white flight created two distinct, increasingly racialized urban worlds: the black urban sphere, and the white suburban one. As Mayor Lee himself declared, in explaining to local civil rights activists why the city did not need municipal fair-housing legislation, not only did Connecticut already have similar state statutes, but also "discrimination is much more a suburban problem than an urban one." As Mandi Isaacs Jackson points out: "One could hardly disagree with the mayor's logic there. Discrimination *was* a problem exacerbated, reified, and written in concrete through the process of suburbanization. This was precisely why a 'suburban' plan for the Dixwell neighborhood…awakened such ire in

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[274] Talbot, 147.
[275] Jackson, 63.

the more radical segments of New Haven's civil rights community."[276] Where some individuals and organizations — including some community-based ones such as the Dixwell Congregational Church — saw integration and neighborhood revitalization, others saw the slow creep of gentrification intended to remove poor blacks and replace them with middle-class whites. In July 1961, not far from the University Park Dixwell development, New Haven's first mosque opened its doors. At its dedication, Malcolm X spoke to a packed crowd of over 150 men, women, and children. "Integration is just a white man's technique to slow down Negro progress," he told them. True integration, he declared, would never happen because "white men don't intend that it should."[277]

While national figures such as Malcolm X decried the folly of integration from the podium, the issue of urban renewal split local civil rights leaders by creating an atmosphere in which a new generation of leaders preached a more militant and radical form of resistance by actively working within the Dixwell community to organize direct action against urban renewal, while the older generation attempted to maintain amicable ties with the civic leadership. The New Haven chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) traditionally operated within middle-class circles and through conventional political means. As such, it maintained close ties to the Lee Administration, which helped advance its goals, such as greater integration of the New Haven Police Department.[278] Yet, as the agenda of urban renewal progressed in the city, the moderate methods of the old

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[276] Jackson, 50.
[277] Jackson, 54, 63.
[278] Jackson, 65.

guard NAACP became inadequate — even oppositional — in the eyes of residents in

neighborhoods such as Dixwell, as it became clear to them that more radical and

direct methods would be necessary to give voice to their grievances against urban

renewal.

As part of this shift to radicalization, the New Haven NAACP elected James

Gibbs as its president in 1959. Gibbs was not part of the old guard leadership, but

instead a young radical. From 1953 to 1954, he had briefly been active in the Dixwell

branch of the Communist Party, and during his five years as an NAACP member

prior to being elected to its presidency, he had worked on the group's political action

committee to transform the chapter into a more radical organization. Thus, his

election as president did not sit well with the NAACP's national leadership, the New

Haven NAACP's old guard leaders, or the mayor's office, all of which tried

repeatedly to unseat him.[279] Yet, his election and, later, community support for his

radical methods were reflective of the frustration of New Haven's black population

with both City Hall's urban renewal strategies and lack of community engagement,

and with the more restrained approach of the NAACP old guard.

Gibbs soon acted on his more radical agenda, earning him both the ire of the

NAACP establishment and the support of the Dixwell community. On September 21,

1961, he announced that his members would stage a sit-out protest in the middle of

Dixwell Avenue to protest urban renewal and the city's housing policies.[280] The idea

of a sit-out was one introduced to the city about a year earlier, on July 29, 1960, by

Mayor Lee of all people. At a talk on the civil rights movement before the

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[279] Jackson, 65-66.
[280] Jackson, 64.

Seventeenth International Sunday School Convention of the Church of God in Christ,

a black church group, Lee had nonchalantly broached the idea:

> Why not a sit-out to follow the sit-ins? What is a sit-out? Just imagine if all the people who live in the slums of our great cities were to leave their tenements, take chairs into the middle of the street, and sit out under the stars some fine summer evening at 5:30. Perhaps then when traffic ground to a halt and commuters were late for supper, we could convince some of the bankers and landlords and business men who make their livings in the cities but live in the suburbs to take a walk through the slums and see the conditions that prevail.

Lee's suggestion caught other city officials by surprise. As police officials clarified

that anyone caught sitting in the street would be arrested for obstructing traffic, Lee

backpedaled by saying that such tactics were meant for cities such as New York or

Detroit, but that "New Haven was solving the problem of slums." At the time, Gibbs

had told the *New York Times* that the idea was "being studied" by the local NAACP

as a method to bring attention to housing discrimination in New Haven.[281]

Apparently, Gibbs had indeed been studying the idea. A few days after his

September 16 announcement of a sit-out, he held a meeting of over 200 NAACP

members in the Winchester School auditorium to officially propose a "sit-out for

decent housing" as a way of demanding low-income housing construction, fair-

housing enforcement, and black involvement and representation in the redevelopment

process. This radical proposal of direct action did not sit well with the more

established elements of the NAACP. National branch director Gloster Current, in

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[281] "Sit-Outs Proposed in Slum Streets", *New York Times*, July 30, 1960.

attendance at the Winchester School meeting, threatened to revoke the New Haven chapter's charter if they proceeded with the protest. Yet the assembled community members were ready to take action, and responded to Current's threat with shouts of "Uncle Tom!" and "Sellout!" Another local NAACP leader and Democratic candidate for alderman Blyden Jackson declared, "As long as the Negro has lived in New Haven, we have had a ghetto…promises…and no action!" The crowd rewarded this statement with cheers and applause. The more moderate old guard of the NAACP was flustered by the support for this radical call to direct action. They quickly called for an adjournment of the meeting and tabled a vote on the sit-out for two weeks. In the interim, according to Gibbs, the chapter's membership increased by 50 percent.[282] It was clear that the community members were ready to embrace direct action against urban renewal, even if the NAACP was not — and that is precisely what they did.

Following the contentious Winchester School meeting, Jackson withdrew from the NAACP, founded a local chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and announced that his new organization would sponsor the sit-out. In the interim, CORE members picketed in front of City Hall and the nearby Progress Pavilion, carrying signs decrying the city's urban renewal policies and the mayor's hypocrisy in excluding the Dixwell community from decisions about its own neighborhood. One sign read, "No University Towers on Dixwell", referencing the graduate student housing being constructed as part of the Oak Street project. Another simply said, "'I would take my chair and sit out in the street' — Dick Lee". On October 6, 1961, 250-300 protesters met in Goin Park, adjacent to the future site of

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[282] Jackson, 66.

the Florence Virtue townhouses, and listened to Gibbs — who, earlier that week, had resigned from the NAACP — speak about the need for low-income housing, anti-housing discrimination legislation, and fair public redevelopment hearings. After Gibbs's address, 100 of the protesters marched from the park to Dixwell Avenue, where they staged a peaceful, if brief, sit-out.[283]

Not only had the city's exclusionary, racialized, suburban renewal strategies brought about direct action — quite literally at the mayor's suggestion — but the city's black population, feeling voiceless and powerless, had split from the moderate influence of the NAACP and turned to increasingly more radical groups such as the local CORE chapter and Black Nationalist groups. In May of 1962, the NAACP held a debate as part of its annual Race Relations Forum between two radical speakers, one more radical than the other. On the one side was former local NAACP leader Roger Williams, who had been "kicked out" of the group for participating in CORE's 1961 direct actions and subsequently founded his own group called Action for Equality. Williams — along with fellow former NAACP members Jackson and Gibbs — was more radical than the old guard NAACP leaders who had ousted him, but still favored the ultimate goal of integration. His opponent, Malcolm X — visiting the city for the second time in as many years — took an even more radical tack, however, declaring the "hypocrisy of the white world, the folly of integration, and 20th century 'Uncle Tom' preachers." In front of a standing-room only crowd of 600, packed into the Winchester School's auditorium, the two debated. Malcolm X's speech was interrupted with cheers and applause seventeen times in the course of thirty minutes,

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[283] Jackson, 66-67; "Sit-Out in New Haven", *New York Times*, October 7, 1961.

and the *Open Gate News* later declared him the overwhelming victor of the debate.[284] The city leaders' vision of "integration" and their exclusionary methods of implementation clearly did not sit well with the Dixwell community, and had driven some of them beyond the threshold of mere radicalism into the grounds of anti-integration Black Nationalism.

The October 1961 sit-out was politically very well timed, as it coincided with municipal elections, forcing the mayor and his allies onto the defensive about urban renewal. With all this community unrest afoot, Lee's political opponents at all levels of government smelled blood in the water and moved to criticize his urban renewal efforts. At the neighborhood level, multiple aldermen and aldermanic candidates criticized the mayor. In addition to Jackson, who founded CORE and organized the 1961 sit-out while running as a Democratic candidate for alderman, Republican aldermanic candidate Willie Pritchett said in a September 17, 1961 statement to the *New Haven Journal-Courier* that "Mayor Lee and his stooges are ignoring the human problems confronting New Haven's Negro population."[285] Sitting aldermen, too, were willing to criticize the mayor and the Redevelopment Agency. In the spring of 1962, sitting Republican alderman Richard Belford wrote a letter to the Redevelopment Agency, followed by multiple statements to the press, "demanding that [they] 'confer closely with citizens…in renewal areas,' emphasize rehabilitation over demolition, keep the public and press better informed of their plans, and 'avoid "high pressure glowing publicity" that contains "unrealistic dreams" about redevelopment.'"[286]

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[284] Jackson, 71-72.
[285] Jackson, 64.
[286] Jackson, 70.

Republican candidates for citywide office, too, used the opportunity to attack Lee. James J. Valenti, campaigning for the Republican mayoral nomination, saw the growing resistance as a key weakness in Lee's agenda. Seeking to capitalize on this weakness, his campaign organized a visit with 300 Dixwell neighborhood families to "ask their opinion" about urban renewal, after which he called for an "immediate halt" to all demolition in the area. Valenti revealed that some displaced residents could not find housing at "comparable costs" and were paying twice as much for housing after relocation. By summer 1961 his campaign had collected 600 signatures — of which, Valenti estimated, 95 percent were from Dixwell residents — on a petition calling for an immediate halt to demolition and new public hearings on the city's housing problems and on the Dixwell renewal plan. "It's a clear cut mandate," he declared to the *Journal-Courier*.[287]

As the municipal elections drew nearer, national level Republicans entered the fray of the urban renewal debate. In late October, speaking in support of the Republican Party's ultimate mayoral nominee Henry T. Townsend at a fundraising dinner, United States Senator Prescott Bush called New Haven's redevelopment plans "overly ambitious", exclaiming how distressed he was at the "vast areas which have been laid waste by the wrecker's ball and the bulldozer, and by the slowness with which rebuilding has taken place." Bush continued by pointing to the recent Dixwell sit-out, specifically, as an example of "either a failure on the part of the administration to plan in time to provide proper housing for the families who will be displaced by that project, or a failure to communicate those plans to the people whose

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[287] Jackson, 69-70.

lives are being affected and give sympathetic understanding to their problems."[288]

It is worth noting, as a brief aside, that these political concerns extended beyond the immediate 1961 municipal elections. In speaking out against urban renewal in New Haven, Bush was targeting a long-serving Democratic mayor who was seen as a potential future challenger for his senate seat.[289] On the local level, it is worth speculating that the organization of city government may also have contributed to urban renewal policies of relocation. New Haven's Board of Aldermen operates on a jurisdictional basis, with each alderman representing a specific ward within the city.[290] Due to this, wards could hypothetically be gerrymandered by dispersing dissenting populations through relocation and by "packing" dissenting minority neighborhoods such as Dixwell with white, middle-class supporters of urban renewal. While the research for this project has uncovered no specific evidence that the Lee Administration explicitly pursued such a policy, it is notable that during Lee's tenure as Mayor of New Haven, the Republican Party controlled no more than nine of the thirty-three seats on the Board of Aldermen at any given time — though usually no more than three and, occasionally, none at all. In this same period, the number of black members of the Board never exceeded four out of thirty-three, despite the fact that the city's black population was increasing as the white population was

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[288] Jackson, 70.
[289] Ibid.
[290] New Haven City Charter, art. IV, § 1, accessed March 17, 2015,
https://www.municode.com/library/ct/new_haven/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId
=TITONE_CONSISTS_FINAL_REPORT_CHARTER_REVISION_COMMISSION
_PROPOSED_REVISED_CHARTER_APPROVED_BOARD_ALDERMEN_PURS
UANT_C.G.S._7-191_D_NEW_HAVEN_AUGUST_5_2013_ANNOTATED.

decreasing.[291] In Middletown, on the other hand, members of the city's Common Council all serve as at-large representatives,[292] making such gerrymandering impossible and therefore removing such consideration in deciding which neighborhoods to demolish and where to relocate displaced residents.

The Lee Administration did not, however, stand idly by as dissent mounted within the Dixwell neighborhood. At the inception of the University Park Dixwell project, the Redevelopment Agency had opened the Dixwell Project Office, venturing for the first time into the project area they were seeking to redevelop rather than deferring such responsibility to state agencies, as they had in Oak Street. The Dixwell Project Office actively tried to generate community support within the project area while minimizing dissent through what the mayor's office called a "human relations project". To accomplish this goal, the mayor's office created the Dixwell Neighborhood Renewal Committee and appointed select members from the community to it. The committee held its inaugural public meeting on August 10, 1960, and the meeting was deemed a resounding success due to the lack of dissenting voices from those in attendance. This attempt at courting neighborhood support, however, was ineffectual in preventing the increasing radicalization and resistance that grew in the neighborhood throughout 1961. This failure largely had to do with the stereotyped views the Redevelopment Agency held about the neighborhood's culture and community leaders. As an October 31, 1960 internal memo from the

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[291] "Mayoral Aldermanic Elections, 1909-2001", in *Historical New Haven Digital Collection*, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT, accessed August 17, 2014, http://www.library.yale.edu/thecitycourse/Data_Tables/Politics/Mayoral_Aldermanic_Elections_New_Haven_1909_2001.xls.

[292] Middletown City Charter, Ch. III, § 1, accessed March 17, 2015 http://ecode360.com/12335076.

city's Human Relations Advisor to Mayor Lee stated, the Dixwell Project Office would pursue the support of "some of the Negroes on the Avenue who could be considered 'natural leaders'…bartenders, barbers, ex-prize fighters, a poolroom operator, and 'just men on the street.'" The problem with this approach was that it did not target those community members who were in fact most affected by urban renewal, and therefore most interested in the issue: "Although the decisions of the [Redevelopment Agency] affected families, the agency imagined the arbiters of the street and leaders of the community as a collection of male figures, most of whom were vaguely associated with vice and sport."[293] As opposition to his administration's urban renewal plans mounted toward the end of 1961, first within the Dixwell community itself and then from his political opponents, Lee realized that his "human relations project" would need to be refocused.

As criticism mounted from all corners throughout 1961, Lee reshaped the Dixwell Neighborhood Renewal Committee into a more concentrated tool of community control under the guise of community engagement. In early August, Lee announced the formation of a more formal advisory committee for the neighborhood. This committee was, essentially, a neighborhood-scale version of the CAC. Much like the CAC, the advisory committee was charged with reviewing, advancing, and making specific recommendations on the city's urban renewal proposals. Yet, also much like the CAC, all the committee's members would be appointed by Lee himself, and the committee would be limited to the power to advise and consent — it would have no decision-making powers. Charles Twyman, the chairman of the Dixwell

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[293] Jackson, 61-62.

Neighborhood Renewal Committee, would also serve as the chairman of this new advisory committee. As Twyman described the committee in a 2004 interview, "They needed a lay component, you know, a group of citizens who were supposed to sort of have oversight. That's maybe too gracious a word, but I mean that's what it was supposed to have been."[294] What the committee became instead — aside from another form of manufactured community involvement the city could use to deflect criticism — was a tool for the Lee Administration to monitor and manipulate the Dixwell neighborhood's community sentiment.

By the end of 1962, the Dixwell Project Office and the advisory committee were firmly, if clandestinely, entrenched in this role. For example, some time after November 1962, some local residents wanted to march and confront the chief of police at a neighborhood cleanup day. When Twyman found out about the planned march, he and James Mitchell, the Project Office's new director of community relations, relayed their intelligence to the police chief. Twyman, concerned that a confrontation with the chief could escalate into police violence, suggested to him, "Why don't you put out the red carpet and receive them?" Having gotten the police chief to agree, Twyman then went back to Dixwell and — without mentioning his earlier meeting — suggested to the marchers that they broach their concerns with the chief in a non-confrontational manner, rather than march. The agitators did so and were warmly received by the chief, as planned. "We took great pride in the fact that we had manipulated this thing," recalled Twyman, and so at the time, he saw his actions as having prevented a potentially disastrous confrontation. Yet, in hindsight,

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[294] Jackson, 61, 71.

he came to regret his role in helping the redevelopment officials silence public dissent and control his community. Twyman, speaking in 2004, admitted, "This wasn't a good thing to do, it really wasn't. At the time it felt good, but then sooner or later [Dixwell residents] began to see through it. They would ask for this much [a lot], and they would get this much [a little], and they would be sort of satisfied because they got something. What I feel now is if they ask for this much, they should get this much."[295] Although Twyman felt at the time that he was serving his community, he realized in hindsight that he and his committee members were being manipulated just as the protestors had been. "We didn't realize that we were sort of playing in the hands of another plan, a grander plan," he admitted. "I don't think that they were setting us up or anything. I just think that it just worked this way and we weren't perceptive enough to understand all the inner workings of what was happening."[296] Instead of responding to dissent by furthering community engagement or giving voice to the concerns of poor, black slum dwellers, the Lee Administration used its advisory committee to further extend the scope of its control over any areas of dissent.

On the other hand, communities that embraced urban renewal in New Haven — including its racialized elements — were given access to the renewal process. In this way, Wooster Square once again represents a point of contrast to elsewhere in the city. There, as in Dixwell, urban renewal took on a racial overtone, but in Wooster Square this sentiment was shared by the community, and may have originated with it. As Talbot suggests, such sentiment marked a readiness for community-based urban renewal efforts: "Negro migration to the city accompanied [urban] decline, rather

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[295] Jackson, 73-74.
[296] Jackson, 71.

than causing it as some New Haveners believed. (One candid Wooster Square citizen said, 'When the colored began moving in, we knew our neighborhood was in trouble.') Wooster Square was ready for urban renewal." Talbot claims that, in the Wooster Square community's enthusiasm for renewal, the city saw "the opportunity to prove 'that we could rebuild a neighborhood with a scalpel not a bulldozer' by cutting away the pockets of slums, replacing them with new life, and renewing the old neighborhood rather than building a new one." This, he argues, was the reason for the city's close collaboration with Wooster Square's residents in planning the neighborhood's rehabilitation. Yet, as Talbot admits, the fact remains that "[m]any, if not most, of the residents of Wooster Square saw renewal quite differently; namely, as a means of removing Negroes. So while the city staff and the neighborhood residents worked closely on planning (a process which essentially saw the city propose and the residents say yes or no), the motivations were entirely different."[297]

Despite this sentiment, Talbot argues, that Wooster Square's rehabilitation represented a model of integration. "The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Italians, and Irish who live there moved in freely," he boasts. Furthermore, he points to Wooster Square as a teachable moment in race relations: "The original Italian families of Wooster Square have learned a lesson that liberal critics often choose to ignore, that urban renewal does not necessarily mean Negro removal."[298] The use of the word "necessarily" as a qualifier, however, suggests that he believed urban renewal often does mean removal of black residents.

Certainly, blacks — and, undoubtedly, residents of other races as well — of a

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[297] Talbot, 137-138.
[298] Talbot, 143, 144.

certain class were targeted and removed as part of Wooster Square's rehabilitation. Rehabilitation often required expense on the part of the property owner to achieve, at least when the owners retained ownership of their property instead of selling it to the Redevelopment Agency to rehabilitate, as was sometimes the case. While the Redevelopment Agency and the Federal Housing Administration worked with local banks to help some Wooster Square residents receive loans and mortgages to fund rehabilitation, the costs necessarily displaced some residents. As Talbot admits, "No one is completely sure what happened to those who used to live in the [formerly low-income] Court Street rooming houses. Some owners were too poor to rehabilitate their homes." In the case of at least some of the Wooster Square's houses, this led the owners to sell to the Redevelopment Agency and, presumably, move away. Rehabilitation thus represented another form of government-sponsored gentrification, removing residents who could not afford to rehabilitate their property and replacing their formerly low-income housing with "[d]ifferent kinds of new housing for the elderly and for families of upper, middle, and moderate income [giving] the neighborhood the variety that city life is supposed to give."[299]

Thus, while the rehabilitation of Wooster Square was not necessarily race-based in the same way that the redevelopment of Dixwell was, it was certainly tinged with class elements that did not "necessarily" lead to the removal and exclusion of blacks, but most certainly did lead to the removal and exclusion of certain types of residents — many of whom may have been black. The inclusion of the Wooster Square community in the renewal of their neighborhood, when taken in contrast with

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[299] Talbot, 138-140, 145.

the exclusion of Oak Street and Dixwell Avenue residents, also shows that the city would give residents a voice in the renewal of their neighborhoods if they embraced the racial and class implications of the project and if their inclusion did not stand in the way of the institutional and commercial interests of the political stratum — as the existence of Oak Street as a neighborhood instead of a highway connector did.

In the late 1960s, Middletown, too, began to redevelop the so-called "South End" of its downtown neighborhood — an area that was home to mostly black residents — with a project it called Metro South. Between funding from the federal government, the state government, and a non-cash credit system that allowed the city to discount contributions from non-profit organizations such as Wesleyan University and Middlesex Hospital to the project area from its financial burden, the Metro South project cost the City of Middletown nothing. (Wesleyan built its High Rise and Low Rise student apartments as part of the project, while Middlesex Hospital built an expansion along South Main Street.)[300] This meant that the city declined to hold referenda for many elements of the Metro South development,[301] disenfranchising many of the South End's black residents from the political inclusion they had previously enjoyed as Middletown citizens with the Court Place and Center Street projects.

The initial promise of residential construction as part of the Metro South development garnered the support of the approximately 200 black families who lived in the project area and stood to benefit from the construction of new housing. As the 1960s became the 1970s, however, the project went through a series of private

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[300] Department of Planning, Conservation and Development, 6.
[301] Center, 15.

developers, and, as part of this shuffle, the idea of residential reuse was eventually dropped in favor of purely commercial and institutional construction, much to the chagrin of the displaced black residents. These residents were therefore relocated to Maplewood Terrace, Long River Village, and Traverse Square, three nearby low-income housing projects, instead of benefitting from the promised residential reuse. Some of the displaced residents saw the decision to relocate blacks from Main Street in favor of commercial development as racially motivated. Idella Howell, one of the displaced residents and a former member of the community group the South End Family Association, recounted in a 1987 interview, "I seen it as if they thought that blacks needed someplace by themselves but not too close to Main Street." Apparently, this was a sentiment others shared with Howell, as she recalls that "[t]here was the feeling that redevelopment only happened in black areas."[302]

Howell and other members of the South End Family Association attempted throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s to bring the grievances of displaced residents to the attention of the Middletown Redevelopment Agency, and to negotiate with the agency on behalf of their neighbors. The Association members argued first for a revival of residential reuse and, failing that, later for greater relocation money, more uniform property compensation, better information from the Redevelopment Agency, temporary eviction relief for some residents, and for relocation to low-income housing instead of housing projects. The projects, they argued, were not where most of the displaced South End residents wanted to live, and specifically they argued that Maplewood Terrace was too far from downtown Middletown, creating

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[302] Center, 16-18, 19.

problems for those residents who did not have cars. Howell and other former South End Family Association members later described how their grievances and attempts at negotiation fell on deaf ears: "Mrs. Howell described how Agency members would promise to look into an issue, for example scattered housing [which was preferred to projects], and then go ahead to authorize the construction of project housing."[303]

In 1969, Mayor Buddy Sbona increased minority representation on the Redevelopment Agency by appointing two black members to its policy-making level; however, dissenters argued that such a move was purely for show, "as the black interest could always be outvoted."[304] Consequently, one of Sbona's two appointees resorted to the press to draw attention to the mistreatment of black displaced residents. In April 1974, William Sneed "started a campaign to ensure proper payment of relocation and rent assistance to displaced blacks." He alleged that many former South End residents had been deprived of rent differential assistance that could amount to $4,000, and that the Redevelopment Agency's policy of denying sub-tenants rent assistance violated Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulations. Redevelopment Director Joseph Haze blamed the oversights on bureaucratic confusion, but Sneed accused the Agency of deliberately deceiving black residents to cheat them out of their compensation. Although Sneed's complaints initially drew the Redevelopment Agency an official reprimand from HUD, the federal department later cleared the Agency of all allegations.[305]

While there is no denying that the Middletown Redevelopment Agency did

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[303] Center, 19-21.
[304] Center, 22, 20.
[305] Center, 22-23.

commit some transgressions against the city's black community — primarily, refusing to address the concerns of the South End Family Association and denying displaced residents their rent assistance — most of the accusations laid against it can either be dispelled or were minor when compared to the actions of the New Haven Redevelopment Agency. While Howell alleged that "redevelopment only happened in black areas", one need only look at the city's previous renewal projects — Court Place and Center Street — to see that renewal in Middletown affected all residents of the East Side, whether they were Italian (as in Court Place), black (as in Metro South), or another racial or ethnic group. Furthermore, while New Haven's black population increased from 9,605 (5.84 percent of the city's total population) in 1950 to 35,606 (27.65 percent) in 1970, Middletown's black population only increased from 544 (1.83 percent) to 2,185 (6.57 percent) over the same period; likewise, while New Haven's white population decreased by 62,907 — a proportional drop from 94.03 percent of the population to only 71.23 percent — during that same time period, Middletown's white population increased by 1,770, netting a proportional decrease of 5.19 percent. Middletown's white population in 1970 still represented 92.9 percent of the city's population.[306] Simply put, unlike New Haven where white flight was actively occurring, there were not enough blacks in Middletown to make targeting only black areas through three decades of urban renewal possible.

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[306] U.S. Bureau of the Census, "General Characteristics of the Population, for Standard Metropolitan Areas, Urbanized Areas, and Urban Places of 10,000 or More: 1950—Con.", *Past Census Information about Middletown, Connecticut*, accessed October 27, 2014, http://www.middletownplanning.com/documents/Census/1950_CensusPop_middletown007.pdf; U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Age, Race, and Sex of the Household Population: 1970", Age, Race, and Sex of the Household Population: 1970".

With regard to the relocation of South End residents to the Traverse Square, Maplewood Terrace, and Long River Village housing projects, the relocation was not nearly as disjointed as similar operations in New Haven. Contrary to the claims of the South End Family Association, Maplewood Terrace is located less than a mile's walk from the South Green,[307] the southern anchor point of Middletown's central business district. While this is certainly less convenient than living on Main Street itself, under most circumstances this could hardly be considered a serious impediment to residents' livelihoods.

Moreover, unlike in New Haven, there was no major attempt to disperse the black population throughout the city. By relocating the South End's residents to three nearby locations, businesses could retain their customer bases and social connections could still be maintained, at least to some extent. (Maplewood Terrace and Traverse Square are within one mile of each other.)[308] As discussed earlier in this chapter, this difference between relocation methods in Middletown and New Haven may have had a political element, as gerrymandering on the municipal level is not possible in Middletown but is in New Haven. Regardless of whether or not such a political motive was at play in the relocation process, however, the fact remains that South End residents were relocated together and kept as close to their former residences as possible — luxuries few of New Haven's displaced black families could claim.

By the 1970s, a third wave of resistance to urban renewal was gaining traction in both Middletown and New Haven in which historic preservation trusts became

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[307] Google Maps, "Walking Directions From Maplewood Terrace to Union Green", accessed March 18, 2015, https://goo.gl/maps/49JcE.

[308] Google Maps, "Walking Directions From Maplewood Terrace to Traverse Square", accessed March 18, 2015, https://goo.gl/maps/lYpu7.

more active, successful, and authoritative forces in advocating against urban renewal. This wave, combined with a changing national dialogue towards urban renewal generally, would see far more success in halting destructive renewal policies in both cities. While the New Haven Preservation Trust was founded first — in 1961, over a decade before the Greater Middletown Preservation Trust[309] — it found itself in an uphill battle against the forces of urban renewal. During its first decade of existence, what New Haven Preservation Trust founder Margaret Flint dubbed the "Ten Years' War", New Haven's preservationists were able to save a few notable buildings from imminent destruction, including the façade of New Haven's City Hall, the main branch of the New Haven Free Public Library, and the Federal Courthouse that, ironically, was renamed the Richard C. Lee Courthouse in 1998 in honor of the mayor whose programs once called for its demolition.[310] Noted Yale architectural historian Vincent Scully credits Flint with giving the academic pursuits of the university's architecture scholars practical application in the fight against urban renewal: "…Peggy separated us from our ivory towers and forced us to put what we knew at the service of our city. I am proud to have been drafted into her army; as an art historian, I owe her a moral debt I have never ceased trying to repay." Nevertheless, Scully laments the damage that urban renewal did to his city despite the efforts of

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[309] New Haven Preservation Trust, "Preservation in New Haven", accessed March 13, 2015, http://nhpt.org/index.php/about_new_haven/preservation_in_new_haven/; Elizabeth A. Warner, *A Pictorial History of Middletown*, (Virginia Beach, VA: The Donning Company Publishers, 1990), 164-165.

[310] New Haven Preservation Trust; Vincent Scully, "Yale in New Haven: An Introduction", in *Yale in New Haven: Architecture & Urbanism*, Vincent Scully et al. (New Haven: Yale University, 2004), 22; Cara Rosner, "Under Construction", *Daily Nutmeg*, November 7, 2014, http://dailynutmeg.com/2014/11/07/under-construction-richard-c-lee/.

Flint and the Trust: "And if it had not been for the heroic resistance of Margaret Flint…New Haven would have been hurt even more seriously than it was. What if all those connectors had gone through? The wounds were grievous enough in any case and have never entirely healed."[311] The aura of invincibility surrounding urban renewal during the Lee Administration, it seemed, even overruled the early resistance of educated, Yale-affiliated preservationists.

The preservation efforts in Middletown, though started later than in New Haven, saw more immediate success. The Greater Middletown Preservation Trust was founded in 1972 and shortly was making headway in fighting against the tide of urban renewal in Middletown. The Trust championed the idea of rehabilitation of historic structures in Middletown and, although the city's official renewal strategy had to this point been focused on clearance and redevelopment, as early as June 1972 the Redevelopment Agency had adopted a resolution to focus more closely on rehabilitation and reuse rather than demolition.[312] Likewise, founding member of the Trust John F. Reynolds III was accepted as a Metro South developer in 1974, a role he sought as part of his efforts to save three historic Middletown houses. In 1972, he purchased the three houses — which were then slated for demolition, but had been built in 1747, 1771, and 1837 — from various parts of Middletown for $1 each. Despite complex negotiations regarding Reynolds's responsibilities under the city's fire code and delays caused by lack of financing for the project, by 1977 Reynolds had worked with the Redevelopment Agency and the Common Council to save the three houses from demolition and relocate them to Agency-owned land at the corner

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[311] Scully, "Modern Architecture at Yale: A Memoir", in Scully et al., 299-300.
[312] Warner, 164-165; Center, 24-25.

of Main and Old Church streets which had originally been cleared for apartments.[313]

The relationship between the Agency and Middletown's preservationists was not always so cordial, however. A major point of contention was the Metro South project's plans for Middletown's historic South Green. The plan called for Church Street to be linked directly to Union Street and for South Main Street to be linked directly to Broad Street. This realignment would supposedly improve traffic flow in the project area, but would bisect the South Green and would result in the destruction of the historic Mather-Douglas House located at the corner of South Main and Church streets. The South Green was placed on the National Register of Historic Places on August 12, 1975, yet HUD and the Redevelopment Agency claimed that because their redevelopment plans predated the historic designation, they were exempt from the prohibition against allocating federal money toward the destruction of recognized historic structures. In response to the burgeoning conflict, Mayor Anthony S. Marino held public hearings of the Common Council throughout July 1976 to debate the issue, which resulted in a decision by the Redevelopment Agency to delay implementation of the project. During the public hearing process, four of the five Council members who supported preservation were Republicans. The delay, coupled with the partisan nature of the preservationists' Council support, displeased the Democratic mayor, who in early August called a special meeting of those Agency and Council members he considered "open-minded on the subject." Following this meeting, the Council Democrats pushed through a vote on August 2 supporting the Agency's plan to sign on a developer for the road project, and the following day, the

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[313] Center, 25-26; Warner, 166; Department of Planning, Conservation and Development, 5.

Agency signed a contract with the D. Arrigoni Company. Preservationists were outraged by the actions of the Council Democrats, and progress was once again halted throughout the month of August as negotiations were undertaken between the city and the preservationists to try and avoid a legal challenge to the project.[314]

Dissatisfied with the direction of the negotiations, the preservationists took the city and HUD to court. They quickly formed a citizens group called the Committee to Save the South Green, retained the services of local attorney William Howard, and on September 27, 1976, the Committee and the Trust filed a motion against HUD and the Redevelopment Agency in Federal District Court in Hartford to stop the redevelopment of the South Green.[315] On November 5, Judge M. Joseph Blumenfeld announced his decision, which found that HUD had violated the National Environmental Protection Act by failing to conduct an environmental impact study of the road alignment project and the National Historic Preservation Act by failing to request comments from the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation before instructing the Redevelopment Agency to proceed with the project. He concluded that starting the project despite such violations would cause "irreparable injury" to the Middletown preservationists, and therefore ordered that HUD and the Redevelopment Agency be enjoined from implementing the road project or demolishing the Mather-Douglas House. Following the successful lawsuit, the Redevelopment Agency and the Preservation Trust negotiated for another year and a half before reaching a compromise on the details of redevelopment for the area surrounding the South Green

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[314] Department of Planning, Conservation and Development, 5; Center, 26-28; Committee to Save the South Green v. Hills, No. H-76-328, 7 ELR 20061 (D. Conn. Nov. 5, 1976).
[315] Center, 28; *Committee to Save the South Green* at 20061.

and, as a result, final federal approval of the project was not obtained until January 1979.[316]

With lawsuits such as the one brought by the Committee to Save the South Green, preservationists demonstrated how new federal laws such as those cited in the South Green decision were making clearance and redevelopment-style renewal increasingly expensive and legally perilous in old cities such as Middletown and New Haven. Consequently, redevelopment agencies began to work in conjunction with preservation trusts, rather than against them. By 1977, for example, the Greater Middletown Preservation Trust and the Middletown Redevelopment Agency had formed an "ad-hoc committee" to address issues of renewal and preservation. Following this increased cooperation between the Trust and the Agency, rehabilitation began to replace demolition as the standard mode of renewal in Middletown, and the last major demolition project in Middletown occurred in 1978 to make way for the Metro Square development.[317] Likewise, by the late 1970s and early 1980s, the New Haven Preservation Trust had become "an accepted authority" and was being consulted by the City of New Haven, Yale University, and individual property owners on matters of development, planning, and preservation. As a result, the number of National Register Historic Districts in New Haven jumped from three to 18 over the course of the 1980s.[318] Simultaneously, lawsuits such as the South Green case were bringing increased publicity and public support to the cause of preservation. This is illustrated most clearly by Marino's path after leaving City Hall.

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[316] *Committee to Save the South Green* at 20063-20065; Center, 29.
[317] Department of Planning, Conservation and Development, 5; Warner, 165.
[318] New Haven Preservation Trust.

By 1987, the former "arch enemy of the preservationists" was serving as president of the Greater Middletown Preservation Trust. In hindsight, he readily admitted that the South Green lawsuit had served as a "conversionary experience" for him and many other Middletown citizens who thereafter came to have a greater appreciation of their city's history.[319]

The story of community resistance to urban renewal in Middletown and New Haven thus takes a long and twisted path from the early conservative resistance of the late 1950s, to the civil rights and fair housing resistance of the 1960s, and then to the preservationist movement of the 1970s. Yet, by comparing the methods and successfulness of different methods of resistance — between the two cities, between different time periods, and between different neighborhoods within the cities — the relationship between civic leadership and members of the urban community becomes clear.

Ultimately, these comparisons reveal which community members have a voice in the system of civic leadership, as well as where they derive their voice from, and how they exercise it. The most basic voice in the system is, naturally, access to the ballot box. In Middletown, where Stephen Bailey set the precedent of holding public referenda for city-funded projects, resistance was minimal when votes were held and adhered to. On the other hand, when referenda were ignored — as with the Center Street Project — or bypassed altogether — as with the Metro South project — then Middletown saw the appearance of urban renewal resistance. Similarly, in New Haven, where Richard Lee designed a program of urban renewal based on political

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[319] Center, 31.

centralization and control instead of inclusion and community assent, agitation against urban renewal was more widespread and — in its most extreme iterations — resulted in direct action in a way unseen in Middletown.

Community inclusion, however, is more nuanced than mere access to the vote. In New Haven, where direct voting on renewal projects never happened, inclusion could constitute a form of political reward. In Wooster Square, for example, where the community's interests in gentrification and "Negro removal" aligned with those of New Haven's civic leadership, the community was given an active role in planning the renewal of their own neighborhood. This same privilege, however, was denied to the residents of Oak Street — whose impoverished neighborhood stood literally and figuratively in the way of the city's model of suburban gentrification — and to the members of the Dixwell neighborhood, whose race and class were definitionally oppositional to both gentrification and "Negro removal".

Those who have the necessary social and economic capital can inject their voices into the process of urban renewal by way of the legal system. Small business owners in Oak Street, the Taxpayers Association, and Middletown's preservationists — the Greater Middletown Preservation Trust and the Committee to Save the South Green — all exercised this option. While their legal challenges met with varying degrees of success, all were at least able to voice their concerns through the judicial system. In contrast, groups such as the South End Family Association and the New Haven chapter of the CORE lacked the resources, knowledge, and social capital to launch such challenges, and thus could not access this avenue of gaining power in the arena of urban renewal.

The final method of accessing civic leadership proved to be the most effective: intellectual authority. This is evident in the eventual inclusion of each city's respective preservation trust in its apparatus of urban planning and renewal. While the administrations of Yale and Wesleyan universities might have largely supported urban renewal, and benefitted from such renewal in the construction of student housing and the removal of certain undesirable "town" elements near their campuses, that support was not necessarily shared by the individual members of the universities' communities. Since academics often possessed the knowledge to appreciate the architecture and history of historic sites, it is not surprising that many Yale and Wesleyan professors and their families were active in preservation trusts. These supporters included Yale professor of architecture Vincent Scully; New Haven Preservation Trust founder Margaret Flint, whose husband Richard was a professor of geology; Wesleyan classics professor Stephen Dyson; and Nancy Campbell, wife of Wesleyan's thirteenth president Colin Campbell, who would go on to serve with numerous national preservation groups, have an internship program with the National Trust for Historic Places named in her honor, and receive recognition from Congress for her preservation work.[320] These university affiliates brought credentials, means, and social capital to the cause of preservation, helping legitimize it as the alternative to urban renewal in the eyes of civic leadership and the public.

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[320] Center, 23-24; Wesleyan University Career Center, "Nancy Campbell National Trust Summer Internship Program", accessed March 18, 2015, http://www.wesleyan.edu/careercenter/students/grants-and-fellowships/nancycampbell.html; Government Publishing Office, "Tribute to Nancy N. Campbell", *Congressional Record* 140, no. 67 (May 25, 1994). http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CREC-1994-05-25/html/CREC-1994-05-25-pt1-PgS20.htm.

Understanding which community members have a voice in the system of civic leadership begs the question of what options are left to those who do not have a voice in civic leadership. When groups are consistently denied the access to their system of civic leadership within the system itself, they are left with two options: they can resign themselves to inaction, as the South End Family Association did in Middletown, or they can make their voices heard outside the system by resorting to direct and often radical action, as New Haven's CORE membership did. Such radical and direct action often carries the possibility of high reward for the disenfranchised group — for example, halting a neighborhood's demolition — but at a high risk of failure, political reprisal from civic leadership, or the government's exercise of the use of force through police action to uphold the system. For civic leadership, all these options necessitate the need to expend time and resources to address community resistance. They also carry the risk of bad publicity and subsequent political consequences, making it in the best interest of civic leadership to employ genuine efforts of community engagement in urban planning.

Ultimately, then, engagement with the community is the only way for civic leadership to secure itself from citizen resistance. Thus, what the story of urban renewal, civic leadership, and citizen resistance in Middletown and New Haven demonstrates is that engagement in "a responsible political system which will reflect the will of the majority and which will enable the citizens to hold identifiable rulers accountable for policy decisions", as Bailey urged in *Congress Makes a Law*, is often the least risky and most effectual way for civic leadership to engage with its

community. Whether or not these two cities have learned this lesson affects not only

their past history, but also continues to affect their future development.

Epilogue

"What You Do is Not More Important Than How You Do It"

As this thesis is being written, both New Haven and Middletown are attempting to rethink and redevelop aspects of their mid-twentieth century urban renewal programs, and to undo architectural and urban planning mistakes of the past. As they do so, it is clear that the philosophies of Richard C. Lee and Stephen K. Bailey still shape urban policy in their respective cities today, and it would seem that their visions of civic leadership will continue to shape their cities — for better or for worse — for generations to come.

The City of New Haven is currently attempting to redevelop the Oak Street Connector by shortening the highway connector and replacing it with commercial development to reconnect the city's Downtown and Hill neighborhoods, which have been physically and psychologically divided ever since the demolition of the Oak Street neighborhood and the construction of the Connector in its place. Unfortunately, despite the best of intentions, the city appears to be repeating some of the same mistakes of civic leadership and community engagement that it made in the 1950s. As a result, New Haven may be simply rebuilding, rather than removing, the mistakes that Lee's vision produced.

On February 1, 2010, New Haven Mayor John DeStefano gave a speech announcing that, despite the perilous specter of the Great Recession, the city was going to pursue what it christened "Downtown Crossing" — the rerouting of the Oak Street Connector and the redevelopment of the former highway — by unveiling the

first phase of the project, the construction of a 400,000 square foot office building at 100 College Street. If all goes according to the plans of developer Carter Winstanley, the building should be completed and occupied by tenants by the summer of 2015.[321] The project has moved forward despite the fact that during the approval process for 100 College Street and other aspects of Downtown Crossing, it became clear that resistance to the project existed to some extent within neighborhoods, at the municipal level, and on the national scale.

At the neighborhood level, Hill neighborhood alderwoman Dolores Colon questioned whether the business developments of Downtown Crossing would draw in employees and customers from her neighborhood, making its streets livable and pedestrian friendly, or whether the scientists working there — 100 College Street being primarily intended to serve the Yale Medical School and New Haven's burgeoning biotech start-up sector — would continue to adhere to the suburban model of the automotive commuter without engaging with the neighborhood, making the development "look like the Grand Canyon after the sun goes down." East Rock neighborhood alderman Justin Elicker, meanwhile, presented the concerns of New Haven's bicyclists and pedestrians about the transformation of the Connector into a pair of equally unfriendly five-lane throughways. Recalling the public hearings of the Lee era, Elicker's testimony was met by a City Hall-backed counter-protest of "pro-

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[321] Melissa Bailey, "Mayor: Downtown Crossing Can't Wait", *New Haven Independent*, February 2, 2010, http://www.newhavenindependent.org/index.php/archives/entry/state_of_city_2010/; Thomas MacMillan, "Winstanley Vows to Keep 'Listening'", *New Haven Independent*, August 7, 2012, http://www.newhavenindependent.org/index.php/archives/entry/aldermen_ok_downtown_crossing_deal/.

job" advocates, who dragged the alders' September 28, 2011 public meeting out until 11:00 PM, when the issue was tabled from further discussion. These concerns about neighborhood engagement and pedestrian-friendliness were reflected in the statement of Hill resident Dawn Gibson-Brehon, one of only nine black residents to attend a fifty-person public meeting held in the Hill neighborhood on March 7, 2012. "I'm really not going to leave my house and walk across four lanes of traffic and through a barrier of trees, just to go and have a latte in a courtyard outside of a building that doesn't employ or likely may not employ a bunch of Hill residents," Gibson-Brehon said. "I'd like to support my community, but I'm just seeing a disconnect in how Hill residents can take advantage of this space for their own needs."[322]

At the municipal level, multiple citizens' groups objected to the Downtown Crossing plans, criticizing the city's disregard for public sentiment. The New Haven Urban Design League stated as much in their 2012 report on the project:

> After 55 meetings with constituency groups and the general public in two years, where community groups have consistently beat the drum for safe streets, improved transportation options, reduced vehicular traffic, clean air, sustainable land use, mixed uses,

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[322] Melissa Bailey, "Winstanley Pitches Downtown Land Deal", *New Haven Independent*, September 30, 2011, http://www.newhavenindependent.org/index.php/archives/entry/city_unveils_100_college_st._deal/; Neena Satija, "Job-Seekers, Cyclists Clash Over Rt. 34 Redo", *New Haven Independent*, September 29, 2011, http://www.newhavenindependent.org/index.php/archives/entry/contentious_meeting/; New Haven Urban Design League, "A Highway Rebuilt, Not Removed", February 2012, http://www.scribd.com/doc/85534610/TIGER-New-Haven-Concerns-League-03-2012, 5; Uma Ramiah, "A Genuine Real Live Neighbor Shows Up", *New Haven Independent*, March 8, 2012, http://www.newhavenindependent.org/index.php/archives/entry/downtown_crossing_where_ar/.

public spaces and a human scale project — neither the lead developer [n]or the City of New Haven have moved from the original car-centric conception of the project. Essentially, the highway is being re-configured and re-built rather than removed — an outcome that does more harm than good.[323]

As a result of this disregard for the outcome of public meetings, groups such as the Design League held their own public workshops and meetings to develop and propose alternatives to the city's plan. These efforts, too, failed to sway the city, state, or developer from their intended design. Consequently, on the eve of Downtown Crossing's approval by the Board of Aldermen, Elm City Cycling — a local bicycle advocacy group — released a frustrated statement withdrawing their support from the project:

Our members and community partners have attended meeting after meeting. We went to public input sessions. We met with City leaders to review plans. We saw that the new roads look a lot like the old roads. They are big. They are fast. They are dangerous by design, much like the existing roads. ECC and countless other groups submitted letters, plans, written comments and sketches. This input from hundreds of residents was largely ignored.[324]

The Design League's report reflected the feelings of many citizens and citizens' groups about the city's interaction with the public when it stated, "The pattern that

[323] New Haven Urban Design League, 4.
[324] MacMillan; Elm City Cycling, "Statement of Elm City Cycling on Downtown Crossing, August 6, 2012", accessed March 23, 2015, https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=10151984565120043&id=22770130042.

emerges in all these public interactions is that despite a time consuming public process there has been limited engagement on the part of the City with the specifics of the suggestions and concerns raised by the public. This holds true whether the process is initiated by the City (55 meetings) or community groups."[325]

Even at the national level, the Downtown Crossing proposal received criticism. In spring 2012, Mayor DeStefano traveled to West Palm Beach, Florida to present the city's plans at a conference of the Congress For the New Urbanism. Despite criticism from architects, planners, and engineers that the city's proposal would not create livable streets or reconnect the Hill and Downtown neighborhoods, that the city was merely reconfiguring the highway, and that the project "seems like a continuation of…suburbanization", the mayor remained steadfast. To the conference attendees' critiques of his plan, he dismissively replied, "You have no money on the table." He would later complain to reporters, "They just ignore any real discussion of budget constraints, any real grounding."[326]

On the evening of Monday, August 6, 2012, the New Haven Board of Aldermen voted unanimously to approve the zone changes and development agreement necessary to proceed with the first phase of the Downtown Crossing project, bringing a decisive end to three years of often-contentious public debate. Despite the widespread, vocal, and sustained community dissent to the project, the

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[325] New Haven Urban Design League, 5.

[326] Paul Bass, "Mayor Enters New Urbanist Lion's Den", *New Haven Independent*, May 14, 2012, http://www.newhavenindependent.org/index.php/archives/entry/mayor_enters_new_urbanist_lions_den/.

development was resoundingly approved.[327] Sadly, such a statement could as easily be applied to the early urban renewal projects approved by the New Haven municipal government of the 1950s and 1960s as to the present government. Thus, in many ways, it seems the dreams of Richard Lee — which were often nightmares for the citizens they impacted — will continue to live on in New Haven.

Middletown, too, is currently exploring options to redevelop its early urban renewal-era projects. City planners are reexamining the Metro Square retail center, which was part of the Metro South project, and the adjacent Arcade parking lot, which was part of the Center Street project area. Unlike New Haven, however, Middletown seems to have adhered to the philosophies of Stephen K. Bailey and learned the lesson of its previous deviations from them. Despite the desperate need for new downtown parking, the city has constantly made public involvement in its renewal plans a primary concern. Instead of pushing the project forward, the city allocated $95,000 in funding for stopgap repairs to the aging Arcade parking lot and pushed back a referendum vote on a $24 million construction bond in order to relieve Middletown taxpayers while public workshops and meetings continue.[328]

On October 15, 2014, the author attended one such public meeting. In a classroom on the campus of Wesleyan University, the director of the city's Department of Planning, Conservation and Development, Michiel Wackers, presented

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[327] MacMillan.

[328] Alex Gecan, "City Workshop to Examine Future Downtown Development in Middletown", *Middletown Press*, August 1, 2014 http://www.middletownpress.com/government-and-politics/20140801/city-workshop-to-examine-future-downtown-development-in-middletown; Alex Gecan, "Middletown's $24 Million Parking Garage Referendum Postponed", *Middletown Press*, September 18, 2014, http://www.middletownpress.com/government-and-politics/20140918/middletowns-24-million-parking-garage-referendum-postponed.

the city's preliminary plans for Metro Square and the Arcade lot to an audience of approximately thirty attendees, mostly Middletown residents in addition to a few Wesleyan students and professors. Before the start of the meeting, Wackers distributed what he called the "Downtown Doodle", a diagram of the city's plans, with an invitation for meeting participants to make notes and drawings showing what they would keep or change about the concept.[329] The audience listened politely and attentively throughout the presentation, before Wackers opened the session to questions by imploring, "We only get to do this once, which is why we're appealing to you." The audience swiftly complied, deluging him with a seemingly endless barrage of critical questions, critiques, and concerns. Throughout the questions, Wackers primarily listened, answering questions when appropriate but mostly taking notes of the citizens' largely critical remarks. At the end of the meeting, he collected the Downtown Doodles, noting that citizens could continue to work on them if they wanted and then mail them to him.

While it remains to be seen what the future ultimately holds for Metro Square, Wackers's attitude in the October meeting — his openness, attention to criticism, and proactivity in seeking citizen feedback with the Downtown Doodle — combined with the conduct of the city in considering the concerns of its citizens and taxpayers while promoting more public meetings are encouraging signs that citizen engagement and inclusion continue to be important parts of city planning in Middletown. While that does not mean that urban redevelopment in the city has been devoid of dissent or

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[329] City of Middletown, Connecticut Department of Planning, Conservation and Development, "Downtown Doodle", accessed March 23, 2015, http://www.middletownplanning.com/documents/DowntownDoodle.pdf.

controversy, it would seem that, in large part, Bailey's philosophies are adhered to more strongly today than they have been at any previous point since Bailey himself was mayor. The future development of Metro Square will certainly be a litmus test for the endurance of Bailey's ideals in Middletown.

Likewise, Wesleyan and Yale both continue to shape the course of development in their cities, albeit in differing ways that reflect the tone of civic leadership and engagement in Middletown and New Haven, respectively. A stark example of this difference is each university's roles in local retail development. In Middletown, Wesleyan continues to rely on community sentiment to guide its investment decisions. In late 2012, a proposal was brought to the university's administration by the locally based Centerplan Development Company to create a new, multi-level retail center across Washington Street from campus. A major part of the Washington Street proposal was to include a new home for the university's bookstore, as well as retail space for national chains including Starbucks and Chipotle. Due to a long-term plan to divest its properties north of Washington Street and the supposed financial benefits of relocating the campus bookstore to the new development, the Wesleyan administration was initially supportive of Centerplan's proposal and entered into a contract to sell some of its property to the developer, as well as short-term nonbinding contract to move the campus bookstore. In announcing this initial administration support for the project, however, a Wesleyan spokesperson

noted, "At Wesleyan, we look forward to a full discussion of the proposal with our community before reaching any conclusions."[330]

Subsequently, on November 27, as many as 150 Wesleyan students, faculty, and Middletown residents attended a community forum held on the university's campus to express their opposition to the proposal on the basis of pedestrian safety, traffic concerns, and disturbances to residents of an otherwise residential neighborhood. As a result of the forum, university president Michael S. Roth announced on December 4 that Wesleyan would not relocate its bookstore to the proposed development.[331] The day after Roth's announcement, Mayor Daniel T. Drew — who had long been a key proponent of the project — admitted to the

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[330] Stephen Devoto, "Mayor To Speak On Washington Street Development", *Middletown Eye*, November 14, 2012, http://middletowneyenews.blogspot.com/2012/11/mayor-to-speak-on-washington-street.html; Cassandra Day, "Mayor Touts Economic Benefits of Wesleyan Bookstore Relocation", *Middletown Patch*, November 15, 2012, http://patch.com/connecticut/middletown-ct/mayor-touts; Rachel Pincus, "Middletown Residents Speak Out Against Bookstore Relocation, Washington St. Development", *Wesleying*, November 14, 2012, http://wesleying.org/2012/11/14/middletown-residents-speak-out-against-bookstore-relocation-washington-st-development/; Zach Schonfeld, "Liveblogging the Bookstore Relocation Open Forum", *Wesleying*, November 27, 2012, http://wesleying.org/2012/11/27/liveblogging-the-bookstore-relocation-open-forum/; Daniel Greenburg, "University Considers Bookstore Relocation", *Wesleyan Argus*, November 12, 2012, http://wesleyanargus.com/2012/11/12/university-considers-bookstore-relocation/; Stephanie Ling, "Divestment of Wash. St. May Bring Changes to BuHo and Other Program Houses", *Wesleyan Argus*, February 7, 2013, http://wesleyanargus.com/2013/02/07/divestment-of-wash-st-may-bring-changes-to-buho-and-other-program-houses/.
[331] Schonfeld, "Liveblogging the Bookstore Relocation Open Forum"; Jim Salemi, "Wesleyan Won't Move Bookstore After Public Opposition", *Middletown Press*, December 5, 2012, http://www.middletownpress.com/general-news/20121205/wesleyan-wont-move-bookstore-after-public-opposition; Zach Schonfeld, "It's Official: Bookstore is Staying Put", *Wesleying*, December 5, 2012, http://wesleying.org/2012/12/05/its-official-bookstore-is-staying-put/; Daniel Greenburg, "University Will Not Relocate Bookstore", *Wesleyan Argus*, December 6, 2012, http://wesleyanargus.com/2012/12/06/university-will-not-relocate-bookstore/.

Hartford Courant, "I'm not sure exactly what the project will be. My support for the project as proposed was based on the bookstore. The bookstore was the piece I was particularly interested in."[332] Although the mayor later reaffirmed his support for the project and the city's Planning and Zoning Commission unanimously approved a controversial zoning changed favoring the project,[333] without the institutional support of the university, the Washington Street development became mired in opposition and controversy and never advanced beyond a proposal.

What did emerge from this episode, however, was the rise of another community-minded Wesleyan professor to a political office wielding influence over Middletown's planning and development. Following the events surrounding the proposed Washington Street development, Stephen H. Devoto, a Wesleyan Professor of Biology and Neuroscience and Behavior and longtime blogger on planning and zoning issues for the *Middletown Eye*, began seeking the Democratic nomination for a seat on Middletown's Planning and Zoning Commission in May 2013. Although Devoto was forced to first petition for a Democratic primary, then to run in a general election against two other Democrats in addition to three Republican opponents, he

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[332] Shawn R. Beals, "Wesleyan Pulls Out Of Washington Street Development Talks", *Hartford Courant*, December 5, 2012, http://articles.courant.com/2012-12-05/community/hc-middletown-wesleyan-bookstore-1205-20121205_1_wesleyan-bookstore-centerplan-companies-wesleyan-officials.
[333] Shawn R. Beals, "Middletown Residents Hold Demonstration Against Zone Change Request", *Hartford Courant*, March 11, 2013, http://articles.courant.com/2013-03-11/community/hc-middletown-zone-change-0312-20130311_1_zone-change-centerplan-companies-new-development; Shawn R. Beals, "Middletown PZC Approves Controversial Zoning Code Change", *Hartford Courant*, March 13, 2013, http://articles.courant.com/2013-03-13/community/hc-middletown-zone-change-0314-20130313_1_centerplan-companies-text-amendment-office-or-residential-space.

won a seat on the Commission with more votes than any other candidate.[334] Devoto's

campaign — from petition to primary to general election victory — Middletown saw

another community-backed Wesleyan professor assume office to oversee the city's

planning and development, much like Bailey before him. In stating his "guiding

philosophy", Devoto promised to seek community input, encourage developers to do

the same, and to consult with the Conservation Commission and the Design Review

and Historic Preservation Board for all decisions.[335] Furthermore, the origins of

Devoto's campaign in the failed Washington Street development proposal, highlights

how individual actors within the university sometimes put the interests of their

community first and foremost, contrary to the institutional interests of the university.

    Thus, in Middletown, the city government is generally more responsive to the

community than in New Haven. Failing that, however, Wesleyan's community

responsiveness can carry enough sway to affect planning and redevelopment policies

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[334] Stephen Devoto, "Letter of Interest in P&Z Nomination", accessed April 7, 2015, https://www.facebook.com/StephenDevoto/posts/389659431136074; Alex Gecan, "Challenger to Seek Zoning Seat Through Primary", *Middletown Press*, July 29, 2013, http://www.middletownpress.com/general-news/20130729/challenger-to-seek-zoning-seat-through-primary; Alex Gecan, "Primary Challenger Holds Impromptu Rally Outside Democratic Phone Bank", *Middletown Press*, September 5, 2013, http://www.middletownpress.com/general-news/20130905/primary-challenger-holds-impromptu-rally-outside-democratic-phone-bank; Alex Gecan, "Stephen DeVoto Wins Democratic Spot for Middletown's Planning and Zoning Board", *Middletown Press*, September 10, 2013, http://www.middletownpress.com/general-news/20130910/stephen-devoto-wins-demoratic-spot-for-middletowns-planning-and-zoning-board; City of Middletown, Connecticut, "2013 Municipal Election Results", accessed April 5, 2015, http://www.cityofmiddletown.com/filestorage/117/123/181/1069/1079/2013_Election_Grid_Totals_11-5-13.pdf.

[335] Stephen Devoto, "Stephen Devoto: Candidate for Planning and Zoning Commissioner", *Middletown Eye*, September 9, 2013, http://middletowneyenews.blogspot.com/2013/09/stephen-devoto-candidate-for-planning.html.

within the city. This is thanks to a system of civic leadership that ensures that the university and the city must take these concerns into serious consideration, as well as to a vocal public that is willing to pressure the university by showing up to public forums and to pressure the city by electing representatives such as Stephen Devoto.

Unlike Wesleyan's community responsiveness, however, Yale's retail management has not been as responsive to its community as Wesleyan's administration. Yale University Properties — which owns much of New Haven's downtown retail — has, in recent years, been attracting national chains such as Shake Shack, Au Bon Pain, and American Apparel to the city's central business district, often at the expense of smaller, locally owned businesses, many of which have historic significance. This form of commercial gentrification has contributed to the demise of several establishments considered New Haven institutions — such as Yankee Doodle Coffee Shop, Copper Kitchen Restaurant, and Anchor Restaurant — through rent disputes and the introduction of national-scale competition to locally owned businesses.[336] Yale students, faculty, and New Haven residents alike have

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[336] University Properties, "Retail Properties", *Yale University Office of New Haven and State Affairs*, accessed March 26, 2015, http://onhsa.yale.edu/up/retail; The Shops at Yale, "Dining", accessed March 26, 2015, http://theshopsatyale.com/category/dining/; The Shops at Yale, "Shopping", accessed March 26, 2015, http://theshopsatyale.com/category/shopping/; Thomas Kaplan, "A Coffee Shop Closes, and There'll Be Sad Songs Down at Mory's", *New York Times*, January 31, 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/31/nyregion/31doodle.html; Allan Appel, "Amid Tears & Free Burgers, Final Grease Sizzles", *New Haven Independent*, October 28, 2010, http://www.newhavenindependent.org/index.php/archives/entry/copper_kitchen_clos es_amid_tears_and_free_burgers/; Paul Bass & David Sepulvida, "Anchor Revival Hopes Dim", *New Haven Independent*, January 5, 2015, http://www.newhavenindependent.org/index.php/archives/entry/anchor_closes/. Note also that the burger chain Shake Shack's New Haven location, managed by Yale University Properties, is a mere block and a half from Louis' Lunch, the supposed

protested the actions of Yale University Properties through small, everyday acts of dissent, such as decorating their residences with "Save the Doodle!" posters or creating a photo blog for the fictitious "New Haven Zoning Authority" which posts parody retail and tourist development proposals.[337] Whether the dissent Yale's continual disregard for community retail has inspired will ever escalate into direct action remains to be seen — but if history is any indication, it may yet come to pass.

As both Middletown and New Haven continue to redevelop their central business districts for the twenty-first century, the very fact that both cities have had to renew their mid-twentieth century developments at all begs the question of whether or not such differences in municipal and institutional philosophies ultimately makes a difference in the outcome of urban renewal. After all, in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, both cities fell victim to fears of suburban competition in commerce and housing and, as a result, razed entire neighborhoods and displaced thousands of citizens to make way for impersonal parking lots, housing projects, and retail plazas mainly constructed on suburban models of development. Philosophical differences did not save either city from the effects of postwar urban renewal.

Yet the words of Allan R. Talbot, the former Lee advisor, sum up the importance of community engagement in the urban renewal process. In August 1967, New Haven's Hill neighborhood had a race riot, five months after Talbot first published his insider's look at the urban renewal process, *The Mayor's Game*. While

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birthplace of the hamburger. See Shake Shack, "About New Haven, CT", accessed March 26, 2015, https://www.shakeshack.com/location/new-haven/; and Louis' Lunch, "History", accessed March 26, 2015, http://www.louislunch.com/history.php.
[337] Kaplan; *New Haven Zoning Authority*, accessed March 26, 2015, http://new-haven-zoning-authority.tumblr.com/.

these riots were occurring throughout urban America in the late 1960s, it had been hoped that the reshaping of the New Haven's physical landscape would reshape its social landscape as well, that its renewal programs would insulate it from such urban violence. These hopes were dashed by the Hill riot, and Talbot had to reconsider the whole project of urban renewal when he wrote the introduction to the paperback version of *The Mayor's Game*. Writing in 1970, he conceded:

> With hindsight, one can see an inevitability in those hostile reactions that followed the physical and social probes into the ghetto. The public process was affecting people never before touched. Some benefitted, others were merely aggravated, but all of them suddenly had a specific outlet for grievances that were far greater than their attitude toward one local Democratic Administration, or the capacity of that Administration to deal with them. Certainly high on the list of such grievances has been the total lack of personal control. It seems clear today, though it wasn't just a few years ago, that for many in the ghetto the problems of joblessness, dreadful schools, or poor housing are symbols of impotence. When relief does come from above, as it did in New Haven because it is quicker and more efficient that way, the problem of impotence remains.

Talbot then states, in words that summarize very well the central argument of this project: "In the urban business these days, we've only just learned that what you do is not more important than how you do it."[338]

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[338] Allan R. Talbot, *The Mayor's Game: Richard Lee of New Haven and the Politics of Change* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), xviii.

This argument is crucial above all else because "how you do it" can ultimately scar a community for just as long as "what you do" — and in ways that are much harder to rectify. While every redevelopment project leaves structures that can eventually be replaced themselves — as they are being in Middletown and New Haven — the processes of redevelopment becomes engrained in the history of a neighborhood, leaving scars that last for generations. In June 2012, Ed Cherry — a local architect who participated in Dixwell's urban renewal — learned as much when he revisited the University Park project area, which he had worked on decades earlier. He was not alone in his ruminations, however: "Behind him trailed a small crowd of mostly white folks. They had signed up for a walking tour of Dixwell's modernist architecture sponsored by the International Festival of Arts and Ideas. Many of them were from New Haven, but they had the vibe of tourists in an unknown city." That feeling of foreignness and alienation, it seems, was mutual: "Curious, skeptical Dixwell residents approached the group several times during the walk, questioning in sometimes hostile tones what the visitors were up to." Yet the most poignant interaction came from a group of Dixwell residents who did not remember the old Dixwell, who had only ever known what the neighborhood had been like after renewal, but who had learned and internalized the lessons of renewal on perhaps a deeper level than Cherry did himself. As the tour ended, it was approached by a group of neighborhood children on bicycles who shouted to the group imploringly, "Hey! Don't take away my neighborhood, please!" and "Please don't turn my community into Yale!"[339] These children live with Lee's urban renewal policies every day, even a

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[339] Nicolá Medina Mora Pérez, "Urban Renewal Revisited — & Taunted", *New*

half-century later, and their pleas reflect the lasting historical legacy of urban renewal in many communities. Municipal leaders, architects, developers, and urban planners would do well to recognize that, and to learn from these children as they consider the shape of things to come.

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