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Homeplace: Care and Resistance Among Public Housing Residents Facing Mixed-Income Redevelopment

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Low-income communities of color experience significant political, economic, and health inequities and, not unrelatedly, are disproportionately exposed to violent crime than are residents of higher income communities. In an effort to mitigate concentrations of poverty and crime, governmental agencies have partnered with affordable housing developers to redevelop public housing "projects" into mixed-income communities and to do so within a "trauma-informed" framework. The current study analyzes how residents have historically and contemporaneously negotiated, endured, and resisted structural and interpersonal violence in 2 long-standing, predominately African American, public housing communities undergoing a public–private housing redevelopment initiative. Interviews with 44 adult public housing residents (age range = 18–75 years; 82% African American/Black) were conducted during a 2-year period while residents' homes were being demolished and rebuilt into mixed-income communities. Analysis of in-depth interviews used constructivist grounded theory principles to reveal a common theme and basic social process of the ongoing formation of *homeplace*, with subthemes focusing on the ways homeplace emerges through shared lineage, knowing and caring practices; how homeplace is maintained through networks of protection in unsafe contexts; how homeplace is disrupted as a result of redevelopment activities; and the reclamation of homeplace during redevelopment in the service of hope and healing. These findings offer a nuanced view of resident's lived experiences of place-based trauma and collective resistance and resilience, while also highlighting the place-specific ways in which redevelopment unsettles deeply rooted sociocultural configurations of home and community.

Public Policy Relevance Statement
This study highlights the ways in which elevating community voices in public policy assessments, using the case of housing policy, can inform how to best maintain community strengths. Findings reveal the complex ways that collective resilience operates in low-income communities of color and suggest that community strengths be incorporated into housing interventions aiming to enact structural, community and interpersonal change.

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With growing recognition of the social determinants of mental, physical, and environmental health, psychology, and other health fields increasingly seek to identify and ameliorate the effects of traumatic experiences on social and emotional well-being. Low-income Black and other communities of color experience significant traumatic experiences shaped by political, economic, and health inequities and, not unrelatedly, the disproportionate exposure to gun violence, assaults, and other types of violent crime. These communities also have a disproportionate number of public housing "projects" in which the buildings and grounds are often in states of disrepair following decades of disinvestment and neglect. Based on a massive city-wide effort to redevelop racially and economically segregated public housing into mixed-income communities, this qualitative investigation examines public housing residents' lived experiences of place-based trauma and their social and collective resistance over decades of living in public housing; it further highlights the place-specific ways in which redevelopment unsettles deeply rooted sociocultural configurations of home and community.

Public Housing Policy: From Demolition to Redevelopment

The historical processes that shape public housing policy and the experiences of residents living in public housing are complex, driven by interlocking systems of oppression. Our focus is the recent shift in housing policy away from the building of physically isolated and exclusively low-income housing projects to redevelopment of public housing into mixed-income communities. This policy change began officially in 1992 when Congress passed the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere (HOPE VI) as a strategy to demolish large public housing projects and disperse residents to areas of lower concentrated poverty through the use of Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers. HOPE VI later altered course toward the *redevelopment* of the remaining large public housing "projects" through partnerships with affordable housing developers and other organizations (local public agencies, nonprofit groups, financial firms) to build mixed-income communities (Joseph, Chaskin, & Webber, 2007). The stated goal of redevelopment was to accommodate a broad range of residents from different social, racial, and economic circumstances and integrate long geographically isolated neighborhoods into the broader community. However, many of these large-scale rebuilding programs occurred without resident input in the planning process, relocation strategies and services, and without a one-for-one replacement of public housing units that had been demolished. As a result, in many cases, HOPE VI became a program of gentrification and forced relocation of original residents (Urban Institute, 2004). Despite an investment of over $6 billion, HOPE VI did not result in better physical living conditions, improved economic outcomes, or greater employment opportunities (Fraser, Burns, Bazuin, & Oakley, 2013; Goetz, 2010; Levy & Woolley, 2007; Nguyen, Webb, Rohe, & Noria, 2016; Popkin, Levy, & Buron, 2009).

"Trauma-Informed" Public Housing Redevelopment

Many public–private redevelopment initiatives have adopted a "trauma-informed" perspective (Falkenburger, Arena, & Wolin, 2018; Weinstein, Wolin, & Rose, 2014), particularly in the context of building infrastructure and investing in community-based agencies that serve public housing residents (Lucio & McFadden, 2017). In this paradigm, administrators, policymakers, and providers are educated on the prevalence of trauma exposure, trained to be sensitive to the sequelae of trauma, and proactive in implementing administrative processes and services that do not inadvertently retraumatize the individuals and communities they serve (Harris & Fallot, 2001). When applied to community building efforts in public housing developments, trauma-informed community building, acknowledges the structural, historical, political, and racialized roots of housing policies that created and shaped affordable housing into isolated archipelagos of poverty. However, this predominant framework for addressing such intergenerational trauma is nonetheless based on a medical model—focusing on how such trauma manifests in individuals, how to screen individuals for trauma, and how to "treat" the traumatized patient (Pinderhughes, Davis, & Williams, 2015). Ascribing the problem of trauma to individuals and individual bodies that experience toxic and pervasive stress, this model is not equipped to address the ways in which political, social, and economic structures built into large public housing projects create reproducing systems of oppression that residents must endure and navigate: continued poverty, lack of employment opportunities, disproportionate policing and incarceration, social and geographic isolation, multiple forms of traumatic violence, substance use and mental health issues, and inaccessibility to resources involving healthy food, reliable transportation, and quality health care and education. Moreover, a "trauma informed" perspective is unable to recognize and account for the everyday forms of collective resilience and resistance that characterize the lived experiences of those subjected to the intersecting systems of power and oppression (e.g., racism, classism, and sexism; Crenshaw, 1991) particularly in the context of those living in public housing. To address these gaps, the present investigation aimed to highlight the multiple forms of everyday resistance emerging in response to traumatic stress in two predominately African American long-term public housing communities undergoing redevelopment.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that guided the present analysis is anchored in inductive and constructivist approaches to the analysis of social phenomena. Literatures on community formation in critical race and racism studies, sociology, and psychological approaches to trauma, toxic stress, and violence led to two concepts that position our analysis. First is the idea of *homeplace,* named and described by Black feminist author bell hooks as a consciously constructed domestic safe space largely created by Black women where Black people can affirm one another; engage in renewal, self-recovery, humanization; and, resist racial oppression (hooks, 1990). Homeplace provides protection from the Otherness experienced in a White world and offers renewal following the daily struggles associated with the overt oppression characteristic of

pre-civil-rights era racial apartheid. Previous quantitative studies have investigated the role of social cohesion or collective resilience in the psychosocial well-being of residents in public housing and low-income communities (Brisson, 2009; Brisson, Lechuga Peña, & Plassmeyer, 2018; Walker & Brisson, 2017). However, these studies relied on preestablished definitions of resilience and social relatedness that do not necessarily reflect the deeply rooted sociocultural configurations of home and community that the current investigation aimed to understand. Informed by the resident interviews, and in line with constructivist grounded theory, this study examined resident illustrations of "everyday resistance" and collective resilience toward liberation in public housing communities and came to understand these experiences as reflective in the power of homeplace. As illustrated in our findings, residents' narratives of their lived experiences of place-based trauma and social and collective resistance and resilience are reminiscent of this seminal construct, yet also empirically extend it in new directions.

Second, the concept of root shock as described by Mindy Fullilove (2004) allowed our analysis to proceed with a sensitivity to the fact that the demolition of place, regardless of cause or form of destruction, is itself a form of traumatic experience. As such, we understand redevelopment as a source of what Fullilove (2004) calls root shock—the "traumatic stress reaction to the destruction of all or part of one's emotional ecosystem" that people experience when they are uprooted psychologically, socially, and physically (p. 11). Specifically, at the level of the individual, root shock manifests as increased anxiety, destabilizes relationships, alters or destroys social and emotional resources, and increases the risk for a multitude of stress-related illnesses like depression or heart disease. At the level of community, the destruction of one's emotional ecosystem has the effect of undermining trust, disrupting community bonds, and decreasing social and emotional and material resources (Fullilove, 2004). Further, the "mazeway"—the shared collective history of a place and our sense of place within it—is ruptured (Fullilove, 2001, 2004). Even residents who remain in gentrifying neighborhoods where there is an influx of persons of higher socioeconomic means "can experience a kind of root shock as a result of exclusion to new forms of cultural, institutional, and political capital and resources" (Hyra, 2008; Perez, 2004; Tach & Emory, 2017). As such, we approached the current study with attention toward how homeplace may be disrupted as a result of redevelopment activities but also "reclaimed" in the service of hope and healing.

The Current Study

This qualitative study uses an inductive approach to making visible the lived experiences of long-term residents living in two housing developments as they are demolished and rebuilt into mixed-income communities. Through in-depth interviews with 44 residents in two predominately African American public housing communities, the analysis asks (a) what role does "trauma" play in resident descriptions of their community; (b) how have residents negotiated, endured, resisted, and created supportive structures in long-neglected underfunded public housing communities; (c) in what ways are redevelopment activities helping or hindering the building and maintenance of the community's collective resilience; and (d) how home and community are defined in the fight for self- and collective preservation.

Method

We used a constructivist qualitative approach to the study design. Data for the current paper was drawn from the Community Health After Neighborhood Transformation (CHANT) Study, a 3-year interdisciplinary mixed-method prospective research study investigating the ways institutional level changes through state and federal government housing policies and practices affects resident and community-level health and social well-being in public housing communities undergoing redevelopment through an initiative called HOPE-SF. HOPE-SF, a current iteration of HOPE VI, is a public-private partnership between government and private affordable housing developers to redevelop the city's largest and "most distressed" public housing projects into mixed-income communities (LFA Group, 2012). Specifically, this includes (a) one-for-one replacement of public housing units and a phased construction plan that allows residents to remain on site during construction to limit the displacement of current residents on-site; (b) provision of employment and job training opportunities to residents; (c) integration of housing development with neighborhood improvement; and (d) opportunities for residents to actively participate in the redevelopment planning process (Public Housing Task Force, 2007). Demolition and rebuilding of these long-standing communities began in 2012.

Study Setting

This article analyzes interview data from the first two of the four housing developments to be redeveloped under HOPE-SF: West Point and Alice Griffith. These multifamily public housing developments were built in 1956 and 1962, respectively, as temporary housing for those who were working at the now decommissioned Hunters Point Naval Shipyard (a designated superfund site). The two developments are situated in the Southeast corridor of San Francisco, one of the most economically disadvantaged areas in the city and home to the highest percentage of the city's Black population. Geographically bounded by the intersection of two major freeways, the Southeast was the city's primary site for industrial activity and became an important destination for Black residents during the Great Migration (Brahinsky, 2014). During the war period, San Francisco was seen as a place for economic opportunity and social refuge for Black people fleeing racial violence of the Jim Crow south. However, the socioeconomic marginalization of Black residents was made apparent through the militarized police responses to social uprising of the 1960s and forced displacement of African Americans from the more central areas of the city to Bayview Hunters Point through the processes gentrification resulting in the Bayview becoming an area of poverty concentration.

Over the next several decades deindustrialization and disinvestment in this community included closure of the naval shipyard in the mid-1970s resulting in thousands of lost jobs. The redevelopment of public housing in the 1980s and 1990s resulted in a net loss of housing units (Howard, 2014; Rongerude, 2009) and subsequent displacement of many Black residents, shaped in part by

federal policy (primarily HOPE VI) and the specific failure to replace housing one-for-one and ensure resident returns (Hartman, 2002). As a consequence, many residents in this community were forced to leave the city as part of a larger outmigration of mostly Black San Franciscans (San Francisco Mayor's Task Force on African American Out-Migration, 2009). The 2008 foreclosure crisis devasted Black homeownership in an area that had the highest rate of Black homeownership in the city (Samaha, 2012) and rising rents continue to destabilize the city's historically Black neighborhoods (Urban Displacement Project, 2018). The current HOPE-SF initiative has unfolded in the context of a long history of social isolation and lack of institutional resources that allow communities to thrive; containment of Black San Franciscan residents from the rest of San Francisco, as well as a history of forced removal from the city itself.

Participants and Procedures

All procedures were approved by the institutional review boards at the University of California, San Francisco and San Francisco State University. Participants were recruited in each of the two sites, primarily through community engagement activities and then through a snowball strategy, during 2015 and 2016. Leslie Dubbin, who is also the Principle Investigator (PI) of the CHANT study, had met a small group of residents at a community meeting who expressed interest in a longitudinal exploration of the redevelopment. These residents ultimately became an informal advisory board to the research project. Our initial entrée into the community was paved in part through this group introducing us to a number of residents and welcoming us to take part in a walking group at both housing complexes. The final sample includes 44 residents living on site at West Point ($n = 18$) and Alice Griffith ($n = 26$) between 2015 and 2017 and comprises 29 women and 15 men ranging in age from 18 to 75 years (68% of residents were between 41 and 60 years old). The majority (82%, $n = 36$) of participants identified as African American or Black; six identified as Samoan; one as White; and one as mixed race/ethnicity. In addition to these 44 initial interviews conducted in 2015 and 2016, five of these participants agreed to a second interview conducted in 2017. For each interview, participants received a $50.00 gift card.

Measures

The semistructured interview guide was designed to elicit participants' histories and experiences living in public housing; perceptions of neighborhood and community; social dynamics, networks, and cohesion; health status and experiences with health, illness, and social outcomes; and thoughts on redevelopment and its impacts. For example, to understand participants' perceptions of place and home, they were asked to talk about their definition of home and if the place they were living met that definition. Residents were also asked to describe the ways in which their neighborhood impacted their sense of wellbeing, health, and safety. In addition, the interviewer asked participants their definition of community and if they considered those characteristics present in the development in which they lived. To elicit understanding of experiences of trauma, participants were asked to describe what it is like to live in public housing and to discuss their feelings about physical safety, emotional health, and economic opportunity. For those participants who shared experiences of physical and emotional trauma, probing questions were asked to understand the nature of these experiences, including how the residents have persevered. All interviews were conducted by Leslie Dubbin (the study PI) and a trained research analyst. Interviews ranged from 2 to 2.5 hr and were conducted at the participants home or public space. Interviews were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim.

Data Analysis

Analysis followed the procedures and conventions of constructivist grounded theory, an inductive methodological approach to data analysis (Charmaz, 2014). Analysis explored (a) the role "trauma" plays in resident descriptions of their community; (b) the ways residents negotiated, endured, resisted, created, and preserved supportive structures; and (c) the ways redevelopment activities helped to build or undermine the community's collective resilience. A team of researchers (three faculty members, one graduate student, and three undergraduate students) began analysis with "open coding" of the de-identified interview transcripts. This process involved each researcher breaking down the data into discrete parts, meeting to discuss, and then organizing them under conceptual headings. Based on these conceptual headings, the lead researchers for this article (the authors and one graduate student) developed categories of themes discussed by at least 2/3 of the participants. The researchers then compared the coded interviews within and across participant interviews. These categorical themes were then brought to the full team for discussion and agreement and these themes were then revisited through reanalysis of a subsample of interviews from both sites. It was through an iterative process that the themes of making and unmaking of homeplace were identified, and through analytic memo writing, the authors came to understand the social processes of how these themes were manifested in public housing and their relationship to public housing redevelopment. Data management and analysis was conducted using MAXQDA 11.

Results

Residents narrated distinct yet similarly multilayered and complicated stories of the ways they endured, were harmed by, and resisted multiple forms of violence reflective of living in public housing. These included the historical societal disinvestment and governmental neglect superimposed on socially embedded, historical, and institutionally sanctioned mechanisms of marginalization of and violence against African Americans. Narratives also highlighted how the process and products of redevelopment can support or unsettle the deeply rooted sociocultural configurations of home and community. It was here, in these narratives, that the concept of *homeplace* emerged as reflective of the role of trauma and the social dynamics of these two public housing communities in transition. Four themes emerged that together constitute homeplace as a process: (a) homeplace emerging—shared knowing, caregiving, and lineage; (b) maintaining homeplace—networks of protection arising in contexts of danger; (c) disrupting homeplace—consequences of redevelopment; and (d) reclaiming

homeplace—community-envisioned ways of remembering, rebuilding, and preserving community. Together, these four themes collectively addressed the study questions regarding the role of "trauma" in resident descriptions of community, the varied ways residents have negotiated, endured and resisted institutional marginalization and neglect, and the impact of redevelopment activities.

Homeplace Emerging: "A Tight-Knit Community"

In resident interviews, when asked to describe their community, most participants invariably began with a story of family: deep familial connections, shared lineage, and shared knowledge about and experience with the public housing communities of San Francisco. It was here in the opening responses to our interview question, "Tell me about living in this neighborhood," that homeplace emerged as an embodied history and a collective experience: Stable in its fluidity and tightly linked to the fungible contexts and place in which it is created, maintained and transformed.

Barbara, a 44-year-old African American woman, began by telling us she was born in San Francisco and has lived at one time or another at each of the four sites that are part of the HOPE-SF initiative. This lifetime of living in San Francisco's public housing developments in the southeast quadrant means she attended school with, traveled on the same bus lines, ate at similar cafes, and shopped at similar stores as others living in these communities. For almost 20 years, since 2000, she has lived in West Point, raising her 5 children. Although she had family living in West Point when she moved there in 2000, she recollected in our interview that when she told friends she would be moving there, her friends warned her:

> [Her friend said] "You moving out there? That's like the worst place in the City—It's violent . . . They gonna take everything you got." But I didn't really experience that first-hand . . . What I found was a lot of people in pain . . .

As Barbara continued, it became clear that the pain she found in people living at West Point was accompanied by, and perhaps grew out of, what she called "confinement," as she described that residents "didn't leave the community, literally". She continued,

> When I talk about confinement, a lot of people now are related because they didn't go anywhere. We may have been neighbors when we were in our 20s, and now we have kids and those kids are 17 and 18, so your child and my child have now a child together. Now our families are combined. Then one of my other kids went and had a child with another neighbor, so now that combines 4 families because we have children in common. We may not be blood related, but we have commonality . . . I think the confinement, the relationships, a lot of the people that live here have lived here forever. So I know you for all of your life . . . Then there's the relationships that build through the kids, they have been friends forever . . . Overall, it's a tight-knit community.

Barbara described the development of "a tight-knit community" that happens over decades, generations, and through what she eloquently named confinement, referring to the ways people are isolated and/or constrained in their geographic and other possibilities. These relationships between and within households and across time illustrate a foundation of homeplace emerging from the structural and geographic isolation that has long defined these public housing projects.

Yet, in Barbara's interview and throughout others' stories, homeplace also comprises a sense of continuity and communal care. Although this continuity was often connected to having long-term neighbors and inter- and intragenerational relationships in residence, as articulated by Barbara, many participants also told us about a common and positive experience of sharing resources and caring for one another. Alondra, a 21-year-old African American woman, who, like Barbara, has lived at each of the four HOPE-SF sites, relayed her experience of "community as family" where sharing caregiving, parenting responsibilities, resources, and physical space were central to the social dynamics of West Point:

> My experience of living up here, we always have fun together as family. It's just everybody that's outside watching us grow up, we watched them grow up too. When we first moved up here, most of the teens, they had help my mom with groceries and she gave them Lunchables and Capri Suns in exchange in helping. Then our house slowly turned into a clubhouse, because her friend at the time was our neighbor and she had six kids. It was just each house had kids in it, and everybody just came to that one building. We all grew up with each other as a family.

By fostering an intimate network of relationships across time and generations and through sharing resources and caregiving responsibilities, residents engage in what we came to see across these narratives as *everyday life as resistance*, which can allow for experiences of collective healing. For example, when Barbara's son Jimmy, a 30-year-old African American man, described what it was like to grow up as teenager in West Point, he also focused on the community as family that came together to resolve problems, have fun, and remember those who had passed away.

> Yeah, it's a lot of happy memories. We all family. Everybody knows each other. If I got a problem with your kid, I can talk to your kid and handle the situation and come see you about it later, you know what I'm saying? We all family. If something going on and your mom ain't around, the community will come out and they help. You know what I'm saying? Y'all down on y'all luck, somebody's gonna come look out for you. We are family . . . a lot of people died, so we have memorials . . . we are close.

In sum, homeplace processes include the emergence of the interpersonal and intracommunity bonds over time and place. These become enduring social connections, an underlying latent solidarity, and resident efforts toward shared preservation and cross-generational communal care in the midst of governmental neglect, police failures at maintaining public safety, and periods of significant gun violence. Homeplace cannot be understood as disconnected from the social, political, and cultural context. It has emerged and endured under the weight of the strategic and structural machinations of housing policy that have created whole neighborhoods divested of resources, opportunities, and safety.

Maintaining Homeplace: "We Were Safe Despite What Was Going on Around Us"

We found that the maintenance of homeplace, the work of ensuring care and connection, included a collective sense of safety in contexts rife with unsafe activities or conditions. It is the fluidity

and ongoing process of homeplace—evident in porous physical boundaries separating households and social connections within the community spanning generations—that allows for collective communication and sharing of information in ways that fostered feelings of safety and protection. Rita, a 50-year-old mixed race woman, has lived in West Point her entire life. She began by describing that living in West Point your whole life means that "word gets around. If you do something on this side of Hunters Point, we know about it. By 24 hours later, we have heard everything We could solve a murder." We had heard this characterization of the community as confined, but close-knit, in all of our interviews.

Maintaining homeplace, residents described how they could depend on other community members to keep eyes on their children when the parent was not physically present. These coparenting relationships resulted in phone calls to one another to let the parent know if their child was all right (in the case of a violent event), in trouble, or just acting strange. For example, Rita explained,

> I had the same neighbor there for 17 years, and we all would sit outside and barbecue. You knew your kid was safe. My neighbor would call me like, Marcus is outside cursing, or he's acting up. Or I could call her and tell her you know, Richie's outside acting a fool, go get him, or I would go get him.

Even when young children became adults, the network of care persisted. Samantha is a 41-year-old African American woman and has lived in West Point since the early 1990s. Her 22-year old daughter recently experienced a traumatic event and community members call Samantha to let her know how her daughter is doing:

> Right now, she confide in certain people. And those people call me on the regular basis, and let me know what's going on with her, cause they know I'm living my life, and she's 22, so she thinks she's grown living her life. So when they see her in traffic, and something do not look right, they call me. So two people call me an told me the same thing.

In connecting these themes directly to the issues of trauma and the violence that can be disproportionately part of the fabric of poor communities more than wealthier ones, it was the specific ways that information sharing and community closeness was described by residents as an important resource for negotiating the effects of community violence. All of the residents with whom we spoke relayed at least one instance of a serious violent event in their life including physical and sexual assaults, robberies, and murder. Invariably, all had been impacted by the pervasive gun violence stemming from what residents described as long-term "turf battles" rooted in multiple histories and perspectives that rendered the ultimate source of the violence a bit opaque and which typically came from sources outside the home community. As Jerome, a 28-year-old Latino man, reflected on the paradox of growing up and living in an environment plagued with violence, the nature of homeplace emerged and tempered negative feelings he had of his community:

> It was pretty tough [growing up in West Point] . . . But at the same time I felt like it was one of the most dangerous neighborhoods, it was the most safest neighborhood for me . . . Just the community—growing up and knowing everybody and everybody knows each other, and everybody takes care of each other. The unity that we got there it's like . . . you do not find that in too many neighborhoods . . . It's like our little bubble. I feel much more safer there than I would somewhere else.

Yvette, is a 54-year-old African American woman and an 11-year resident of West Point reflected on the notion of care in the context of pervasive gun violence that has plagued these neighborhoods for years:

> It was really at night when there was drive-bys. [The children] scared of them . . . they were scared when they heard them. All the kids ran inside. If they was too far away [from their own house], I brought them into my house. If my kids [are outside] and they hear the bullet shots and my kids were right there, they would come in their house, "Yvette, your kids are in the house. They safe. Your kids are now safe in my house." That's what they did. That's what I like about my neighbors.

These examples of maintaining homeplace as constitutive of caring and resilience are also part of the accounts we heard of resident activism and resistance. Local community groups (many members are residents of West Point and Alice Griffith) such as the *Hunters View Mothers Committee* and *Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice* successfully drew widespread attention to the negative health effects of power plant situated at the foot of West Point and addressed the contamination of Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E), a designated superfund site in close proximity. Leticia, for example, described how the community reacted to false information in the news media regarding air quality:

> We [GreenAction] went over there and ransacked the reporters. We ransacked them because their graph lied. They were telling us the level was this much when we had our own specialist come out and turns out the level was three times that . . . the new buildings down there [new housing developments being built on what used to be shipyard property] are poisoned! They're on top of poisoned land, the toxic dirt.

The result of this ongoing organizing and collective efforts of protest and civic engagement successfully resulted in the permanent closure of the power plant in 2006 and revelation that the PG&E cleanup data were indeed falsified. The residents are now part of a lawsuit against Tetra Tech, the agency in charge of the Shipyard cleanup as well as Lennar Corporation, a leading housing developer (Sumchai, 2018a, 2018b). The interviews describing informal caring and more formal social movement activism together demonstrate that in spite of a long history of structural racism, social isolation and lack of institutional resources, homeplace can and often endures in these communities: it manifests in the everyday practices of care, creating safety, and fighting injustice that community members engage in and around this place they call home.

In the context of poverty concentrated public housing, a fundamental element of maintaining homeplace as collective resistance is demonstrated through the provision of needed but lacking resources. We learned from residents at both West Point and Alice Griffith that the lack of a nearby, affordable full-service grocery forced many residents to rely on the on-site food pantry—donated foodstuffs from the local food bank that was delivered on site once a week out of which the "Candy House" was borne. Most of the residents we spoke to had a story to tell about the Candy House. Antwon, a 30-year-old African American man who grew up in

West Point, explained that the Candy House was run out of the home of Mrs. T, a well-loved community elder and was what the name implied—a safe place where children could go to get snacks, treats, and candy, and residents could retrieve needed staples like milk, eggs, bread, and other items that Mrs. T collected from the food pantry:

> She was the matriarch, you know what I'm saying? She was an ambassador and just everything man. She looked at her community and she noticed there were a lot of young men in the hood that wasn't eating dinner. They didn't really have a home or have a family, or have a place to eat. She stopped a lot of crime. She changed a lot of hearts. She was able to like reach into the community, pull the guns from the mud. It wasn't just because it was feeding them. They get food and a message. You get a soda and hug . . . She was serious about fueling the community, letting the community know, "it's just like home here. Whoever you're running into, I'm pretty sure he's just like you, which would damn near make him family anyway. So these streets, this is our home. This is our hood." She was connecting it like that.

The necessity of the Candy House was a product of structural violence that isolated this community from the broader neighborhood and functioned as an informal economy that provided necessities/resources and social connections for residents by residents. It also eased tension within the community, particularly involving the young men— giving them a sense of belonging and recognition in a collective safe space they called their own. Furthermore, the Candy House is illustrative of "geographies of self-reliance" (Reese, 2019), the longstanding practices in Black communities of working together to navigate and resist unequal food distribution and availability. Through their stories, we came to understand this particular form of self-reliance as a type of relational place-making practiced in the context of spatial inequality. A discrete yet central place and a resource to the community, the Candy House provided a means through which residents lived together without, as Jimmy put it, "feeling poverty." As such, the Candy House was a source of community pride that it existed at all and served as a mechanism of surviving structural oppressions—a homeplace. Mrs. T died shortly after the demolition of West Point began. But so powerful was the memory of the Candy House that Barbara memorialized it on one of her walls dedicated to Mrs. T—a collage of candy and potato chip wrappers pasted to the wall over the painted word "BELIEVE."

Disrupting Homeplace: "It's Like They Took Some of the Life Out of Us"

As part of HOPE-SF's commitment to minimize displacement of residents, all public housing units would be rebuilt in a one-to-one replacement allowing all residents to have the option to stay on site during the construction. Using a phased construction plan, as particular buildings were slated for demolition, residents moved to vacant apartments and then to their final new home once construction was complete. The theory behind this strategy was by keeping residents on site, social networks would remain intact and the transition to the new housing less traumatic. Yet, being "in place" during the demolition and rebuilding confronted residents with a daily dose of root shock (Fullilove, 2004)—a visual of watching what many residents felt were their memories and histories being systematically erased. The old apartment units, even in their deterioration, were homes with memories. From across the street where the new buildings are being erected, Alondra looked over at the old housing, now cordoned off by fencing. She described a profound sadness and sense of loss in seeing the buildings of her past torn down:

> It's crazy because I literally stood at the bus stop and watched them tear down the buildings over there. Then I was just thinking to myself that this is just so unhealthy. But I want to see. I want to be up close . . . Just finding a reason to stand at the bus stop to watch it . . . I cried because it was sad.

Jack, a 58-year-old African American man, now retired and living in another HOPE-SF development. Jack grew up in West Point and, as he says, "I keep coming back." In our interview, Jack described to us that he frequently drives to West Point to enjoy the views of the bay, and "get it back together" by reconnecting to the place he was raised. He parks his car in front of his old apartment building (now all boarded up), to watch the goings-on in the neighborhood: "I come up here to clear my head, clear my mind. Look around you. There is so much to watch!" Jack took the interviewers on a guided walk of the West Point he remembered as a boy. With a lifelong love of plants, landscaping, and baseball, Jack pointed out trees he had planted years ago, the grassy hill where he and his friends played ball, the markings on the ground he remembered as homeplate, and the big tree in which he buried his beloved dog a long time ago. Although Jack felt hopeful about what he called the "re-modernization" of West Point, he was a bit melancholy thinking about the future without the place he had called home for 58 years: "When these buildings come down, it will affect me due to the fact I got a lot of history here and family and all. This is home. This is MY home. Hey, you have peace around here."

This strong attachment to place was also exemplified one day at Alice Griffith. While spending the morning with Jenny who tends the community garden, Jenny, a 72-year-old African American woman and community elder, leads the garden program. On this day, the interviewers watched as four men assembled a card table on the old site, right in front of one of the old apartment complex buildings, now boarded up and waiting for demolition. Soon, they began playing cards and we could hear them joking around and laughing while playing music from their car parked adjacent to them. They looked as if they were truly enjoying themselves. Jenny commented, "Yeah, this is where they gather. Now, when they tear this down, I don't know what they gonna do . . . this is home . . . But I don't know if they allowed to do it over there [at the new Alice Griffith]. . . there's so many rules, regulations."

Many of the residents not only lament, but actually fear the new tenant policies instituted by the new housing developers that manage the new buildings. These policies govern a wide array of activities, such as rent payment, use of common spaces, and house rules about having guests and unit maintenance. In particular is the lack of a central social space where the community can gather. At West Point, the outdoor basketball court was the center of social life. Its demolition has had severe implications for disrupting community, what our analysis has come to refer to as threatening to "unmake" homeplace. Jimmy reflected on how redevelopment (both as a result of policy changes and physical changes to the space) has disrupted ways of healing and communing:

> [Prior to the redevelopment], regardless of what's going on in everybody's personal life, when we're together, it's just a different feeling. We happy because we know that we still here. Regardless of everything that we lost, everything that we are going through, we can still come together and be happy and chill and hand out and have a good time. We can turn a barbeque grill on, eat some food, have a good time, play a little music and chill. Cannot do that no more. That's gone. It's like they took some life out of us . . . It's gonna be hard to rebuild that tightness, that family, that togetherness. That's gone right now.

Similarly, at Alice Griffith, many residents described how they could just open their front doors, see and talk with their neighbors, and watch the kids play outside. Many of the old units had back yard porches where friends and neighbors would gather and socialize. Rhonda is in her late 40s and is a third-generation resident of Alice Griffith, still called Double Rock as did many old timers. When speaking with Rhonda a 56-year-old African American woman, she also reminisced a bit about the happiness, closeness, and vibrancy of the community, which combated social isolation. She shared,

> I wish they had built this like the old Double Rock where we'd just go out the front door . . . the kids was out and about doing what they doing. They seemed much happier . . . You know, it was like we were community. You see people in the morning, going to work. You'd see people coming home from work. You'd hear kids laughing and playing outside . . . If it was hot outside, everybody sitting outside talking. You got the barbeque and dominoes going . . . Do you hear anything? You do not hear that anymore. It starts in the evening. People get off work and then that silence . . . See, you do not hear the laughter that you used to. Where's the people talking to each other? There's nothing no more. It's sad.

Like many of the residents we spoke to who live at Alice Griffith and West Point, a profound loss lingered over much of the interviews: loss of community binds, loss of social space, and loss of specific physical areas resulting from the design of the new buildings. There was a collective sense—in both public housing communities—that the redevelopment had ruptured the mazeway (Fullilove, 2004)—their collective sense of place and their individual place within it. At Alice Griffith, residents can no longer simply open their front doors and be connected with their neighbors. Now, they must enter a multistory building where hallways and elevators have become barriers to social interaction: Rhonda continues and says,

> Most people, once they in they apartment, just stay there . . . They confine in the building. They cannot just open they door and hey, they outside, "Hi, how you doin'" or talk to your neighbor . . . It doesn't happen anymore . . . they took a lot of freedom away from these people.

Many residents described that they believe that the lack of social space and the fundamental design of the new structures purposefully undermine their collective agency by restricting and controlling how residents navigate the new physical space in their place of home and community. In addition, they view the new rules instituted by the private developers as an overt message that residents have no personal or collective agency because they have no choice. As Jimmy, the young man who grew up in West Point explains, "There's too many rules . . . You're forcing a person to live a certain way. I'm paying rent! I should be able, not to do what I want to do, but at least have some leeway . . . We don't have as much freedom as other communities and neighborhoods," making the point that the redevelopment policies are "robbing" residents of the freedoms that will be afforded to the market-rate residents when they move on site. Similarly, Jeremy, a 38-year-old African American man who has lived in West Point since he was kid, explained that, for him, the new housing policies are incongruent with HOPE-SF's stated aims of building community to support thriving families:

> They [the management company] have a really thick rule book. It's just confusing to us residents. They're promoting that they want us to be able to live our lives and raise families in these communities, but our kids are not allowed to play in the courtyard . . . There are rules about people coming over to your house. You have curfew. There's a quiet hour . . . [these rules] have taken the closeness away.

Although feelings of homeplace exist in the knowledge and security that the dwelling place will always be there, the root shock of redevelopment simultaneously produce stressors. As the new management took over the daily operations, many residents began to feel their sense of housing security and sustainability crumbling. Perhaps familiar with the policy of de-facto institutional neglect by the housing authority where everything from maintenance to the collecting of rent was deferred, now many residents are in fear of the new requirements to maintain "good standing" with the developer. Alondra described the ongoing fear and uncertainty of many of the residents having moved into the new units:

> [Moving into the new buildings] can be scary because a lot of people ain't prepared for the financial part of it and the education part of it. What rights do you have? How long can you stay here, based off your income? Because most people been staying here in these old buildings all they life, no matter what done happened to their income. For over there [pointing to the new buildings], it ain't the same. Most people is scared of just not having a home. Because they've been so used to certain ways of living.

Thus, these new rules act as a veil making the past clarity of homeplace now rather opaque. The sense of stability created by homeplace is being replaced with a sense of instability and impermanence as residents navigate not only new spaces, but the rules that govern them.

Remaking Homeplace: "Something Related to What We Had"

Although residents of both communities shared many more challenges of living through redevelopment, many also came to see some changes as a positive benefit to their lives. We asked residents what they thought the future would look like for these developments. In doing so, many residents began to envision a new future where health figured prominently. For example, Martha, a 54-year-old African American woman and community elder discussed her own efforts with the *Bayview Mothers and Fathers Committee for Health and Environmental Justice* to secure needed resources for the community "We're trying to get parks and little shopping centers. We're trying to keep it environmentally sound but we're also trying to get things that the neighborhood needs, like a grocery store so we wouldn't have to go so far to do these things."

Many suggested that a first step to reclaiming homeplace was to finally have the services that targets the specific needs of the residents. Throughout the multitude of interviews that were conducted, there was an overwhelming sentiment that services and support to help residents deal with traumatic events, mental health issues, and problems affecting social wellbeing were either not available or were wholly inadequate. Rita explained, "I've watched a lot of murders up here. That's the one thing that I found hard to live up here. I've been fighting with other leaders for so long for there to be mental health services up here." And while there have been behavioral health workers deployed to the communities recently, most feel the level of support is still not conducive to community healing as a whole.

Barbara pointed out that there are complex layers of trauma and mourning best healed through a variety of methods. She does her part by leading children in a number of art healing activities that help them process their emotions over witnessing traumatic events or losing loved ones. She still hopes one day for a community healing center that would pay tribute to the past, "a place that we can come to that still have something related to what we had." Alondra, with several other women (Barbara, Yvette, Samantha, and others) also created a community walk they call the "Heart, Healing, and History Walk." Gathering residents as they go, the walk traverses neighborhoods, inviting neighbors along the way, and allows the group to talk, reflect and remember their history and celebrate each other while safeguarding their health. Alondra is credited with naming the group and explains its purpose:

> The heart is the center of things for a lot of people. The center of health. The center of spirituality. The heart has strands that help keep it together and make it so it beats strong and functions properly. When people see all these bad things happening around them, those strands start to break and then the heart doesn't work right. The more strands that break, the worse the heart gets. After a while people literally die of broken hearts. That's how they die. But getting out and walking and talking about things, getting your heart rate up helps the strands to heal. When we walk we talk about the history of this place, what used to be here, what's not here anymore, how things have changed. It's good to talk about those things. We like to remember the good times that we have had here.

The women of these communities are collectively working to sustain cohesion and connection in the face of place-based change and doing so by building support systems and social spaces that combat multiple forms of violence embedded in and enacted upon their lives.

In reconnecting with the past and all that was good about it, the residents are finding their way forward to a new place of community, a new place of strength, and a new homeplace.

Discussion

The current investigation centered the voices and lived experiences of public housing residents living through a literal, contemporary "re-construction" in the form of the mixed-income redevelopment. Through in-depth interviews, the analysis explored the ways that residents of public housing negotiate, endure, and resist traumatic stress in their everyday lives and highlighted the context and place-specific ways in which redevelopment may unsettle deeply rooted sociocultural configurations of home and community. The findings have implications for advancing conceptualizations of collective resilience and resistance in disadvantaged or marginalized populations, extend previous research into the social identity and well-being of low-income communities of color, and have the potential to inform public housing redevelopment policy and programs, particularly those that aim to be "trauma-informed."

In the communities under study, housing policy converged with political-economic shifts and racial discrimination to geographically contain and disenfranchise mostly African American residents through residential segregation, economic divestment, and deteriorating housing. Through their historical and contemporary accounts, residents of two long-standing predominately African American public housing communities spoke about the emergence, endurance and reclamation of a complex, rich and multilayered phenomenon reminiscent of bell hooks' *homeplace* (hooks, 1990). When first articulated by hooks, homeplace moved beyond de-gendered, de-racialized notions of "home" and "place" to emphasize how Black women consciously construct domestic spaces specifically for Black families to experience renewal and resistance of racial oppression. In the sociological literature, in contrast, home has been described as a place that "holds considerable social, psychological and emotive meaning" and is produced and reproduced "through social relations that extend beyond physical boundaries" (Tester & Wingfield, 2013, p. 71). Although this sense of home was woven throughout the narratives of residents in these two public housing communities, their narratives of home also emphasized characteristics that can be seen as a form of resistance of structural processes that would otherwise cause disempowerment. As such, homeplace not only combines the two opposing forces discussed by Tuan (1980)- a sense of place (i.e., deliberative efforts to create a place of belonging and identity) and rootedness (timeless and un-self-conscious knowing driven by a deep familiarity), but also an "everyday resistance" (Pacheco, 2012), particularly in the forms of communal care, coparenting, and a sense of safety driven largely by Black women in the community.

Importantly, residents were not directly questioned about the concept of homeplace; this analytic construct built up over time and emerged in analysis. As such, the spontaneous articulation of this multidimensional construct in these two communities, including how it emerges and how it is maintained, suggests the need to look deeper than recent empirical assessments that indicate overall lower social cohesion in public housing communities relative to nonpublic housing neighborhoods (Brisson et al., 2018). Place-based antipoverty initiatives funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (such as HOPE VI) have shown very modest effects on improving social cohesion (Walker & Brisson, 2017). This may be partly because inadequate attention is paid to the intersection of social and psychological processes that occur within these tight-knit communities on a day-to-day basis and across generational time (Arthurson, Levin, & Ziersch, 2016). The present analysis suggests that social cohesion may be a result of phenomena that cannot be externally imposed, including but not limited to shared knowing through cross-generational residency, communal caregiving, and resident-driven resource development (e.g., the Candy House).

We are not the first to find the relevance of homeplace so acutely in public housing communities of color. In their book, *The Dignity of Resistance: Women Residents' Activism in Chicago Public Housing,* Feldman and Stall (2004) also used homeplace as

a starting point for their analysis of resident activities that reflect not only "social reproduction of individual household" but also the "social arrangements [residents] make to protect, enhance, and preserve the cultural experiences" in a predominately African American public housing community (p. 192). Similarly, over 40 years ago, sociologist Carol Stack (1975) spoke of kinship forms through which family members exchange the essential goods, services, and cash that allowed them to endure structural conditions of unemployment, welfare residence rules and rules against accumulation, and less-than-adequate income. The current study builds on these previous analyses by examining not only how homeplace manifests among men and women living in two predominately African American public housing communities but also the many dimensions of homeplace which we have described above

The current study also extends previous examinations of forms of homeplace in public housing by documenting how homeplace is disrupted and reclaimed during redevelopment into mixed-income communities. As noted by Kirmayer and colleagues (2014), assessing and supporting collective resilience must be "balanced by analyses of how political and economic dynamics interact with community wellbeing, and how those forces can be aligned to produce contexts that allow individuals and communities to pursue ways of living that they value" (p. 312). Our analysis of residents who were displaced from their homes, but not from the land areas in which those homes reside, speaks to the ways that redevelopment can result in what Fullilove (2004) referred to as root shock. Namely, in the course of redevelopment, residents shared experiences of traumatic loss of physical places and demolition or removal of coconstructed social spaces where residents had typically come together. Moreover, although the new buildings represented physical "upgrades", the additional rules that accompanied resident moves into the new buildings as well as the physical layout of the apartments interrupted social connection.

Implications

The findings have a number of implications for current and future initiatives to redevelop public housing communities in ways that will enhance, rather than disrupt, the collective well-being of the community. First, the current study adds to the limited body of empirical research documenting that punitive policies and other non-resident-centered activities are pervasive in mixed-income communities in the United States (Mccormick, Joseph, & Chaskin, 2012). More specifically, the residents described how overly restrictive rules have resulted in the threats to resident agency (i.e., lack of decision-making power, policing of who visits their home), the potential for small violations of rules will result in homelessness, and disruption of long-standing sociocultural practices (rules against barbequing or congregating on an outside step or porch).

Second, the current findings also suggest the need to pay close attention to the preservation of protective interpersonal relationships and social networks, that provide conditions for not only resilience, but also healing. In relating their personal experiences of how homeplace endures and is maintained, residents in the current study described the emergence of networks of protection and highlighted the ways in which residents coconstruct spaces of safety. In extant literature, neighborhood safety is often examined in terms of the violence represented by crime rates, number of arrests, and/or homicides. Resident narratives highlighted that feelings of safety are not solely tied to criminal or violent activity happening in the neighborhood and echo other qualitative research showing the power of social bonds in fostering feelings of safety and protection in unsafe spaces (Clampet-Lundquist, 2010; Zuberi, 2018). The interviews also reveal that feelings of harm are driven not by individual incidents so as much as they are by historical and structural factors. As such, the current findings address the lack of information on what contextual and structural factors might influence feelings of safety in the midst of danger (Zuberi, 2018) and add to the growing literature showing that residents in low-income communities connect social cohesion and collective efficacy to individual resilience (Forrest-Bank, Nicotera, Anthony, & Jenson, 2015) and mitigation of the negative effects of violence (Clampet-Lundquist, 2010).

Finally, as public housing is increasingly being demolished in service of developing mixed-income communities, with the stated aim of decreasing concentrated poverty, isolation, and marginalization, there is a growing emphasis on "trauma-informed" community redevelopment. This model calls for the recognition of the pervasiveness of multiple forms of traumatic and toxic stress in low-income communities and the development of policies and resources that emphasize the principles of empowerment, trustworthiness, choice, safety, and collaboration (Hales, Kusmaul, & Nochajski, 2017). The goals of HOPE-SF include advancing public health in low-income residents by attending to the intersections between race, place, and trauma and doing so by coordinating "trauma-informed" services through wellness centers, schools, and other service access points. Similarly, other housing initiatives in Illinois and Oregon, such as the Housing Opportunities and Services Together (HOST) project, focus on bringing new resources into the community to support mental health and community well-being (Weinstein et al., 2014). Yet, in these housing initiatives, the disruption of long-term community connections is not necessarily addressed, nor is the need for healing centered approaches. The external resources brought in by housing authorities are often ineffective in meeting these needs, as shown in evaluations of HOPE-IV Community Supportive Services (Walker & Aguayo, 2016). The current findings suggest the need to replace a medicalized individual-focused model of trauma-informed policy and services with one that includes the ways in which social and community structures shape experience, including health, and advocates for a healing-centered approach that addresses structural racism and other oppressions alongside traumatic events and ongoing stressors of everyday life.

Limitations

There are a few limitations to the current analysis that need be considered. First, the study sample was a convenience sample of public housing residents and may not reflect the views or experiences of all residents in public housing. Middle and older adults were overrepresented in the current sample. Public housing developments are also home to many children, adolescents and transitional aged youth, and it is likely that younger people may have different perceptions than those reflected in this article. That said, we also see the focus on middle and older adults as a strength of the study given that they are in the unique position to be able to articulate longer term observations and lived experiences that span

decades. In addition, the sample did not include new residents to the communities and therefore cannot speak to a critical component of redevelopment: the social impacts of new residents of higher income or those purchasing market-rate homes.

Conclusion

There has been little if any policy-relevant consideration of the everyday forms of resistance and resilience that characterize the lived experiences of people who reside in public housing undergoing redevelopment (Cole, Ramirez, Villodas, Ben-David, & Munson, 2019). Moreover, the focus on residents of low-income communities as being a "traumatized" population, has limited our understanding of how trauma can be coproductive with resistance, knowledge, and other ways of positioning oneself in relation to domination. The current study sought to address these gaps by taking an inductive approach to understanding the role of trauma in resident accounts of their community, examining how residents negotiated, endured, resisted, created, and preserved supportive, healing structures in these long-neglected communities, and the emergence of structural disruptions to these supportive structures in the context of redevelopment. Homeplace emerged as a counterenduring way of living in structural conditions characterized by the criminalization of Black individuals and communities, the established marginalization of neighborhoods, the neglect of public housing sites that reside in these neighborhoods, and community experiences of violence and traumatic loss. The current findings highlighted the ways homeplace emerges through shared lineage, knowing and caring practices and how homeplace is maintained and reclaimed through networks of protection and suggest that protective resources in low-income communities should be examined through a social collective lens rather than through a personalized resilience lens.

Keywords: qualitative research; public housing; Black/African American adults; trauma; resistance/resilience

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