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People, Place, Process: Unpacking Local Efforts To Produce Social Sustainability

Hannah Lebovits
Cleveland State University

PEOPLE, PLACE, PROCESS: UNPACKING LOCAL EFFORTS TO PRODUCE

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

HANNAH LEBOVITS

Bachelor of Arts in Political Science

Touro College, Lander College for Women

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Master of Public Administration

Cleveland State University

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We hereby approve this dissertation for Hannah Lebovits

Candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy degree for the Department of Urban Studies

And the CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY

College of Graduate Studies by

Rosie Tighe, Ph.D.

Committee Chairperson

Urban Studies, November 16, 2020

Meghan Rubado, Ph.D.

Committee Member

Urban Studies, November 16, 2020

Ashley Nickels, Ph.D.

Committee Member

Political Science, November 16, 2020

November 16, 2020

Student's Date of Defense

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Esther O. Law and Lula Gittings,

the two women who gave me a voice and handed me a pen.

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ABSTRACT

This three-paper dissertation seeks to understand the factors that drive social sustainability in local contexts, giving attention to institutional efforts of local governments and nonprofit agencies as well as the interdependence between the built environment and collective action efforts. It marries two separate literatures, in public affairs and urban studies, by conceptualizing the relationships between the way spaces have been planned and designed to function and they ways they are lived in and governed.

The first paper measures the relationship between modes of housing settlement within a city and the number of social sustainability policies a city adopts, finding a positive and statistically significant relationship between the dominance of single-family detached housing and the adoption of fewer policies. Paper two is a process tracing effort to understand the ways that a city that was historically designed to be dominated by single-family detached homes and automotive access can promote social sustainability through restorative justice efforts. Lastly, the third paper seeks to understand how members of a progressive nonprofit group who live in a region dominated by low-density housing and lack of public transit continue to engage in interactive, community building efforts.

Overall, this dissertation speaks to the existing literature on the relationship between spatial and social aspects of urban areas and adds to our understanding of how the production of social sustainability is tied to the physical landscape of an area.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Over the last several decades, sustainability- broadly defined as the capacity of a system to adapt without the threat of resource depletion- has developed as a key focus of local governance. The 1987 Bruntland report encouraged all levels of government across the world to prioritize the prevention of environmental and social degradation in light of the increasing trend towards rapid spatial development (WCED, 1987). The primary driver of these concerns is urban development, a process intended to maximize the economic utility of a given space, over time.

Actions taken today should not present a threat to tomorrow's viability and institutions of collective action can work to ensure the sustained existence of social and spatial systems, preventing the tragedy of the commons (Olson, 1965). Today, cities are where most human activities in the United States take place. Local governance systems are tasked with engaging in active efforts to protect the environmental, economic, and social life that occurs within them and they have absolutely taken on significant efforts to promote sustainable activities (Portney, 2013). Nevertheless, local governments can still

struggle to sufficiently prevent degradation, in large part due to their inability to perform

the functions of larger, coordinated, and centralized units of government (Peterson,

1981). While they certainly can utilize their powers to service those within their borders,

the ways that they determine and prioritize needs and ultimately provide goods, services,

and opportunities can be significantly impacted by the social and organizational

capacities of the area (Wang, et al, 2012).

However, though the research focus on local sustainability efforts has given

significant attention to economic and environmental practices in cities, it mostly avoided

defining and measuring the third area of sustainability: social sustainability (Bostrom,

2012; Clark, 2015; Dempsey et. al, 2011; Murphy, 2012; Opp, 2017). In its most pure

form, socially sustainable community planning is an effort to minimize the degradation of

human-centric systems across space and time (Berke, 2002). Social sustainability efforts,

specifically, focus on the needs of human life, such as employment, housing, basic needs,

a lack of environmental harm, educational services, and safety (Dempsey, et al., 2011)

and prioritize the individual and communal needs of human-systems in a developing

world (Shirazi and Keivani, 2019).

There are several reasons to study social sustainability, specifically. The first is

the interdisciplinary nature of the topic. Sustainability concepts cross over urban affairs

and public administration and social equity is a key goal of public affairs. The second is

that the topic is still considered a "fuzzy concept," (Markusen, 2010), and additional

research can add insight into the definitions, theories and applications—and in particular

the role of governments and NGOs in promoting social sustainability (Pacione, 2007).

Relatedly, the normative nature of our existing understanding of the topic does not layer

in systems and efforts that are intentional threats to sustainability and the need to consider the persistence of "wicked problems," (Rittel and Webber, 1973) in our research. And lastly, unlike the other areas of sustainability, social sustainability is predominately focused on the intersections between human life, natural and built environments, and man-made systems, such as institutions of collective action (Jarvis, Pratt and Cheng-Chong Wu, 2001).

Essential to our understanding of social sustainability is an awareness of the inequities that are driven by the current and historical development of natural spaces into places. Space is abstract and can refer to any physical item that contains mass. Place, on the other hand, is what is created when spaces are imbued with meaning (Tuan, 1997). And just as the rapid, place-making efforts of the Global North have created significant inequities between the Global North and the Global South (Bello, et al., 1994), local and regional areas in the United States are places of deep inequities, as well. Where one lives, in the United States, determines their ability to access and acquire high-quality goods, resources, and experiences (Burns, 1994; Peterson, 1981; Tickamyer, 2000).

But these place-based inequities are not spurious, and do not exist on their own. Instead, they are created and recreated though individual actions and institutional systems (Rothstein, 2017; Zenou and Boccard, 2000), as previously abstract spaces become places where economic activity occurs, residential settlement is present, and politico-administrative systems interact with both the economy and the housing patterns (Morgan and Mareschal, 1999; Peterson, 1981; Weber, 1958; Weiher, 1991). This reality creates deep inequities in factors that can determine the health and well-being of their residents (Harvey, 2010; Merrifield, 2013; Sampson, 2003; Pebley and Sastry, 2004). As first

responders to communal social needs (Gooden and Rissler, 2017), local governments can be a primary governance driver for social sustainability (Roseland, 1992; Alibasic, 2018). However, the relationship between the place and people must be the focus of any social sustainability effort.

One method to promote social sustainability is through direct institutional activities- such as policies, programs, and co-production efforts- that create and sustain opportunities for historically marginalized populations such as racial minorities, children and seniors, and low-income individuals and families (Saha, 2009; Manzi et al., 2010). As such, this dissertation focuses on the actions of local governmental agencies as well as nonprofit and quasi-public institutions, as they attempt to produce social sustainability. While made up of individual actors, institutions are greater than the sum of their individual parts, particularly when it comes to collective action efforts (Feiock, 2009; 2013). Institutions often engage in interjurisdictional efforts to provide direct services (Zeemering, 2008) or they may collaborate to prevent negative externalities (Durant, Fiorino, and O'Leary, 2004) and enhance equity (Fung and Wright, 2001).

As an addition to the growing literature on urban social sustainability efforts, this dissertation considers the spatial elements of the city as deeply tied to the ability of governance systems to promote social sustainability. In three papers, it delves into the ways that current and historic spatial elements of local places impact the production of social sustainability through governance efforts of public and nonprofit entities. Though the relationship between spatial elements of local communities [e.g. the built environment] and social sustainability activities has been considered in a number of contexts (Sherazi and Keivant, 2017), this dissertation is a significant addition to the

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existing literature in its focus on active efforts to promote social sustainability as well as its inclusion of social theories of space and its consideration of historic and current trends in metropolitan development.

This dissertation is a valuable addition to the current literature as it investigates the ways that the experience of the city as a spatial unit are directly tied to the institutional governmental and nonprofit efforts intended to support human life. First, social sustainability, generally recognized as the least defined and theorized element of sustainability (Boström, 2012; Dillard et al., 2009; Opp, 2012; Woodcraft, 2012), is fully operationalized and defined by key three elements: (1) direct access, (2) just acquisition, and (3) mutual accountability [community care, cohesion, and social capital]. Then, I build on existing research by noting that effective social sustainability production efforts are deeply context dependent and must consider how people do and have navigated the built environment of the city—the local housing, transit, economic and demographic patterns. Moreover, I argue that even despite physical environments that are not naturally conducive to social sustainability these outcomes can be produced via institutional efforts— when those efforts intentionally grapple with their social and spatial context. I also provide specific policy recommendations to support the production of social sustainability, based on these findings.

Each paper of this dissertation focuses on a different component of social sustainability, a different spatial context, and a different governance practice. In Chapter Two, the first paper is presented. It defines social sustainability as accessibility to resources, opportunities, and services in an area. The spatial aspect of the city it focuses on is residential settlement choice and the predominance of the single-family detached

home as the mode of occupied housing. Institutional governance efforts are conceptualized as policy actions oriented towards enhancing access, particularly in the areas of transit, housing, and family-related services. The findings from the first paper show that increases in the percentage of occupied units that are single-family detached homes reduce the number of social sustainability policies a city is likely to adopt.

Chapter Three, the second paper, conceptualizes social sustainability as a process of "just acquisition"— a term that I created to define a process of ensuring that resources, opportunities, and services are acquired and that the systems that secure acquisition are equitable, inclusive, and just. This paper also focuses on more far-reaching institutional governance efforts, looking at a broad array of actions enacted over the course of a local administration. In this chapter, the historic and current efforts of land development and disinvestment are the spatial components that take center stage. The results of a process tracing effort reveal a restorative justice approach is evident in one suburban city's work to ensure the process of just acquisition is achieved.

Then, in Chapter Four, the final paper conceptualizes the production of social sustainability as a process of maintaining and enhancing social capital, community care, and cohesion—mutual accountability between people—and analyzes the production process through the governance efforts of a local chapter of a national nonprofit agency. In this chapter, the persistent isolationist and exclusive design and use of suburban space is critical to our understanding of the ways that the local group functions. The paper reveals the tendency of successful suburban social change organizations to both combat and utilize the place and space to create a sense of community. Finally, in Chapter Five, I summarize the findings from the three papers (Chapters 2, 3, and 4). This chapter

provides an overview of the relevance and importance of this research and reiterates the implications for research and practice.

Taken together, this dissertation sets the stage for future research on the intersection between the built environment, the production of social sustainability, and institutional governance. It argues that the ways that people live—the built environments they construct and inhabit— shape and are shaped by the way we govern- and especially the ways we seek to sustain human life. Exclusion, disinvestment, marginalization, and isolation not only determine whether a place is currently socially sustainable, they impact our ability to engage in the production of social sustainability, as well.

By placing institutions of collective action- governance systems- at the core of this effort, this dissertation adds new insight to the field of public administration— providing a more substantive, multi-faceted view of public and nonprofit agencies as both reacting to existing spatial and social realities and engaged in the creation of new ones. As a management and organization-centric field, public administration research does not give significant attention to the built and natural environments. This research is an intentional effort to encourage sustainability-related public administration research and practice to appreciate the spatial lens. As the creation and recreation of the local built environment sustains human life, scholars cannot continue to ignore the fact that the way we live impacts and is impacted by the way we govern.

CHAPTER II

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY POLICY ADOPTION

Introduction

The interdisciplinary topic of "social sustainability" is primarily focused on

supporting social life and human-centric systems (Bostrom, 2012). One important aspect

of the process to generate social sustainability in local places is accessibility to resources

and opportunities that fill material, social, and biological needs within an established

urban boundary (Bostrom, 2012; Clark, 2015; Dempsey et al., 2011; Opp, 2016). Access

is a key element of urban social sustainability specifically because it relates directly to the

heart of urbanism – the spatial and social pull towards agglomeration (Scott and Storper,

2015). Without a system of highly accessible amenities, social life within a city cannot be

sustained (Dempsey et al., 2011). In our modern globalized and highly-urbanized era,

local decision making revolves around access to economic opportunities, housing, parks,

educational services, safety, and political/democratic activities within the city (Peterson,

1981).

In considering how governance systems—institutions that guide collective action

efforts—can produce social sustainability, one common mechanism is the policy making

process (Manzi, Lucas, Jones and Allen, 2010). As political entities, local governments have various levels of control over policymaking efforts and can use this control to encourage greater accessibility to resources, goods, services, and experiences. But while social sustainability is so innately tied to the ways the city operates as a physical entity that provides for human needs, it is unclear how the physical settlement of the city might impact social sustainability policy adoption over time. Cities are both spatial and social in nature, and as such, the design, housing, and land-use features of a community can impact individual and community-level access to resources, experience, and well-being (Arendal and Ronald, 2015; Bramley et al., 2006, 2009; Howley et al., 2009; Kyttä, Broberg, Haybatollahi, Schmidt-Thomé, 2014).

Still, it is unclear how these spatial aspects interact with the process that generates social sustainability, particularly through policy making efforts (Sherazi and Keivani, 2017). In this paper, I argue that there is a connection between a city's spatial experience and the policies that are adopted by the city government. I suggest, test, and find that the way that people settle within the city can impact the adoption of policies intended to support housing, transit, and family-related services. These results suggest that when city living is dominated by single-family detached housing, fewer social sustainability policies are adopted.

This study includes two sets of secondary data, both from 2010 and 2015, that were merged and reconfigured by the author. The dependent variables were constructed from secondary survey data and the independent variables were constructed from U.S. Census and American Community Survey data for the same years. I leverage these panel

data to examine whether the percentage of occupied housing units that are single-family detached homes are systematically linked to social sustainability policy adoption.

The results demonstrate a clear, negative connection between higher rates of residential settlement in single-family detached homes and the number of policies that a city adopts to promote enhanced access to affordable and supportive housing, multi-modal transit options, and childcare services. Though this study does not measure any intentional, direct policy efforts to design the spatial nature of the city, I suggest that this relationship enhances our understanding of socio-spatial connections and can set the stage for more intentional policy efforts related to housing composition. While individual residential choices cannot be micro-managed in the United States, local governments can take steps to encourage different patterns of residential settlement that may foster improvements in social sustainability policymaking.

Urban Social Sustainability and Residential Settlement

For more than three decades, sustainability has been a clear and distinct policy priority, especially for local and regional governments (Opp and Saunders, 2013; Portney, 2013; Sharp et al., 2011). Following the 1987 report from the World Commission on Environment and Development (commonly referred to as "Brundtland"), the need to ensure that resources are not depleted and inaccessible for future generations was recognized as a primary focus of local, national, and global efforts. Nevertheless, sustainability agendas emphasize values in tension—with clear trade-offs between enhanced economic efforts, the physical development of space, and the maintenance of thriving individual and communal life (Campbell, 2003). Not the least of these tensions is

the inability to fully frame sustainability through a human-centric approach. While the tensions between human activity and environmental sustainability have gained considerable attention, scholars and practitioners have struggled to fully develop a coherent set of theories, frameworks, practices, and policies specifically focused on social sustainability (Colantino, 2010; Dempsey et al., 2011; Sherazi and Keivani, 2017, 2019; Yiftachel and Hedgcock, 1993).

Still, several themes do emerge in a review of the literature on social sustainability. One of the defining, overarching concepts of social sustainability focuses on accessibility within urban environments. The core aspects of the access component of social sustainability can be understood through a what, how, who and when framework. Access to resources, services, and opportunities (what) is a key component of social sustainability and most often operationalized through a definition that prioritizes components of the physical and non-physical environment (Bramley and Power, 2009; Dempsey et al., 2011; Manzi, et al., 2010) and how to secure access (Bostrom, 2012; Mackenzie, 2004).

Procedural accessibility (how) is often determined by the ability to traverse space (Talen, 2003), as well as spatial distribution and spatial equity in terms of goods, services, and experiences (Barton, Grant, and Guise 2010; Hewko, Smoyer-Tomic, and Hodgson 2002; Tsou, Hung, and Chang, 2005). As all sustainability efforts involve a focus on reproduction and an effort to secure generational maintenance (when), accessibility efforts include a time component, as well. This component also includes a focus on generational equity and awareness (Dillard et al., 2009; Mackenzie, 2004) along with the time-space interactions, ensuring that actions that cross space, over time, will

reproduce accessible systems (Wu, 1998). Finally, when viewed through an equity perspective, access prioritizes who gets what, how, and when (Opp, 2016).

The physical geography of a city provides a landscape for social life and can impact the degree to which a place can be deemed socially sustainable (Sherazi and Keivani, 2017). If one cannot, for example, access an affordable home within a city, the capacity of the physical geographic unit to support social life over a period of time, with fluctuating macro and micro economic systems, is diminished. The same is true if one cannot access a job, healthy food, a high-quality education, and any number of other items individuals and communities require for their current and future maintenance.

Urban social sustainability, specifically, is organized around elements of localized units, where human activity and the need to sustain human life are more profoundly felt and experienced. Studies of social sustainability have focused on various geographic levels including block groups, neighborhoods, cities, and regions (Bramley et al.. 2009, Bramley and Power 2009; Burton, 2000; Cuthill, 2010; Dempsey, et al., 2011; Kippenberg, et al., 2007; Opp, 2016; Yiftachel and Hedgcock, 1993). In line with Robert Parks's (1915) view of a city as an institution, the physical elements of the city – buildings, roads, homes – provide a spatial platform for social sustainability efforts. These items are the material conditions that enable efforts to sustain social life (Netto, Seboya, Verges, 2018).

The design and density of the urban landscape can be tied to the level of access one has to a variety of resources, opportunities, and experiences. However, research on the ties between access and a variety of measures typically find mixed results. Higher rates of density improve some elements of social sustainability (such as access to

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resources) but negatively impact community cohesion (Bramley et al., 2009). Further, it appears that while density and housing stock variations promote individual socially sustainable behaviors, they can be negatively related to community sustainability characteristics, such as the ability of individuals to interact with one another in a casual and consistent manner(Bramley and Power, 2009; Dempsey, et al.. 2012). Others note that living in incredibly high-density communities can be stressful and disengaging (Bridge, 2002; Freeman, 2001; Simmel, 1995; Wirth, 1938).

Complicating this further is the question of whether the ability to choose one's preferred form of housing is already related to their quality of life as consumer preferences often indicate that many people would choose to live in a lower-density, suburban-style community (Gordon and Richardson; 1997). Similarly, Bramley and Power (2009), in a study of several UK cities, find that neighborhood concerns and dissatisfaction are greater in higher-density communities though access to services is generally better.

This study fills a gap in the existing literature by measuring and interpreting the relationship between housing settlement patterns, operationalized as the percent of occupied housing that is single-family detached homes, and the adoption of a subset of sustainability policies: those intended to increase access to basic needs for marginalized communities across time and space. Though existing literature has considered the iterative nature between how people live and their self-reported levels of social interaction and community support, our understanding of the factors that explain how cities produce urban social sustainability remains underdeveloped (Dempsey et al., 2011; Littig and Griessler, 2005; Murphy, 2012; Opp, 2016; Vallance et al., 2011). While the

contextual nature of social sustainability outcomes is clear, what remains to be seen is whether there is a direct relationship between the ways that people live within city spaces and the number of social sustainability actions or policies a city adopts, observed over more than one period in time. If social sustainability is achieved when there is, "equitable access to urban opportunities" (Boschmann and Kwan, 2008: 139), and natural city progressions create and sustain inequities, actions are required to produce that access (Manzi et al., 2010).

And yet, little is known about whether the way the city operates as a context for residential settlement impacts the efforts of the city government to directly enhance that access. Therefore, this research focuses on the social sustainability policy efforts of local political units (e.g., cities, boroughs, towns), over time. This paper examines the relationship between local patterns of housing settlement and actions passed by the local politico-administrative unit that are intended to produce urban social sustainability. People are drawn to cities to live in them but those living arrangements can vary significantly. What effect does the dominance of single-family detached housing have on the degree to which a city enhances access by adopting social sustainability policies?

Connecting Settlement Patterns and Policy Making

In order to understand the dynamics that explain policy adoption efforts, existing studies on local sustainability policy efforts are often modeled around several assumptions. These theories highlight responsiveness (Feiock and Clingermayer, 1986; Peretz, 1986; Rubin and Rubin, 1987), stakeholder control (Truman, 1951; Lowi, 1969; Stone, 1989), growth efforts (Molotch, 1976; 1979), diffusion (Savage, 1985; Walker,

1969), and institutional governmental characteristics (Lineberry and Fowler, 1967; Morgan and Pelissero, 1980; Sharp, 1991; Barrilleaux et al.., 1992) as key drivers of the policymaking process.

In line with these theories, existing research has found a relationship between the financial resources and the capacity of the city to prioritize sustainability policies (Hawkins, et al, 2016; Swann and Deslatte, 2019; Wang, et al, 2012). When considering environmental sustainability initiatives, specifically, policy adoption is more likely in central cities, more populous cities, cities with higher percentages of Hispanic residences, cities in Western states, and cities with highly educated citizens (Opp, Osgood and Rugelely, 2014). Similarly, in all areas of sustainability, population size, diversity, political party and ideology, and geography (central city vs suburb) are connected to the degree to which cities engage with sustainability initiatives (Opp and Saunders, 2012). Additionally, the wealth of the area has been shown to positively influence the likelihood of adoption of environmental sustainability policies (Deslatte, Feiock, and Wassel, 2017).

Beyond size, wealth, and financial capacity, previous research shows a significant positive relationship between the council-manager form of government and the adoption of sustainability policies (Bae and Feiock, 2013). Moreover, the degree to which the business community in a city also has power and access to the sustainability planning agenda, particularly as it relates to economic development policy, can vary across cities and impact adoption rates (Feiock, Portney, Bae and Berry, 2014). The presence of stakeholders also increases the likelihood that financial support will be secured for sustainability efforts (Frantzeskaki and Rok, 2018; Portney and Berry, 2016; Wang et al., 2012).

However, though these studies provide valuable insight into the ways policy adoption is tied to the organizational limits of local and regional governmental action, such as demographic, capacity, and growth elements of the city, little is known about the connection between the way people settle within a city and the social sustainability policy efforts of the local government. As the literature review above indicates, there are direct though complex ties between the built environment of a city and the degree to which residents experience social sustainability. What remains to be tested, however, is whether there are direct ties between residential patterns and the direct efforts of governance systems to enhance social sustainability via the policymaking process. To provide a conceptual grounding for this connection, theories of policy adoption can be augmented with social and spatial theories to tie spatial experiences to the governance process.

Spatial aspects of city life can determine the perceived needs of the community, the stakeholder processes and groups, and the compilations of organizations seeking to address these (Castells, 1977). The built environment is a powerful factor that shapes how people interact with one another and understand the community around them (Hanson, 2000; Hillier and Hanson, 1984; Legeby and Marcus, 2011; Vaughan and Arbaci, 2011). City designs that emphasize communal living and recreational spaces result in increased human interactions and thus an enhanced understanding of others who live within the city. Along these lines, Frazen (2009) claims that the mere existence of, segregation, makes social life a spatial issue—suggesting that minimizing physical distance between people and between their daily activities can enhance social collectivism.

If physical distance can be minimized and positive micro-encounters can be encouraged, there is a greater potential for macro and meso-level concerns to be resolved (Grannis, 1998). Indeed, denser, urban spaces are likely to create deeper and broader social networks via positive street-level interactions (Duany and Plater-Zyberk, 2001; Talen, 1999), with a higher degree of compactness seen as positive for the individual as well as a community (Mouratidis, 2018). Furthermore, a city that does not provide those opportunities is a place where people are less likely to meet and understand one another (Grannis, 1998; Olsson, 1998; Zukin, 1995).

Moving beyond the physical design and planning theories of the spatial makeup of a community, however, social theories of space emphasize the subjective nature of developed places as differently experienced and understood (see: Bourdieu, 1977; Habermas, 1989; Harvey, 2009; Lefebreve and Nicholson-Smith, 1991; Talen, 1999; and Tonkiss, 2005). The nature of a city as interwoven between the physical and social is a significant aspect of the cultivation of social sustainability. The way a city is spatially experienced is connected to the nature of city behavior (Brenner, 2009; Harvey, 2010; Kostoff, 1991; Tuan, 1997). A city that is lived by people who are predominantly choosing to settle within single-family detached housing is a vastly different city than one where more people live in smaller, less exclusionary, more affordable forms of housing. Socially, people might be less likely to interact with one another or be aware of others' needs. Operationally, it might be a city that is more dependent on forms of taxation and service provision that focus on large properties. And from a policy-making standpoint, the desires of the residents might be vastly different.

Moreover, with the globalized tendency towards suburbanization (Guney, Keil, and Ucoglu, 2019), our need to understand this relationship between settlement and social sustainability policymaking is even more pressing than ever. With low-density, auto-centric communities increasingly built on the urban periphery, the ties between the modes of housing people occupy and the actions of governance systems is increasingly important. In the United States, many suburban communities that were developed in the pre-WWII era were designed with a predominance towards single-family, detached homes and few commercialized spaces and are now struggling to support the economic, communal, and housing needs of residents (Allard, 2017; Puentes and Orfield, 2002; Short, Hanlon, and Vicino, 2007).

And, though newer suburban communities built after the war have more commercialized space, the single-family detached housing dominance is still prevalent, and the lack of accessibility is exacerbated by auto-dependence. These design choices have been largely considered unsustainable, and contemporary planners and scholars have encouraged a massive retrofitting effort (Dunham-Jones and Williamson, 2008). And yet, the ties between housing modes and sustainability policy adoption are still unclear. Though some of the existing literature on sustainability policies notes that policy adoption is more prevalent within central cities, rather than suburban communities (Opp, Osgood and Rugelely, 2014; Opp and Saunders, 2012), these studies do not layer in key spatial elements of the communities, making it difficult to determine whether the connection between policy adoption is based on geographic location within a region (central vs periphery) or the experience of navigating the spatial landscape of a community.

In line with the conceptual ties between social life, spatial experiences, and local policy, I suggest that the ways that a city operates as a place of residential settlement will impact how local governance systems act in a number of social sustainability policy areas. I theorize that when more people live in the most exclusionary and isolated form of housing—the single-family detached home—there will be a reduced number of social policy actions passed by the local government. As the dominance of single family detached housing is so clearly linked to social and spatial dynamics that create and sustain exclusion and isolation (Berry, 2001; Dwyer, 2007; Orfield, 2005), I contend that when a larger share of a city's residents live in single-family detached homes, that city will adopt fewer policies that advance social sustainability.

This connection is based on evidence that the way that people experience and settle within a city will impact policy demands and policy outputs, specifically because they may interact with fewer members of populations that require additional accessibility. The lived experience of the city, centered around the settlement patterns and housing choice, will shape what residents perceive and advocate for as needs of the community. The demands of residents, in turn, will affect policy adoptions by local government. Therefore, my hypothesis predicts that cities with larger shares of residents living in the most isolated form of housing will have systematically lower rates of social sustainability policy adoption.

H1: As the percentage of occupied homes that are single-family detached units increases, a city will adopt fewer policies related to social sustainability.

Geographic aspects such as the location of the city within the region have been considered in previous studies (see: Hawkins, Krause, Feiock and Curley, 2016; Opp and

Saunders, 2012; Opp, Osgood and Rugelely, 2014; Swann and Deslatte, 2019; Wang, Hawkins, Lebredo, and Berman, 2012). Instead, this research focuses specifically on the way that people live within a city—and not its relationship to other areas— and how that is connected to the actions of the city government to enhance access to essential city services, such as transit and road access, supportive housing options, and child services. Its findings will add significantly to current conversation on the development and redevelopment of urban/suburban spaces.

Methodology

The production of social sustainability is an incredibly context-dependent process that centers around the interdependent nature of human activity within geographic environments across time and space (Bromley et al., 2009; Sherazi and Keivani, 2017). Though earlier studies have looked at the relationship between variations in housing type, density, and self-reported social sustainability experiences, there is a need to understand the relationship between local settlement patterns and the processes that produce social sustainability, specifically policy adoption. This paper adds to existing research on social sustainability policy by testing the hypothesis that the number of policy efforts intended to produce social sustainability is negatively related to increases in the percentage of occupied housing units that are single-family, detached homes.

This city-level study leverages survey data from the International City/County Managers Association (ICMA) as well as the U.S. Census and American Community Survey data to test the central hypothesis on a sample of 491 cities across the United States. The cities are observed at two time periods, allowing for panel analysis of changes

in housing patterns and sustainability policy adoption over time. The main dependent variable is an additive index of bike, transit, housing, and child related sustainability policies. While these policy areas can be conceptually distinct, together they reflect the gamut of social sustainability efforts of the city. To capture additional nuance, however, I also test these four individual policy areas using separate dependent variables, as well. The key independent variable in this study is the percentage of occupied homes that are single-family, detached units. Additional control variables related to the policy adoption literature, are included and described in the independent variable section below.

Dependent Variables

The main dependent variable for this study is an additive index of dichotomous responses to ICMA questions related to four sub-sections of social sustainability policies, as shown in Table 1. These four areas are bike infrastructure, public transit assistance, affordable and supportive housing, and programs for children. As social sustainability is keenly focused on access across time and space, and particularly focused on the needs of vulnerable and marginalized populations, these four themes strike at the heart of this endeavor. Bike infrastructure enables greater access to cross spaces for those without a personal automobile. Enhanced bus services increase access to spatial experiences and employment opportunities. Housing security is a key component of social sustainability in its own right. And, finally, access to childcare and educational services is a necessary factor for employment and educational efforts for members of a household and sets the child and family up for educational success in the future.

Table I: Dependent variables: Social sustainability additive indexes

Construct	Survey question
Housing (measured 0-4)	- Provide financial support/incentives for affordable housing - Provide supportive housing to people with disabilities - Provide housing options for the elderly - Provide housing within your community to homeless persons
Transit (measured 0-2)	- Expanded bus routes (in past five years) - Transportation programs targeted specifically to assist low-income residents
Bikes (measured 0-2)	- Expanded dedicated bike lanes on streets (in past five years) - Added biking and walking trails (in past five years)
Children (measured 0-2)	- Provide funding for pre-school education - Provide after-school programs for children

By providing supportive transit options, creating bike lanes, ensuring housing for vulnerable populations, and providing additional children's programing outside of school hours, cities engage in social and spatial efforts that support engagement with economic systems, without personal or communal degradation, over time and space. In this study, I primarily consider the combined dependent variable with all four areas (measuring from 0 to 10 policy efforts) in a panel regression analysis, but I run additional models for each subset of policies, as well.

The dependent variables were derived from responses to two waves of surveys from the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), the first sent out in 2010 and the second in 2015. Using the literature and theory discussed above, the four social sustainability areas of bikes, transit, housing, and children were identified as key topics within this survey, with a total of ten questions serving as indicators for these areas. The IMCA surveys have several advantages, including reliability, number of

observations, and breadth of scope, as the ICMA is the leading organization for evaluating local governments on various metrics, including programs and policies related to sustainability. ICMA frequently collaborates with the US federal government, colleges and universities, and other local government organizations to collect survey data.

The 2010 and 2015 surveys on sustainability inquired about local government efforts related to water, transportation, energy, recycling programs, and policy actions (ICMA, 2010; ICMA, 2015). The surveys have been used in previous studies assessing sustainability policy adoption in US cities, especially those seeking to understand the determinants of sustainability policy adoption (see: Berry and Portney, 2013; Homsy and Warner, 2013; Kwon and Bailey, 2019; Osgood, Opp, DeMasters; 2016; Svara, Watt, and Jang, 2013). The response rate for the 2010 survey was 25.4% (2,176 localities, including cities, towns, boroughs and counties) while the 2015 survey response rate was 22.2% (1,899 localities).

Responses to each of the ten questions were dichotomous, asking the cities whether or not action had been taken in these key areas. While over 800 communities replied to the survey in both years, for the purpose of this study, only localities that were included in both the 2010 Census and 2015 five-year ACS data sets were included. This included most of the localities with the political designation of "city" (in line with other studies such as Deslatte, Feiock, and Wassel, 2017) as well as towns and boroughs. This produced a final sample of 491 localities that were observed in both survey years and had available Census data. The dependent variable is measured as the number of actions reported by a city within a survey year.

The primary model considers the total count of policies across all sustainability areas, though I also specify models which examine the number of policies enacted within a given sustainability area. The dependent variable in all models are count variables – additive indexes that include: two questions each in the bike, transit, and child policy areas, four in the housing area, and ten in the combined variable. In total then, there are 10 possible policies a city may enact. This includes 0-2 possible policies implemented for bike, transit, and children, and 0-4 policies which may be implemented related to housing. Table 2 provides descriptive statistics on the additive indexes while the bar graphs (Figures 1-5) show the percentage of policy actions over the two time periods.

Table II: Descriptive Statistics, summaries

Variable	Year	Obsvs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Independent Variables						
Occupied housing, Single-family detached homes (%)	2010	491	63.10	15.03	6.10	98.40
	2015	491	62.78	15.26	8.10	99.70
Population (ln)	2010	491	10.04	1.11	8.22	14.07
	2015	491	10.09	1.12	8.50	14.16
Education, Residents with a BA degree and above (%)	2010	491	31.41	15.85	3.40	85.10
	2015	491	32.90	16.32	4.80	87.00
Median housing value (%)	2010	487	234.28	162.13	55.40	993.50
	2015	491	227.74	180.21	54.10	1456.30
Poverty rate (%)	2010	491	13.22	8.16	1.10	48.40
	2015	491	14.57	8.18	1.90	49.30
Race, non-Hispanic white (%)	2010	491	70.63	21.72	1.90	99.50
	2015	491	68.31	22.11	1.80	99.10
Transit type, Public Transit Users (%)	2010	491	2.40	4.13	0.00	34.60
	2015	491	2.64	4.72	0.00	44.80
Age, Population under 5 (%)	2010	491	6.77	2.00	1.00	15.70
	2015	491	6.54	1.83	0.90	14.60
Dependent Variables						
Total Policy Actions	2010	491	3.16	2.43	0.00	10.00
	2015	491	3.25	2.53	0.00	10.00
Housing Policy Actions	2010	491	1.08	1.32	0.00	4.00
	2015	491	0.88	1.24	0.00	4.00
Transit Policy Actions	2010	491	0.49	0.69	0.00	2.00
	2015	491	0.60	0.79	0.00	2.00
Bike Policy Actions	2010	491	1.18	0.80	0.00	2.00
	2015	491	1.30	0.76	0.00	2.00
Children Policy Actions	2010	491	0.41	0.65	0.00	2.00
	2015	491	0.47	0.69	0.00	2.00

The main model includes the count across all 10 policy actions as the dependent variable, while four different sub-models separately consider the number of enacted policies within a single area. Considering these policy areas independently, rather than

through a single, cross-policy index, allows for a nuanced look at the relationship between housing patterns and different types of sustainability actions. The combined dependent variable, on the other hand, provides an understanding of the totality of social sustainability action within a city. This is especially valuable as some cities might be likely to adopt several actions across all areas while others might be likely to neglect these areas entirely. So, this measure provides a fuller range of sustainability action by the city. As Table 2 and Figures 1-5 show, the frequency of policy adoptions increased, overall, between the two time periods. This trend is also evident in three of the four subcategories, though the housing policy index is the exception to this trend. More cities had zero (0) housing-related policies in 2015 than in 2010.

Figure I: Total Policy Actions


Graphs by year
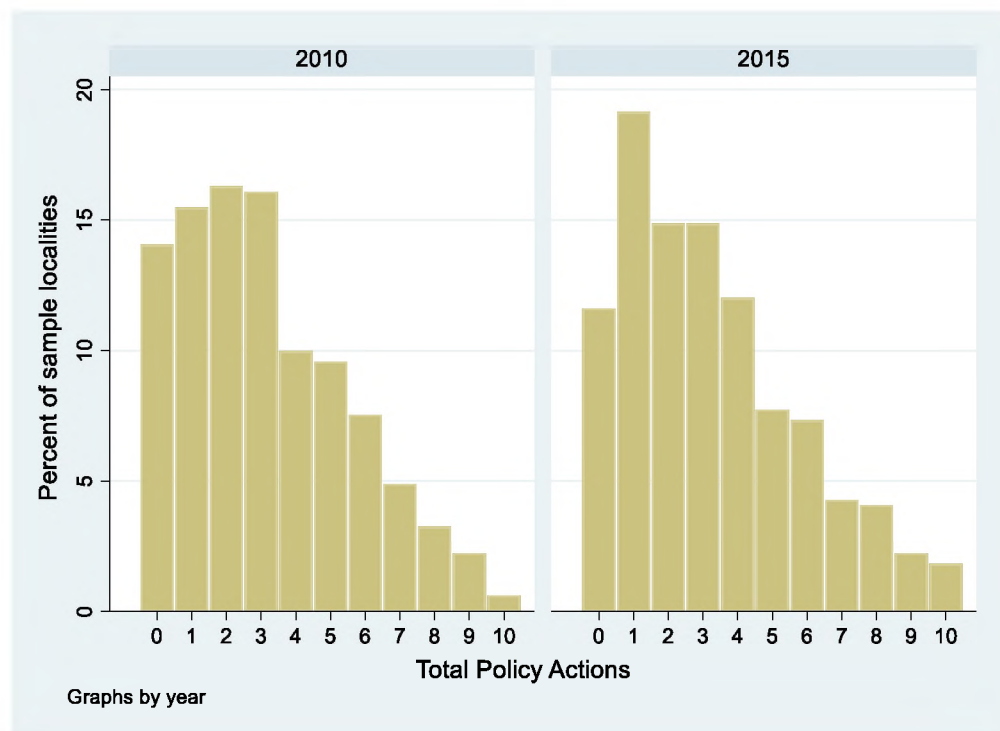
Figure II: Housing Policy Actions

Graphs by year
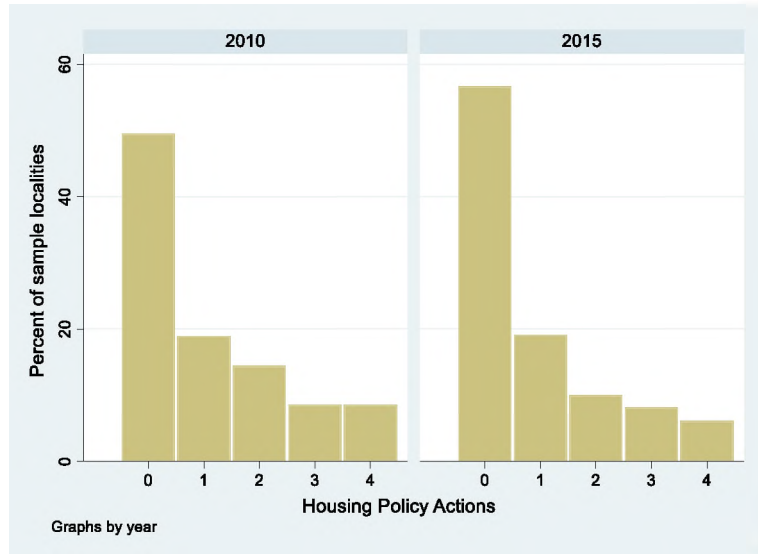
Figure III: Transit Policy Actions

Graphs by year
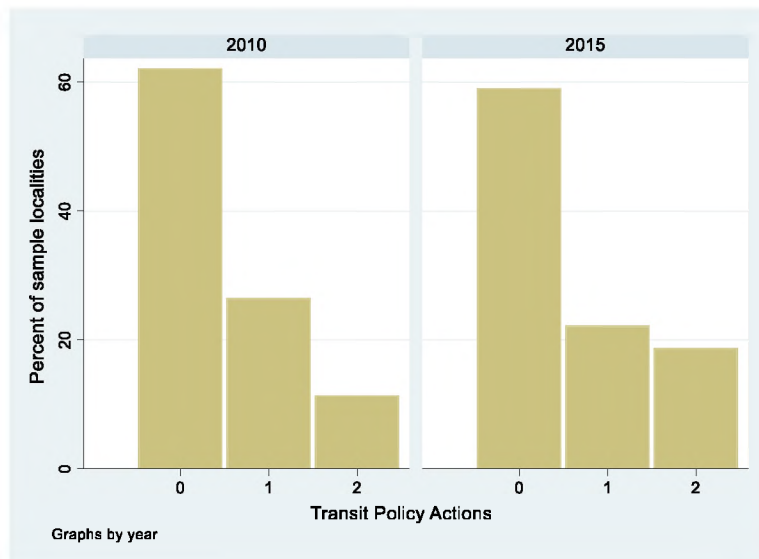
Figure IV: Bike Policy Actions

Graphs by year
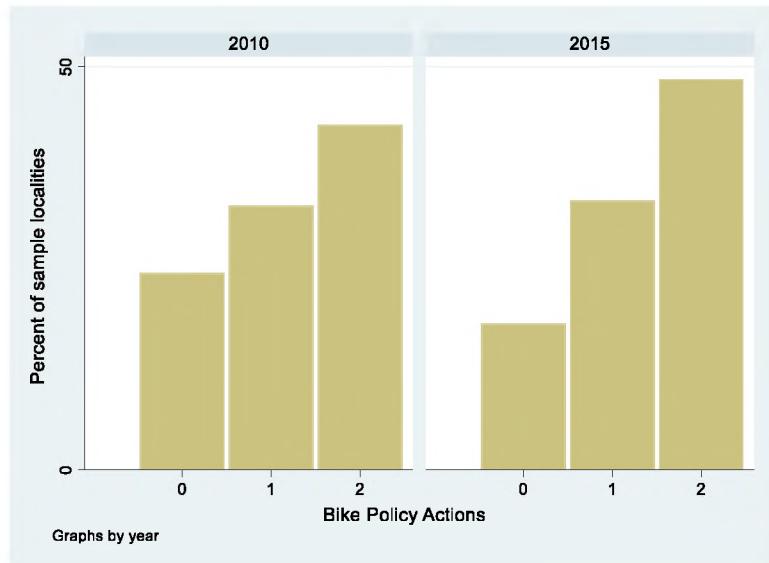
Figure V: Children Policy Actions

Graphs by year
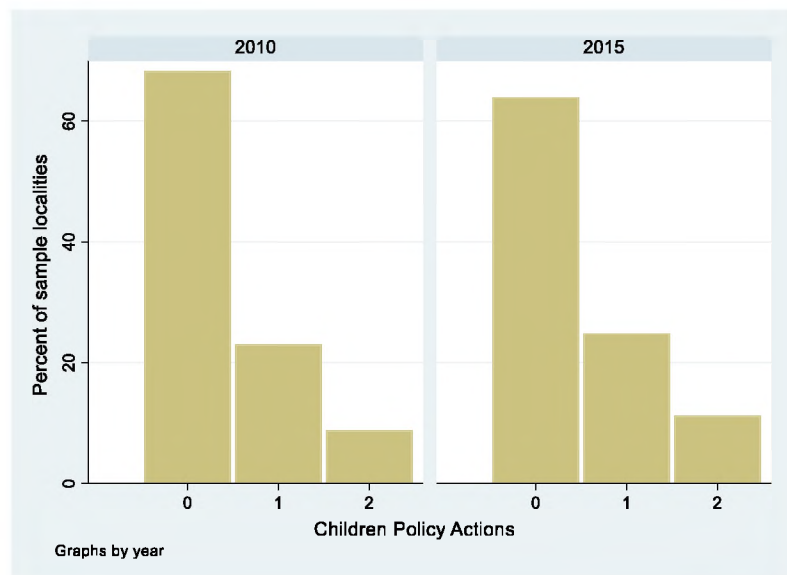
Independent Variables

The primary independent variable used to test the theory outlined above is the percentage of occupied housing units that are single-family detached homes, retrieved from 2010 and 2015 Five-Year American Communities Survey data. In line with previous studies, I also chose a series of independent variables to serve as controls. Social elements of the city are likely to impact the adoption of social sustainability policies. Therefore, my model controls for the size of the city (the natural log of the population), the wealth of the city and its tax base (median home value, in thousands) as well as the needs of the community (the percent of the population that is living in poverty) and specific racial demographics (percent of the city that is white). The education levels of the city residents are also considered (percent of population with a bachelor's degree) as this variable is likely to explain policy demands and engagement from residents—with higher levels of education correlating with higher levels of engagement.

Cities with larger populations are predicted to have higher numbers of policies adopted, given enhanced capacity of more populous cities, on average. This effect is predicted to take on a log linear functional form, given diminishing effects of additional population in very large cities. Cities with higher poverty rates, too, are predicted to adopt more sustainability policies since these cities have more individuals who will directly benefit from accessibility measures. A higher percentage of white residents is expected to predict fewer social sustainability policies as more diverse cities are more likely to adopt sustainability policies, as indicated in the literature above Higher levels of education and higher home values are predicted to have a positive relationship with social

sustainability policy adoption. A city with a higher percentage of educated residents is likely to see increased policy demand from these residents, as they attend meetings, vote, and are generally more engaged.

Cities with higher median housing values have increased capacity, through property taxation, to implement policies and provide a greater level of services. Additionally, a binary city leadership variable was created to measure whether a city had a strong mayor or city manager form of government. As city manager forms of government are more frequently associated with innovation in sustainability policies, cities with a non-mayor form of government (mayor = 0) are assumed to be more likely to adopt a higher number of policies (see Figure 6 for the histogram). When considering the transit and child related policies specifically, additional control measures were added to include key stakeholders—the percentage of the population that are public transit users and the percentage of the population that is under 5, respectively. Both of these variables are expected to have a statistically significant and positive relationship to the number of policies adopted. The summary statistics are displayed in Table 2.

Figure VI: Mayoral Form of Government

Graphs by year
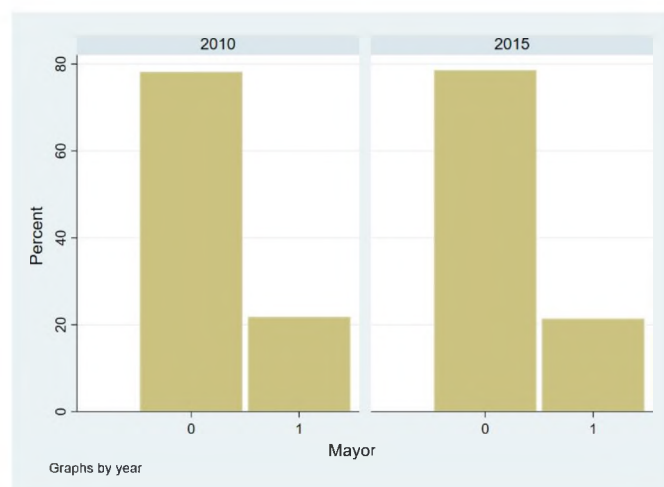
Model Specifications

I employed a panel linear regression model to determine the relationship between the dominance of single-family detached housing choices and the adoption of social sustainability policies. While linear regression models are most appropriate for continuous variables, and count models are often utilized for discrete ones, for the total policy (0-10) model I utilized a linear regression model because it is the best model to explain, interpret, and visualize effects. To ensure the robustness of results, I also ran the model with a Poisson specification, and found no major changes in directions or significance of effects across the model. Given the lack of any significant differences between the results of the Poisson and linear regressions and the relative ease of explaining the results of generalized least squares regression models, the linear model was chosen for the main model. Results of the Poisson regression are provided in Appendix, Table 1.

I include state and year fixed effects in the model to help control for state and year variation. Fixed effects allow for systematic unit and/or time variation on the dependent variable that is not captured by independent variables, effectively allowing different intercepts for different units and/or years. Fixed effects are applied to a study when the variation between units is important yet cannot be fully incorporated into the model, most commonly for unit and time elements of the model. California is likely different from Ohio, for example, in ways that matter for local-level policy decisions, but I cannot control for every variable that makes this so. The same is likely to be true for the time elements of the model. A random-effects model, on the other hand, is indefensible if unit

and time variations of this sort exist. A random effects approach would assume that variations at the unit and time levels are strictly random. The results of a Hausman test indicate that a random effects model could be used for the model with the aggregate dependent variable. However, given the theoretical expectations on the year and state impacts on the dependent variable, these fixed effects are included in the model. To account for the additional city-level error patterns, robust standard errors were applied, clustered on the city.

Using the margins and margins plot functions in Stata, I calculated the predicted count of policy adoptions at various levels of the key independent variable (% single-family housing). The margins function allows a researcher to estimate the predicted level of the dependent variable action at various point in the independent variable value. In this case, the number of policies adopted is estimated at various levels of the percentage of occupied housing units that are single family, detached homes.

Limited dependent variable models

For each subset of distinct policy variables, a Poisson model was used because it is difficult to justify the use of a linear regression model with such limited variation in the dependent variables (counts from 0-2 or 0-4). These models included the time-variable fixed effects but not the state-level fixed effects. Ideally, I would have included state effects, however limitations on the data set make this difficult for the models with less variation. As some states include only one or a handful of cities and the count variation in these models is not as large, the state-level fixed effects could not be applied. Robust standard errors, clustered on city, are included in these models, as well.

Findings and Analysis

In three of the five models, results indicate a negative relationship between the percentage of single-family detached housing and the number of sustainable policies enacted by a city. As shown in Table 3, this result is statistically significant in the primary model, which considers the total number of policy actions (0-10), as well as in the housing policy actions (0-4) model, and the transit actions model (0-2). In the other two models, results are insignificant, but the coefficients remain negative. In the total policy action model, for every unit increase in the single-family detached home measure (1%), there is a .0164 decrease in total number of policies enacted. It is statistically significant at the % confidence level.

Table III: Results of Linear and Poisson Regressions

Variables	Total Policy Actions Linear Regression^	Housing Actions Poisson	Transit Actions Poisson	Bike Actions Poisson	Children Actions Poisson
Occupied housing, SFDH	-0.0164***	-0.00908***	-0.00814**	-0.00254	-0.00550
	(0.00602)	(0.00336)	(0.00360)	(0.00180)	(0.00409)
Population (ln)	1.038***	0.469***	0.318***	0.220***	0.317***
	(0.0907)	(0.0474)	(0.0474)	(0.0210)	(0.0471)
Education, BA+ (%)	0.00470	-0.0120***	-0.00251	0.00113	-0.00448
	(0.00732)	(0.00413)	(0.00421)	(0.00173)	(0.00463)
Mayor	-0.164	-0.0276	-0.0638	-0.0734	-0.356**
	(0.171)	(0.133)	(0.132)	(0.0583)	(0.152)
Med housing value ($1000s)	0.000881	0.00204***	0.000223	0.000263	0.000798**
	(0.000870)	(0.000313)	(0.000388)	(0.000161)	(0.000310)
Poverty rate (%)	0.0419***	0.0278***	0.0199***	0.00252	0.0117
	(0.0106)	(0.00619)	(0.00662)	(0.00318)	(0.00811)
Race, Non-Hispanic white (%)	0.00667	0.0111***	0.000566	0.00432***	-0.00346
	(0.00545)	(0.00266)	(0.00292)	(0.00142)	(0.00299)
Transit type, Public Transit Users (%)			-0.0165		
			(0.0144)		
Age, Pop under 5 (%)					-0.0386
					(0.0375)
2015.year	-0.0203	-0.203***	0.149**	0.0870***	0.110
	(0.103)	(0.0601)	(0.0678)	(0.0292)	(0.0783)
/lnalpha		-0.574*	-1.409**	-18.07***	-1.678
		(0.324)	(0.686)	(3.337)	(1.143)
Constant		-5.506***			
		(0.679)			
Constant				-2.334***	
				(0.339)	
Constant			-3.706***		
			(0.717)		
Constant					-3.489***
					(0.785)
Constant	-9.051***				
	(1.229)				
Observations	978	978	978	978	978
Number of Cities (n)	491	491	491	491	491
Robust standard errors clustered on city in parentheses; year fixed effects included in all models					
^State fixed effects included in main model					
Note: Poisson models report partial effects on natural logs of expected counts					
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1					

The margins plot for the total policies model (Figure 7) displays the predicted number of policies a city would have at various levels of dominance of single-family detached housing, all other variables held at their means, with the city manager form of government. The plot indicates a decline in the likely number of policies as the independent variable increases. For the total policy model (0-10), the predicted number of policies when there are no occupied single-family detached homes (0%) is about 4 policies. When every occupied housing unit is a single-family detached home (100%), the policy action prediction drops down to 2 policies. The mean for the SFDH variable is about 63% with a standard deviation of 15%. As the figure shows, a single standard deviation increase (from 63% to 78%) shifts the city's policy count from 3 to 2. This is a substantively significant effect and further discussed in this section.

Figure VII: Margins Plot for Total Policy Actions
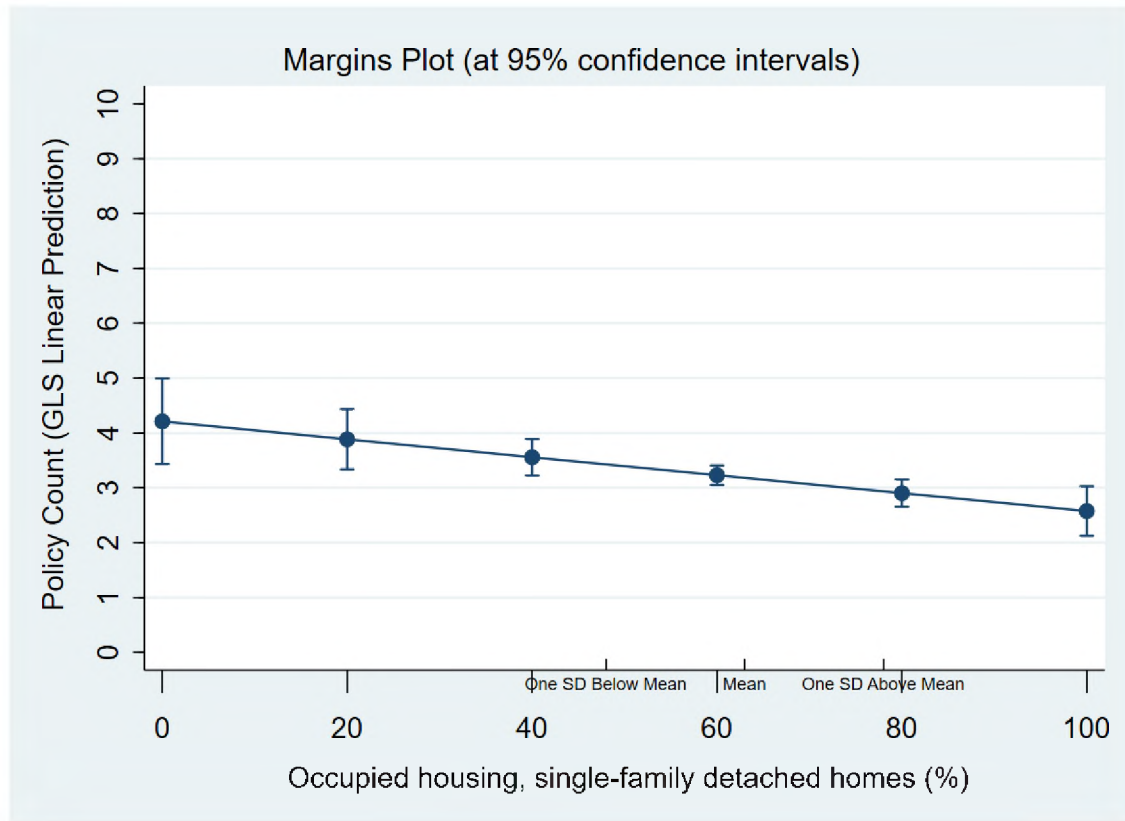
A Poisson regression was used for the other four sub-set models. In the housing policy model, if a city were to increase its single-family detached housing share by 1 percentage point, the difference in the logs of expected counts of sustainability policies would be expected to decrease by 0.009, given the other predictor variables in the model are held constant. The magnitude of this effect is difficult to conceptualize. The incidence rate ratios enable us to interpret this finding more clearly. If a city were to increase the percentage of occupied housing that is SFDHs by one unit, the rate ratio for housing

policy counts would be expected to decrease by a factor of .991, while holding all other variables in the model constant.

In the transit policy model, the difference in the logs of expects counts of sustainability policies would be expected to decrease by .008, given the other predictor variables in the model are held constant. In terms of incidence rate ratios this means that if a city were to increase the percentage of occupied housing that is SFDHs by one unit, the rate ratio for housing policy counts would be expected to decrease by a factor of .993, while holding all other variables in the model constant. In the Bike and Children policy models the key independent variable was not statistically significant.

Across all five models, the control variable that proved to be positive and significant was the population variable. This result is in line with the theory that size and growth enhance policy responsiveness. The poverty rate variable was statistically significant and positive in the total policy, housing policy, and transit policy models, indicating that cities are responsive to the specific, supportive needs of the local population, as well. The education variable was only statistically significant in the housing policy model, which is counter to the theoretical expectations and findings from other sustainability policy adoption studies.

Similarly, the racial makeup of the city and median housing values were not statistically significant in most of the models—also counter to several sustainability studies mentioned above which find that wealthier and more diverse cities are more likely to have adopted sustainability policies. Indeed, the race variable was only statistically significant in the bike-related policy adoption model. This might lend support to the idea that bike-accessibility efforts are often driven by increasingly white, wealthier residents

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of a neighborhood, and can be understood as a symbol of a gentrifying city (Hoffman, 2016; Lubitow, Zinschlag and Rochester, 2016; Stehlin, 2015; Stein, 2011).

For the GLS regression total policies model, the between R-squared value is .5, the within R-squared value is at zero, and the overall R-squared value is .4. With only two points in time, the low within R-squared value is not unexpected however, the cross-sectional R-squared is considerably high and indicates that the model does account for a large portion of the factors that explain the variation between city policy actions. Additionally, a Poisson regression for the total number of policies enacted finds similar results as the linear regression model (see Appendix, Figure 1).

Overall, the results indicate that a significant relationship exists between the dominance of single-family housing and the degree of adoption of social sustainability policies. This tendency is evident in three policy categories: the total number of policies, the housing-specific policies, and the transit policies. Further research will be required to examine whether the results would hold with better measures of social sustainability policy in the areas of biking and child-related services. These findings are valuable and important as they add additional insight to our understanding of the relationship between the city as a built and lived-in environment, a place of social interactions and policy action.

The significant relationship between policy adoption and the percent of occupied units that are single-family detached homes provides evidence for the theorized connection between settlement patterns and sustainability policy outputs. Additionally, the null findings for the control variables make a case for focusing more narrowly on

social sustainability policy adoption specifically when understanding the landscape of sustainability policy adoption in local communities across the United States.

Limitations

There are important limitations to this study that should be noted and explored in future research efforts. First, the dependent variables were collected via a series of survey responses over two time periods. As with all organizational survey efforts, the findings rely on the accuracy of the respondent recording. Another important consideration of the survey tool is the sample representation. Second, the sample is not random or balanced between states. The city manager form of government is overrepresented in the sample, in part due to the sampling frame and survey audience (ICMA members). Additionally, many cities might be left out of the model due to their lack of ICMA membership or because they did not respond to both rounds of surveys. Though the panel data usefully measures differences within cities, the lack of a representative sample impacts the measurements between cities.

Moreover, with four states not included in the data set and the number of cities in each state not balanced based on the state population/number of cities, the data set is not perfectly representative. Third, restrictions on the data set limited the use of the state fixed effects for the limited dependent variable Poisson models. Optimally, I would have included state fixed effects, as state specific actions are likely to drive local policy decisions, however due the data limitations, I could not include the state fixed effects along with the time period fixed effects. And fourth, as this study uses secondary data, the survey tool was not designed or disseminated by the researcher. The social

sustainability measures are incredibly limited and overly focused on transportation and housing access. They lack measures that capture economic and job access, greenspace access and environmental protections, as well as access to food and other basic needs, all key elements of social sustainability (Opp, 2017).

Grounding the Findings in a Larger Policy Debate- A Focus on "Upzoning"

The connection between the adoption of social sustainability policies and the occupied housing tendencies suggests that the theoretical connections between the way that people interact with the city as a spatial unit and the policy efforts of the local government hold true. Overall, these findings suggest that increases to the number of occupied units that are single-family, detached homes decreases the rate at which cities adopt policies oriented towards equity and access. These findings have important policy implications, particularly when considering the man-made limitations on housing stock variation via zoning efforts. Especially in communities where social sustainability policies are necessary for long-term individual and communal sustainability, policies that mandate shifts in housing settlement patterns might have a significant effect on social sustainability policy making.

Indeed, one policy implication that can be clearly observed here is the need to prioritize the ability to change the residential settlement patterns as they are clearly connected to the likelihood that the city will better support its residents' social sustainability needs. Increasingly, contemporary scholars are returning to the questions about how the housing stock, density, form and design might impact equity/access by highlighting the possibility of continuous upwards-zoning (upzoning) measures to enable

cities to increase the number of available residences. Even when not clearly and legally deemed exclusive, zoning efforts of the 20th century lead to a reduction in building rates in the mid-20th century, creating housing shortages that remained, even as these rates rose slightly towards the end of the millennium (Been, Madar, and McDonnell 2014; Morrow 2013).

Upzoning, according to theorists and some empirical evidence, can increase housing construction rates, increasing the supply of quality housing and thereby decreasing the costs. Cities with more restrictive zoning codes have been shown to lag in building efforts (Chakraborty et al., 2010; Glaeser and Gyourko, 2002) and result in higher land and housing costs (Ihlanfeldt 2007; Kok, Monkkonen, and Quigley, 2014; Quigley and Raphael, 2005; Pollakowski and Wachter, 1990). Unlike other inclusive zoning efforts, upzoning has not only been used in smaller, more suburban communities but is more commonly advocated for in larger cities across the country where housing affordability concerns surge. Cities like Chicago, Minneapolis, and a number of large and small cities across California have recently considered massive and targeted efforts to increase the potential usage of land parcels within the city limits (Freemark, 2019).

However, due to the nature of the practice as targeting the zoning code rather than the actual building/supply processes, upzoning has received criticism, as well. Concerns that shifts in use will result in gentrification and displacement due to increased housing costs, have been observed in New York City (Angotti, 2016) and Chicago (Freemark, 2020). Additionally, concerns related to upzoning stem from the argument against an adherence to the reliance on the free market to resolve the housing crisis as well as more specific concerns related to local democratic processes (Imbrosio, 2019). Scholars and

activists have responded to both sets of claims, noting that zoning reform is not intended to be a silver bullet but an initial step in the direction towards more housing density (Baca and Lebovits, 2019).

Others have pushed back on the narratives about neoliberalism, social ills, and democracy by arguing that the shift towards upzoning is in and of itself a radical change and an important political shift, when contextualized with historical insight and a knowledge of contemporary settings (Einstein, 2019; Goetz, 2019). Still others note that the concerns related to upzoning can be mitigated with a focus on "the missing middle"— mid-level density housing such as duplexes and four-plexes (Bozikovic, Case, Lorinc, and Vaughan, 2019). This study adds to this existing debate as it indicates that the SFDH occupancy rate can depress policy action for other social needs.

Conclusion and Future Research

Social sustainability places human needs and behaviors at the core of the sustainability focus. In this paper, I frame social sustainability through a lens that prioritizes access to resources, goods, and opportunities. The dependent variables in this study were counts of city policy actions related to increasing access to additional housing resources, existing transit services (specific bus support for the elderly and low-income residents), additional transit options (bike lanes), and additional child care services (programming provided outside of the public school infrastructure). These policies can be considered social sustainability efforts as they exist within a given structural environment (road, home, school) over time periods (travel time, work time, and recreational/home-based time) and enable existing members of the city to better access necessary goods and services.

I sought to understand the potential connection between the settlement patterns of the residents of the city and the degree to which the city government would adopt policies intended to enable increased accessibility. The findings show that cities with higher percentages of occupied homes that are the most exclusionary, isolated, and expensive form of housing, have lower levels of adoption for social sustainability policies. These results suggest a connection between the spatial experience of the city and its policymaking efforts, in line with theoretical assumptions about the impact that living patterns have on the process of generating social sustainability through government actions.

This line of research presents new and exciting opportunities for future and additional study. First, qualitative research efforts can further illuminate the findings in this analysis. Interviews, focus groups, and observational methods can be used to identify not only why city design might be connected to social policy making but how these two changes are connected via governance efforts. Questions to consider in future research might include: Are there specific community engagement processes that are impacted by these residential settlement practices? How might the dominance of one kind of housing option create a path towards decreased support for vulnerable communities? Does the shift in the occupied housing trends suggest to local governmental actors that additional support systems are not necessary? What role do developers and business leaders play in impacting social sustainability policy adoption?

These additional questions are timely and worthy of our attention. Additional attention can also be given to the specific aspects of each policy which might explain variations in adoption. The ages of city residents, for example, might prove to be

significantly related to the adoption of policies related to supporting elderly and child-related support systems. Moreover, dependence on car ownership might impact the transit and bike-related policies.

Lastly, I would suggest a similar study that includes all three areas of sustainability – environmental preservation, economic development, and social sustainability. Theoretical and empirical work in the area of sustainability suggests that the maximization of one area of sustainability can have direct or indirect effects on other areas, and that cities that adopt different policies might be similar or dissimilar from those that adopt others. In considering the relationship between residential settlement and sustainability policy action, future research might consider not only whether the same variables impact all sustainability areas similarly but how the presence of one set of policies might impact another.

CHAPTER III

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Introduction

"Black leadership gets these cities when they're broken, that's when it becomes our city to fix." -Maple Heights Mayor Annette Blackwell, October 9, 2019

Almost fifty years after the historic election of Cleveland mayor Carl Stokes, neighboring Maple Heights elected its first Black mayor. Like many inner-ring suburban communities across the country, the city had undergone a significant shift since the Stokes election—changing from a predominantly white, middle-income community to an overwhelmingly Black, low-income one. However, the 2016 election of Maple Heights mayor Annette Blackwell was more than a political shift in a single suburb. Like Stokes' election as the first Black mayor of a large American city, Blackwell's election reflected a broader reality shaping inner-ring suburban communities across the country: despite demographic shifts, minority leaders only gain institutional power once the cities are considered too far gone for white leaders (Freisema, 1969).

The city had been steadily losing residents and tax dollars following the deindustrialization of the region and white flight to ex-urban areas. Decades of devaluation and disinvestment left too many concerns and too few tools to address them. Rather than a progressive or representative shift, the change was abrupt. As Mayor Blackwell explained, shortly before pointing to the pictures of the fifteen white, male mayors that preceded her, "Maple Heights has struggled because 'diversity and inclusion' have been elusive for a long time" (Lebovits, 2019).

Though commonly assumed to be spurred by decades of human ecological progress, the modern metropolitan area has been wholly shaped by intentional efforts to maintain physical divides by both race and class (Marcuse, 1997; Massey and Denton, 1998). These efforts have been clearly tracked through federal, state, and local systems that have invested directly in spatial efforts to destroy minority communities via the housing and highway systems as well as explicitly racist policy making intended to generate "segregation by design" (Baldassare, 1992; Harvey, 1973; Jackson, 1985; Kruse and Sugrue, 2006; Massey and Denton, 1988; Rothstein, 2017; Trounstine, 2018).

The segregation effects have been particularly evident in studies of the mass suburbanization efforts of the post-World War II era, which subsidized the development and residential settlement of new communities further and further from the urban core. Suburban living was once seen a privilege for the wealthy who could afford to visit, work at, and shop in the city at their leisure. However, mass suburbanization efforts subsidized suburban settlement for working-class white families (Rothstein, 2017). Still, working class housing was made inaccessible to non-whites through mortgage and lending efforts,

zoning and building processes, public finance practices, race-restrictive covenants, and community organizing tactics (Rothstein, 2017).

Social sustainability, a key component of the sustainability triangle, can be understood through the lens of "just acquisition" – a term I use to describe the attainment of necessary human materials, resources, and opportunities through a system that ensures that the creation and dissemination of these items is founded on equity, inclusion, and justice. The services, experiences, and opportunities acquired might include jobs, housing, education, health, safety, and other systems. Thus, segregation, and the intentional disinvestment that creates and sustains it, is a social sustainability crisis—it prevents individuals and communities from securing and maintaining what they need to thrive for generations. However, the process of securing these resources must be built on a foundation of on inclusion, enacted equitably, and driven by justice in order for the production effort to be truly socially sustainable.

Various levels of governments were not only complicit in this effort, they were the primary drivers of social inequities across space—through a mix of legislative, bureaucratic, and cultural strategies. Encouraged by the legal powers of home-rule, cities across the country adopted severely restrictive and prejudicial legal and bureaucratic practices that further enhanced segregation and isolation (Rothstein, 2017; Trounstine, 2018), creating a threat to the sustainability of the community. As these cities were initially settled by residents with the political and social means to leave the restrict access and acquisition of city services (Frye, 2011; Kye, 2018), the institutions they created was intentionally reliant on the constant influx of social and financial capital of those particular types of residents.

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With a shift in demographic and economic factors, residents in these communities often struggle to secure services, goods, and opportunities, a defining element of social sustainability. As such, the suburban "struggle" in these communities in transition presents a crisis for local governments beyond demographic change. Not only do local governments have to respond to changing social needs and different racial dynamics(from higher income to lower income; from majority white to majority Black), they must also pay attention to historical roots of inequities and the institutional processes that perpetuate them. This requires social sustainability scholars to ask not only, how can suburban communities ensure that those who live within them can acquire materials, goods, and resources *today* but how can we generate institutional reform to ensure that these communities retain this power tomorrow?

Prior research-based efforts to promote the attainment of services, goods, and opportunities in inner-ring suburbs lacks a distinct focus on *just* acquisition. Framing the concerns of these communities through a lens that amplified human ecological changes and residential sorting ignores the intentional disinvestment and devaluation of poor and Black spaces. These harmful efforts are the core mechanism that drives the inability to produce social sustainability seen in many suburbs in transition. When the process to ensure social sustainability is intended to mitigate the negative effects, but not the existing foundation, of historical and institutional racism and classism, just acquisition is not established. I theorize that a restorative justice effort is necessary to give back power to those who have been victimized, centering this work as a dynamic effort between the victims, perpetrators, and their communities. Through a process tracing analysis, studying Maple Heights, OH, I show this restorative justice effort in action and draw causal lines

between inclusion efforts, local equity-based policy making, and justice-centered language and partnerships and the successful regeneration of a suburban community on the edge.

Suburban Communities in Transition: Reconsidering Decline

The extension of metropolitan regions during a time of monopoly and global capitalistic growth was driven by unsustainable development efforts to create urbanized regions where goods, resources, and experiences are allocated in a highly exclusive, inequitable, and unjust manner (Gottdiener and Hutchinson, 2000). The single most significant predictor of individual and communal success in the long-term is place—the zip code, neighborhood, or block where one's primary residence is located (Dreier, Mollenkopf, & Swanstrom, 2001). Place matters in service delivery, policy creation, and implementation. Public institutions—including cities, towns, villages, public school districts, and special districts—can utilize the power of the public sector, including police and taxation powers, to increase exclusion, hoard resources and institutionalize inequities (Burns, 1994; Trounstine, 2018).

The creation of a large number of small local governmental institutions as well as the practices that tax citizen and property and provide services (local governments and special districts) means that the inequitable distribution of amenities requires a trade-off and a choice, giving meaning to those spatial inequalities (Peterson, 1981; Tickamyer, 2000). And while the practice of zoning land uses is a commonly used municipal regulatory tool that attempts to maintain property values and the property tax base (Fischel, 2004; Ihlanfeldt, 2004), the result—when layering in the regional economy and

local service delivery efforts—is a local political system that is designed to reproduce segregation (Trounstine, 2018) and limit the ability of those within Black and poor spaces to acquire much needed resources.

However, though once intended to be an escape for the urban elite, demographic, economic, and housing realities in older suburban cities have changed—especially those in Midwestern and Northeastern Shrinking Regions (Tighe and Ryberg-Webster, 2018). As Black people have moved out of the central city into the nearest suburbs, more economically and racially homogenous whites have sprawled further out into the ex-urbs (Brueckner, 2000). Few states limited the continued development of suburban layers in any meaningful way, resulting in new pattern of poverty and decline in older, suburban communities. As a collective whole, there is now more poverty in the suburbs than in the central cities (Allard, 2017; Kneebone and Berube, 2013).

The inner-ring suburbs were the first to face this increase in poverty as people left the central city in an effort to move people to areas of opportunity, despite the fact that these cities lacked the resources and design to be wholly supportive of racial and economic diversity in any meaningful way (Kneebone and Nadeau, 2015). And while poverty rates have risen in all inner-ring suburbs, this change is particularly apparent in the Northeast and Midwest (Hanlon, 2009; Madden, 2003; Mikelbank, 2004; Orfield, 2002; Short, Hanlon and Vicino, 2007). , Furthermore, those in poverty who can find quality, affordable housing in the suburbs will often find these communities to be a "poverty trap," rather than a place of opportunity (Pendall and Weir, 2015) as social services are few and far between in these suburban communities and public dollars are

mostly allocated to services including public works, safety and EMS services, and school districts (Murphy and Wallace, 2010).

Additionally, as many residents of these cities purchased their homes with subprime mortgages, vacancy rates in the inner-ring suburbs rose dramatically since the housing market crash of 2007-08 (Adhya, 2013; Anacker, 2015; Lucy, 2017), creating additional pockets outside of the central city where homeownership and property-based equity are out of reach for those living in poverty (Kneebone & Nadeau, 2015). Almost seventy-five percent of homes that secured a mortgage between 2004-2008 and subsequently faced foreclosure were in suburban neighborhoods (Schildt, Cytron, Kneebone and Reid, 2013).

The shift in suburban spatial structures—population, demographics, economic vitality, and housing stability—has prompted scholars to study suburban spaces through a growth-loss lens (Anacker, Niedt, and Kwon, 2017; Airgood-Obrycki, 2019; Lee and Leigh, 2005; Puentes and Warren, 2006; Sarzysmi and Vicino, 2019). Suburban areas that have undergone any significant transformation in the past 40-50 years have been considered "shrinking" or "in decline," while those that have retained wealth, population statistics, white residents, and high-priced housing are considered stable, growing, and successful (Short, Hanlon, and Vicino, 2007).

As a result, scholars and practitioners have attempted to promote revitalization efforts in suburban communities that include non-white, low-income, immigrant, and housing insecure residents via economic development strategies and attempts to lure new residents to the community (Kneebone and Berube, 2013). In some regions including Cincinnati (Coleman and Carroll, 2018) and Baltimore (Vicino, 2008), these practices

have gained support as valuable methods of recovery and have been shared widely among local governance scholars without significant critical analysis or review.

Nevertheless, in considering the history of suburbanization and the mechanisms of injustice, inequity, and exclusion that this effort institutionalized within local governmental finance, planning, housing, and economic development practices, a critique of the suburban decline and revitalization narrative—and the actions that it leads to—is long overdue. As with historical reflections on the urban narrative, it is important that we consider the nature of the claim that areas that are non-white and low-income are inherently failing. As Morris (2004) describes in their assessment of urban educational systems in Southern states, institutional barriers to success due to racism and classism are more significant determinants than individual demographic markers.

While overt and covert racism continued to strip Southern urban schools of their ability to provide a high-quality educational environment, teachers and administrators prevailed and schools became important community-building catalysts (Jones, 1981; Morris and Morris, 2002). Similarly, as Smith, Caris and Wyly (2001) point out in their discussion of suburban change in Camden, NJ, the role of capital circulation is often overlooked in our understanding of what drives this shift. While the current state of older suburban communities is often observed by the in-migration of urban Black residents and the flight of white, economically mobile residents to outer-ring suburban communities and rural areas or rapidly gentrifying areas of inner-cities, it is caused by disinvestment, discrimination, and development practices (Smith, Caris, and Wyly, 2001).

As early suburban communities were built just as land-values became the dominant driver of capital accumulation, newer communities with accessible pathways to

the older, central business district flourished (Hoyt, 1933). However, as that capital diffusion has spread outward to outer-ring, ex-urban communities and back to previously disinvested urban areas, the inner-ring suburbs have been left to decay. By allowing the dominant narrative to define decline based on individual demographic markers—who moves in and who moves out—"this trope systematically disguises the market forces of disinvestment that constitute a more trenchant explanation of the fate of urban and suburban communities" (Smith, Caris and Wyly, 2001, p. 526).

Social Sustainability as a focus on "Just Acquisition"

The need to center sustainability stems from a concern about a future state and a process of degradation (WECD, 1987). Social sustainability refers to the ability of human life to continuously maintain a high-level of tangible and intangible resources over time, without a loss of quality (McKenzie, 2004). As the topic is all-encompassing and multi-faceted, researchers often use various layers to make sense of, measure, and study the topic. In this paper, I focus on the acquisition and attainment of goods, resources, and opportunities. Housing, economic opportunities, safety, a high-quality educational experience—it is not enough for items to be accessible, they must be solidly within the hands of individuals and communities in order for the geographic area to be considered socially sustainable and they must be continuously attainable over time.

As such, social sustainability is produced only when policies create spaces that maintain, over time, systems designed to increase/ensure equitable levels of access, voice, potential, and physical and non-physical quality of life (Sherazi and Keivani, 2017; 2019; Wu, 1998). In synthesizing the social sustainability literature, the focus on

acquisition requires three important elements: inclusion, equity, and justice. Together, I refer to this aspect of social sustainability as "just acquisition."

Inclusion is a process that ensures that people have a voice in the governance of their lives (Artnstein, 1969; Larsen, 2009; Magis and Shinn, 2009; Murphy, 2012; Opp, 2016; Sachs, 1999; Weingaertner and Moberg, 2014; Whitehead, 2003). Inclusion is a procedural effort, often enabled through participatory systems, that precedes an organizations ability to provide goods and services (Larsen, 2009; Shirazi & Keivani, 2017; Weingarten and Moberg, 2014). Without institutional collective action efforts that center marginalized groups, some individuals and communities are systematically restricted from being able to acquire goods, services, and opportunities. Democratic procedures to maximize inclusion can occur at the neighborhood and local-level as very intimate interactions (Weingarten and Moberg, 2014; Whitehead, 2003) or seep into all layers of civic participation (Shirazi & Keivani, 2017). In order to be considered truly inclusive, these procedures must enable "the effective appropriation of all human rights – political, civil, economic, social and cultural – by all people" (Sachs, 1999, p. 27).

Equity is the most referenced element of social sustainability. In some research efforts it has even become the catch-all phrase for social sustainability efforts, broadly (e.g Campbell, 2003). However, a more precise definition of equity reveals that it is deeply tied to the process of ensuring access to what people need within an urban space (Dempsey et al., 2011). In a social sustainability framework, equity is tied to ensuring the ability of goods, services, and opportunities to transfer to all relevant individuals or communities. Equity is a procedural effort, involving both the generation and allocation of physical and non-physical traits of the city (Jenks and Jones, 2010). This process must

be conducted in a way that is tied to the many personal and spatial identifications of humans within the city, to be sure that there are not inequities between groups and places (Larson, 2009; Harris and Goodwin, 2001; Magis and Shinn, 2009; Murphy, 2012; Opp, 2016; Sachs, 1999). If where one lives, when one was born, or other personal identifies such as race and class, impact their ability to experience the city, equity is not achieved. Moreover, as McKenzie (2004) explains, equity must be evident over time. A socially sustainable city is one in which access to all resources, across all areas, over generations remains equitable.

Justice is the final pillar of the social sustainability production process. Where inclusion asks who can and equity asks can they, justice asks will they without harm? A socially sustainable system is one in which the entire acquisition experience is devoid of wrong-doing, with the degradation of human-life considered to be the ultimate harm. The creation of an established institution for collective action efforts, such as a city or region, is a process driven by an attempt to horde social and environmental benefits for specific groups, across certain places (Castells, 1977; Lefebvre, 1974; Harvey, 1973). As place and people are so deeply intertwined, both spatial/environmental justice (Agyeman, 2008; Opp, 2016) and social justice (Cuthill, 2010; Weingaertner and Moberg; 2014) are seen as the primary components of a just agenda for social sustainability. Achieving just outcomes requires specific attention be given to the reproduction of systems of injustice and those groups that have faced historical marginalization as a result of these systems.

In combining the elements of inclusion, equity and justice and tying them to the broader acquisition process, the "just acquisition" aspect of social sustainability clearly emerges. Goods, resources, and experiences must be secured through a process that

brings all effected parties to the table, provided at a level of service that matches the current and historic needs of the population, and does so without harm to current and future generations.

With this understanding in mind, an obvious research puzzle is revealed. First, we can ask how can communities engage in this process, particularly when historical and current social and spatial patterns have attached the fundamental elements of social sustainability and kept the acquisition of urban resources out of reach for so many people? Second, we can seek to discover to what extent efforts to promote just acquisition are successful. As with other areas of sustainability, governmental agencies might move towards this goal through specific policy efforts that promote the interaction between goods, services, and opportunities and the people who need them within a political jurisdiction of the policy making entity (Manzi, Lucas, Jones and Allen, 2010).

However, as stated above, these efforts must be substantively tied to equity, inclusion, and justice to be deemed socially sustainable. Efforts that might appear identical can be delineated based on these criteria, though the unsustainable aspect might not be immediately clear. For example, policies that incentivize high-quality housing close to transit sites, do not in and of themselves generate social sustainability—they merely encourage the creation of a physical structure which might bring people closer to transit and job opportunities. Indeed, without a focus on the complete process, these policies incentivize harm through in gentrification and displacement in neighborhoods most in need (Lung-Amam, 2019; Lung-Amam, Pendall, and Knapp, 2019). Instead, efforts to produce social sustainability must include a direct focus on inclusion, equity, and justice within the policy formation and implementation stages.

Figure 8: Conceptual Model of Social Sustainability as Just Acquisition
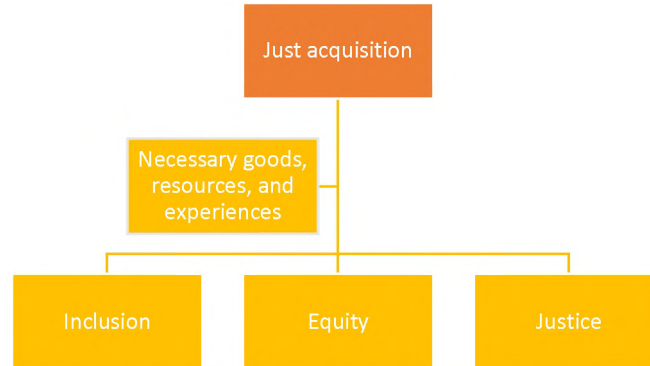
A Restorative Justice Approach to Social Sustainability

Without significant attention to the contextual nature of social sustainability, it is impossible to truly achieve this state (Shirazi and Keivani, 2019). Looking at current attempts to generate social sustainability within suburban communities, this is abundantly clear. Because racism and classism have driven development and metropolitan fiscal and environmental sustainability, these communities are often heralded as "declining," and "vulnerable" due to the increasing and persistent number of residents who are non-white, the of a lower-income populace, shifts in housing patterns, and fiscal constraints (Lucy and Phillips, 2000; Puentes and Warren, 2006; Short, Hanlon and Vicino, 2007). With the devaluing of these spaces comes an effort to achieve this acquisition state by investing in housing and economic development efforts that will boost the city's tax base and encourage the growth of a new resident population (Hanlon, 2008; Kneebone and Berube, 2013; Vicino, 2008). However, as is described above, this redevelopment effort only

continues the cycle of social unsustainability—seeking to replace, rather than stabilize the current race/class dynamic.

Instead, I theorize that a specific focus on restorative justice can promote a production process to a socially sustainable state. In line with our understanding of the current situation in communities in transition as produced via intentional harms against Black communities, I suggest that the key to a successful effort to produce social sustainability in communities in transition must be centered on restorative justice, a process of harm reduction and reconciliation that centers the victim's ability to regain power and center their healing. Unlike typical criminal justice practices that separate victim and perpetrator, the restorative justice process brings victims, perpetrators, and their collective communities together to engage in a process that is honest, open, and not focused on the punitive process of damage resolution against the state (Roach, 2000; Cario, 2003).

Common tools for restorative justice processes include meetings/mediations, peacemaking circles, and conferences (Kurki, 2003; Latimer, Downden, Muise, 2001). Though most often utilized in criminal justice and education work, the restorative justice process can be useful to repair bonds that have been disrupted due to any kind of harm by forcing perpetrators to face the results of their actions (Fattah, 1998; Umbreit, Bradshaw and Coates, 1999). Therefore, I suggest that it is not only a valuable but a necessary step for securing social sustainability in inner-ring suburbs in-transition. Because the harms have been enabled through urban and public administrative institutions—such as local governments and regional development efforts—a restorative justice focus is warranted

in these fields. This study is a valuable effort to determine whether and how these mechanisms might function, through a distinctly urban and local governmental lens.

Over the past several decades, the restorative justice framework has developed, globally, as a mechanism to answer the centuries-old question of "how should we respond to harm?" In 1989, New Zealand became the first country to adopt a massive effort to bring victims, perpetrators, and their communities together to resolve the impacts of wrongdoings in a way that would place power back into the hands of those who had faced injustices. Though commonly practiced at a small scale in the United States—either as single programs within larger systems and/or via nonprofit agencies (Johnstone and Van Ness, 2007)—restorative justice efforts since New Zealand's adoption of the system, have expanded as an international concept whose basic principles have been outlined by the United Nations.

In the early 2000s, the Economic and Social Council of the UN provided a clarifying document outlining the process and intended outcomes. They provided information on key considerations—including cultural and power imbalances, the role of facilitators and procedural efforts, and the need to ensure that participation remains safe, open, and voluntary—as well as major procedural elements. Restorative outcomes, according to the ESC, can include, "reparation, restitution and community service, aimed at meeting the individual and collective needs and responsibilities of the parties and achieving the reintegration of the victim and the offender" (UN, 2002, p. 3). These outcomes, agreed upon by all, should be further monitored by the judicial system to ensure they are implemented and adhered to.

What then is RJ best used for and what are its goals? The restorative justice process is, at its core, an effort to resolve the key issue of victimization: a loss of power or perceived loss of power (Baril, 1984, 2002; Hudson, 2003; Strang and Sherman, 2007; Zehr, 2002). It is about addressing the needs of those within the harm-system and changing the roles they play and ensuring that the responsibility to resolve harms does not fall on the victim (Zehr, 2002). Mediators, circle participants, conference attendees must all recognize that the purpose is not to share blame or promote a sense of collective responsibility. Rather, it is centered on ideals that give information, language, power, and the potential to determine whether there can be reconciliation to the victims and how (Braithwaite, 2007). It creates a system of accountabilities for the offender, directly tied to the needs of the victim. It further expands the harm-resolution effort to the community to place the wrong-doings within a broader framework, noting that harm is a fundamental violation of individual and communal relationships, and enabling communities to take care of each other and promote collective accountability.

The devaluation and disinvestment of Black spaces in the United States is one of the most serious crimes in which governmental systems, within the United States have not only been complicit but actively engaged. Black spaces—be they schools, streets, neighborhoods, or entire cities—have been devalued, leading to direct disinvestment in these communities. Social sustainability is, at its core, built on the pillars of inclusion, equity, and justice and must be established prior to and in conjunction with acquisition work. Therefore, I suggest that an effort that prioritizes a system of restorative justice is likely to succeed in producing social sustainability in suburbs in transition. Without

existing literature on the concept, a case study approach can illuminate our understanding and provide a pathway forward.

Methodology

In this study, I seek to understand how and the extent to which RJ practices are integrated into governance efforts to produce social sustainability within historically harmed spaces and social groups through a restorative justice framework. This study places institutional collective action efforts through governance systems as the main driver for just acquisition. I have noted that the threats to social sustainability in suburbs in-transitions stem from historic harm and that the RJ approach to rectifying harm has proven to be successful in a communal and personal setting. This paper seeks to understand how and to what extent RJ efforts might be evident in local *institutional* governance practices, investigating the ways that this can take place, and the degree to which it might be successful, at the city-scale. I posit that a governance approach that seeks to secure power for victims of injustices is the ideal mechanism to ensure social sustainability, due to its pillars of inclusion, equity, and justice.

In line with this epistemological approach, a methodological strategy that best enables the researcher to analyze both institutional and structural efforts as well as the work of individuals and specific mechanisms, within a context dependent manner is ideal. Therefore, I have chosen an exploratory case study method for this research effort. Exploratory case studies are a commonly used analytical tool for causal research efforts (see: Eisenhardt, 1989; Fischer, 1998; Flyvbjerg, 2003; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Yin, 1989) specifically because they allow the researcher to encase the breadth of the study

within contextual boundaries and enhance the depth (George and Bennett, 2005; Gerring, 2001).

Context independent efforts to determine causality can fall short due to the inability of the researcher to understand and account for a variety of causal mechanisms, especially when little prior research is readily available (Brady et al., 2010). Exploratory case studies, on the other hand, allow a researcher to delve deep into a new phenomenon to construct theoretical insights (Meredith, 1998). The case study method is also specifically well-suited for the phenomenon I am studying as it is the gold-standard research design for a study focusing on decision making, historical context, discourse, and values (George and Bennett, 2005).

As this research effort focuses on a specific type of city (inner-ring suburban ones) and a sub-group of that specific type of city (those that are in-transition), a case study design is ideal as it allows a research to emphasize both those elements that are general (trends that can be observed across spaces) and specific (decisions, language, outcomes etc.) of a particular phenomenon. Local governments often look to other cities to imitate and enhance their practices, seeking to copy efforts that prove to be feasible and valuable in other communities. Therefore, case study efforts, especially singular cases, of local governmental decision making can be empirically valuable because of the influences that single cases can have on others (Carpenter, 2010). Additionally, for the purpose of this project, as this specific lens has yet to be analyzed, a "crucial" case will be used to begin to develop this area of research.

Still, there are limitations to the case study methodology that must be acknowledged at the onset of the research method. In many ways, the limitations of the

method are strikingly similar to its advantages. Efforts to control for dissimilarities and encourage broad applicability are abandoned to enhance the richness of the research materials and the exploratory and explanatory potential of the study (George and Bennett, 2005; Yin, 1989). As such, case study efforts are often critiqued by those who believe they lack generalizability, a core research goal.

As the specifics of any specific case might not be generalizable, the methodological choices of the research design and the analytical practices must be drawn from existing, rigorous study to ensure that any additional empirical research to further confirm or deny the conclusion of a case study is easily replicable and analytically generalizable (Yin, 1989). This study is not an effort in generalizability, rather an attempt to investigate and conceptualize a new phenomenon with enhanced accuracy and validity. Following this in-depth study, future research can assess generalizability.

Case Selection

This study focuses on the inner-ring suburban city of Maple Heights, OH as the study location, with the unit of analysis as the local governmental agency. The City of Maple Heights is a valid case study as the city conforms to the suburb-in-transition label described above, yet it has successfully enhanced the levels of community acquisition since the recent governance change in 2016. As a suburb outside of a shrinking central city in a Midwestern state, Maple Heights has lost a significant number of wealthy, white residents since 1970, has undergone decades of disinvestment as it is land-locked between disinvested neighborhoods of the core city and ex-urban areas, and faced significant set-backs in the years following the 2008-2009 financial crisis.

Once referred to as "EC2", a reference to East Cleveland—another struggling inner-ring suburb that faced decades of mismanagement and disarray—the city's previous mayors openly and repeatedly stated that nothing could be done to regenerate the city. However, following a governance shift in 2016, when the city's first female and first Black mayor took office, equitable and justice-oriented efforts began almost immediately. While the city was on a path towards governmental deterioration, local journalists and city documents continued to observe and document the the city's efforts.

Aside from the validity criteria, the case was selected for its rich materials and accessibility. As the researcher resides in the same county as the city, frequent visits to the area were possible and my general familiarity with the historical development and current realities of the area was valuable for the research effort. Additionally, as a resident of the region and a local reporter, I was able to create and maintain relationships with important subjects of the study, ensuring that the information, perspective, and analytical lens applied to the study was as accurate as possible.

Contextual Information on Maple Heights, OH

Though originally built as a section of Bedford Township, OH, the village of Maple Heights was incorporated in 1915 with a population of approximately 1,000. The area was established right outside of the municipal boundary of the city of Cleveland, within Cuyahoga County. Seventeen years later, the village had grown to the size of a city, with 5,950 people and incorporated as one, institutionalizing a city charter and legislative positions, including a mayor-council form of government. The city grew exponentially, as the local industrial sector expanded.

Following the Second World War, the city expended even more. Shopping centers were built, and the city continued to house many new corporations and operate its own bus service. In 1970, the city hit its peak population number with 34,093 residents. Several years later, in 1975, the bus service ended. Three years after that, a stretch of the I-480 highway system was constructed through the area. However, these changes did little to stop the subsequent population loss. Following the deindustrialization of the region, the city population started to shrink and then rapidly declined. Five decades later, in 2019, the city population was at 22,078, a 4.6% decrease from its 2010 estimate of 23,135.

Not only has the city's population shrunk, the demographic, economic, and housing structures of the city have changed significantly. Though originally occupied by predominantly white, middle-class homeowners, the city's poverty rate in 2019 was at 22.4%. Additionally, Maple Heights' Black population grew from 44% in 2000 to 73% in 2019. The five-year census estimates in 2018 placed the occupied-homeowner rate in the city at 58.3% and estimated that 14.1% of the over-25 population had received a bachelor's degree.

These shifts can be explained by a combination of factors and are observed in suburban communities across the county as well as the Midwest, broadly (Hanlon, 2010) Deindustrialization and conservative control of state political houses significantly shifted the trajectory of the entire region, leading to massive declines across the Rust Belt (Hackworth, 2019). Additionally, Black migration from Southern states combined with exclusionary city-making efforts in the outer-lying areas and bank-led actions to restrict housing loans to Black families, prompted a process that allowed white families to move

further and further out from the city while Black families remained trapped within the city (Rothstein, 2017). "White flight" predominantly hit the East and Southern areas of the city as well as the inner-ring suburban communities, such as Maple Heights, and though change was gradual, at first, and then rapidly picked up in mid to late-twentieth century (Michney, 2017).

Despite this reality, Maple Heights leadership remained overwhelming white and middle class, particularly in the Mayor's office. White, male mayors continued to run and be elected in the city, even as the population shifted towards a majority Black community (Lebovits, 2019). As the city population and financial capacity dwindled, the city's finances were severely impacted—leading mayors to turn to individualized, fine and fee-based tactics to raise funds. As was observed in Ferguson, MO, the city of Maple Heights became increasingly reliant on policing measures to generate fees for the city (Naymik, 2015). And yet, these attempts—some of which were deemed illegal—were not even successful in generating enough financial capital to keep the city afloat (Naymik, 2015). In 2014, the state auditor pronounced Maple Heights to be a city in financial distress and placed it under fiscal watch (State of Ohio, 2014).

More than just demographic, housing, and economic shifts—these changes represent a threat to the social sustainability of the community as the attainment of these goods, resources, and opportunities was not firmly within the hands of residents through processes that gave them voice and control, as is evident by the Board of Elections records indicating that the city lacked adequate legislative and executive representation for its population. The rhetoric from city leadership blamed residents for the city's condition and used the governance powers to police and punish residents rather than

support them and assist them (Naymik, 2015). Meanwhile, the area struggld to in its emphasis enhanced access and retention to social services and safety nets. The one local Jobs and Family Services center within the Southgate Shopping Plaza closed in 2016 despite the increasing needs in the city, due to state financial constraints. There were no policies or systems developed to enable struggling homeowners, renters, and low-income folks to secure and maintain housing, jobs, and food (Lebovits, 2019).

And while these inactions would be bad enough, the communal needs were ignored, despite the testimony from residents about their lived experiences, documented in meeting minutes and community newspapers. Residents were often painted as problematic to the media, by their own leadership (Naymik, 2015). The mayor's office simply accepted decline as fact. Little effort was made on behalf of the residents to improve the living conditions of the city or generate more security. Until a significant shift towards restoration took place—the election of the first Black, female mayor— Annette Blackwell—who took office in 2016.

Data Collection and Materials

Massive governmental efforts can be best understood when observed over time and using thick description methods. A rich understanding of the unfolding of events is a significant advantage for the validity of any case study effort. As Rosenthal (1986) explains, a "soaking and poking" period can allow the researcher to follow events, important actors, and institutional change over time. From June 2017 through October 2019, I soaked and poked, compiling data and reviewing events through general community knowledge/engagement strategies and journalistic efforts. Following this

stage, a more specific and directed effort to systematically collect data began in July 2019

and extended until April 2020. In the second round of data collection, a number of data

sources were accessed and reviewed. These included 1) quantitative and qualitative

documents such as Census/ACS/AHS date, local legislation, meeting minutes, press

releases and other similar reports; 2) secondary interview sources including journalistic

coverage, local events/speaking engagements, and social media posts; 3) a single, half-

day field visit to a local historical center.

Secondary data resources were a key part of this research effort. These included

journalistic coverage, local events and speaking engagements as well as social media

posts from the city and local governmental leaders. These interview-like resources played

a pivotal role in understanding the way that the actions of the local government were

government framed through the actor's own words, an important element of post-

positivist and interpretive research efforts. The coverage also elaborated on events,

actors, and institutional changes over time. Personal reflections, including my own

journalistic coverage, have also been layered into the soaking and poking research stage

to provide more a more accurate and contextualized understanding of the secondary

resources. These personal reflections were saved as memos and notes, compiled as

freelance writing submission, and printed in a local media outlet.

Table IV: Source Materials for Case Study

City Government:
City Council meeting agendas from 2016 – 2019
Fiscal emergency plans from 2016-2018
2019 City Master Plan
County Government:
Community/Economic Development grants 2016-2019
Local statistical and historical data:
American Community Survey, Five-Year Estimates
HMDA Data
Case Western Reserve University historical entry, from Mark Souther
Local News coverage: (date range)
Ideastream
Cleveland.com/Plain Dealer
News5
Cleveland Scene
Neighborhood News (monthly coverage of several suburban municipalities including Maple Heights):
Fifty-four editions between 2016-2019
Maple Heights press releases
Announcements/Coverage of local events online and in media

Data Analysis and Measures

As this is a theory testing effort, my aim is to determine the centrality of a restorative justice framework in social sustainability efforts. I have laid out the expected inputs (inclusion efforts; local equity-based policymaking; justice-centered language;

justice-centered partnerships) and described the outcomes (just acquisition), with the

hypothesis that the outcomes will be directly and positively tied to the presence of the

inputs. As the literature review explains, just acquisition is achieved when the process to

secure needed items is inclusive, equitable, and just. These necessary items include all

components of social life needed to sustain human interactions across time and space,

such as housing resources, economic opportunities, access to public spaces,

intergenerational support systems, safety, and community (Dempsey et al., 2011, Opp,

2017).

What this study seeks to understand is whether these outcomes can be traced to

restorative justice inputs and the extent to which these inputs, should they be present, are

successful. Process tracing, a well-established method of in-case analysis that enables a

researcher to identify causal mechanisms, that link a cause to an effect (Beach and

Pederson, 2013; George and Bennett, 2005; Waldner, 2012), provides a path forward for

this study.

Process tracing rests on the assumption that explanations and causal relationships

can be gleaned through an understanding of how events unfold over time (Collier, 2011)

and a systematic review of occurrences and interactions that clarifies some assumptions

and eliminates others (Bennett and Checkel, 2015). Unlike other case study tools, process

tracing is uniquely suited for crucial cases, allowing a researcher to highlight causal links

between inputs and outcomes when little or no existing empirical research exists

(Gerring, 2007). Process tracing includes several iterative steps/phases that require one to

fully embed themselves within the case to enable the researcher to determine causal

mechanisms and relate these to existing or emerging theories (Beach, 2017). With the

extensive "soaking and poking" phase and the collection and analysis of empirical data

over time, the researcher can see clear ties between broader themes, the particulars of the

case, and larger social phenomena (Beach, 2017).

Figure IX: A Visual Model of the Research Design Strategy
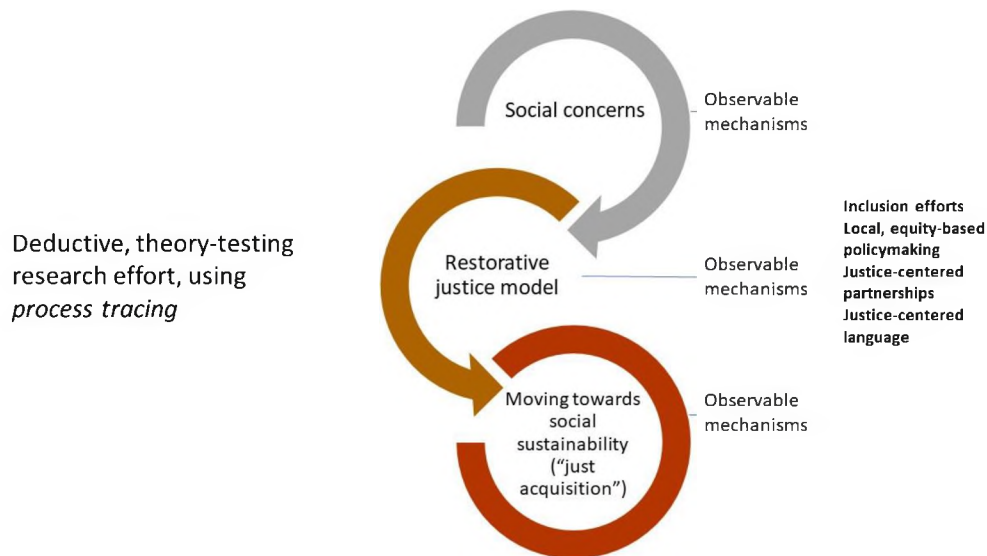
The first layer of analysis involved case construction and descriptive analysis,

answering the *what and how* questions of this research effort. This contextualization was

achieved through sequencing (Mahoney, 2010): providing a clear timeline of the

significant events and efforts from 2016, when a governance change took place in the

city, and the end of 2019—when the Blackwell administration completed its first term.

Additionally, data collected during the soaking and poking period was used to construct a

broad understanding and contextualization (Yanow, 2013) of the case, offering insight

into the details of this crucial study. Both time periods, the 2017-2019 soaking and

poking period and the 2019-2020 targeted data collection were chosen based on the

identified governance shift as the primary catalyst. Prior documents and news coverage indicated that the previous stakeholders had either allowed social sustainability to fall to the wayside or had attempted to manage decline, rather than invest in revitalization. Following the governance shift, several new and innovative policies and practices clearly intended to produce social sustainability were adopted. After the sequencing efforts, I used content analysis strategies to determine the thematic elements of the documents, identifying the key mechanisms by which the changes in the city were achieved.

The data collected during the soaking and poking period provided a clear timeline of events, laying out the actions of the administration and the corresponding increases in social sustainability. I enhanced this analytical effort with the data collected in the directed round of collection, using document coding and analytical memoing, two strategies used to establish the existence of expected measures within case materials.

Materials obtained directly from the city—city council meeting minutes, city financial audits, city press releases, etc.—were augmented with neighborhood newsletters, announcements from other organizations, and media coverage. A complete list of materials is provided above, in Table 4. As this is a theory-testing effort, the coding was established prior to the review, based on the four primary restorative justice mechanisms. The analytical memoing strategy involved writing and reviewing preliminary findings and discussion with other scholars and practitioners for additional input. The half-day immersion at the Maple Heights Historical Society center solidified the historical context and added weight to the thematic elements.

Following this stage, I used stakeholder analysis, a method of defining and outlining specific actors, policies, and actions of the observed phenomenon (Reed et al.,

2009) to identify *who* the major players were, and *which* policy decisions were most

significant. As the unit of analysis in this case was the Maple Heights city governmental

system, the key stakeholders were identified by their level of control over governance

processes and the level of connectivity to key themes of social sustainability (policies and

practices most likely to prioritize and maximize inclusion, equity, and justice). Though

the steps were unique, they were also iterative. Case construction and process tracing

efforts informed the stakeholder analysis work, which in turn added more insight to the

case construction and process tracing.

Table IV*:* Key Stakeholders

Mayor and mayor's assistant
Economic Development Director; Housing Director; Office of Aging Director
City Council Members; County Council and County Administrators
Ohio Housing Finance Agency; JobsOhio
Real estate agents and developers
Western Reserve Land Conservancy, MetroParks
Cuyahoga County Community College
Cleveland Foundation and MyCom
Local and regional business owners/industries

Findings and Analysis

Identifying the Inputs to Produce Social Sustainability through Institutional Governance

"We don't start at ten, we start at zero." – Mayor Annette Blackwell (Lebovits, 2019)

In Maple Heights, the catalyst of inclusionary leadership (the election of Mayor Blackwell) is the initial evidence of the theoretically predicted causal mechanisms at work. Prior to her election, the city's perspective on producing social sustainability was accurately summarized by its previous mayor, "I can't fight for them anymore," (Naymik, 2015). The election was both a restorative justice effort on its own and, from a stakeholder view, a method to enable additional RJ work. The nature of Blackwell's elected leadership as the first Black, female mayor of a city that had rapidly shifted towards a majority-minority locality would suggest that it is a result of community-based RJ (the community choosing to elect her as Mayor) and the power that she then had over the governmental system triggered a process oriented towards restoring power to others who have been harmed by the institutional design of suburban development.

Indeed, following the election late 2015, Mayor Blackwell clearly stated that her first term was to be dedicated to ensuring the just acquisition of resources, experiences, and opportunities. According to city meeting minutes, in her inauguration speech,

> Mayor Blackwell pledged that her administration will work diligently with Council to improve the quality of life for the residents, to search for funding for senior programs and those to benefit children and to pursue small businesses as members of the community. The Mayor said she intends to change the public relations of the City to encourage prospective homeowners to invest in the city (Maple Heights city council meeting minutes, January 6, 2016).

Additionally, since her election, Blackwell herself has engaged with key organizations that enhance inclusion and equity for minority and low-income persons. In 2016, she was awarded the Maple Heights City Schools Pathfinder Award, the National

Action Network of Greater Cleveland Humanitarian, and Warrior of Justice and Leadership Award. The following year, Blackwell completed training in the Cleveland Leadership Center's Civic Leadership Institute. Blackwell was the keynote speaker at a regional hospital system's 2018 Black history month event and was one of the keynote speakers at the 2019 International Woman's Day march.

However, while leadership and coordination are key to good governance, it is Blackwell's administration and the broader governmental efforts that drove social sustainability, particularly through one three of the most significant just acquisition concerns: housing stability, city planning efforts, and economic security. Less than three months into the new administration's tenure the city adopted several intersecting processes to enhance housing stability. Maple Heights had long maintained a practice of requiring new homeowners to set aside large sums of money for potential repairs (cite the rule/ practice/ ordinance/ interview) of homes, prior to purchasing them—creating additional barriers to secure home ownership.

In response, the administration not only prioritized legislation to reduce burdens and barriers, they proactively worked with realtors to mitigate prejudicial and predatory real estate practices. With new policy and interorganizational actions, however, housing security processes were streamlines and ensure that home purchases in Maple Heights would be beneficial for all parties. Seth Task, the past-president of the Akron-Cleveland realtors association even went so far as to note that, "Mayor Blackwell is, simply put, a breath of fresh air. Maple Heights has such potential and it is great to see real leadership in City Hall that truly wants to positively affect property owners."

These changes resulted in the increased acquisition of housing resources, significantly improving the numbers of home purchases between 2017-2019 and at increasing values. Due to its impact, the action was also reapproved by the city council. To further secure the social sustainability process, investors began to show increased interest in the city, as well. Blackwell's administration, however, remained focused on ensuring that "just acquisition" was the goal, demanding that the home product was high-quality and worthy of the city's residents. "I'm not anti-investor. I'm anti-investors that put in something substandard, that they themselves wouldn't even live in," Blackwell noted (Lebovits, 2019). In 2018, the city also sought to enhance intergenerational social sustainability, working with developers to submit plans for a senior affordable housing facility to the Ohio Housing Finance Agency (the application was ultimately denied, likely due to the small size of the project). Additional housing-related efforts from city's administration were also taking shape in late 2019, with discussions about new housing designs and uses to adapt for the community needs.

The city administration also worked with the residents as well as the county government to enhance city planning efforts and invest in public space improvements, another aspect of just acquisition. In mid-2016, Cuyahoga County announced a new initiative to provide municipal grants for a number of local projects. Maple Heights secured $150,000 in 2017 for park improvements, and another $150,000 in 2018 for improvements to one of its main thorough-fares, Libby Road. Additionally, in 2018, the city entered into its first ever partnership with the Cleveland Metroparks system to share the governance and maintenance of a massive local greenspace area. All three projects enhanced the ability of residents to acquire the true value of their public spaces.

Moreover, the city further supported just acquisition efforts by dedicating time, resources, and attention to a community-led Master Plan effort, which ensured that the city's future goals were aligned with the residents perspectives and needs. In early 2019, the city council approved a new Master Plan, after a two-year process set into place by the Blackwell administration. The new Master Plan included a focus on the economic vitality and community use of the Southgate shopping district, where the ODJFS office had recently closed. In late 2018, following the completion of the Master Plan, though before it was approved by council, Maple Heights secured an Opportunity Zone status for Southgate. Additionally, the Master Plan made community engagement and supportive programs for young people a core element of the city's planning efforts. By leveraging a partnership between MyCom—a project of the local Cleveland Foundation that provides funding for community-based endeavors, the school district, and the local government, the Master Plan lays out a coordinated effort to enhance student support, provide internships and work opportunities for young people, and market/promote these efforts to other communities.

Another social sustainability outcome of the city administration was the just acquisition of economic development opportunities—prioritizing small businesses and jobs that provide stability and a living wage. In early 2016, Blackwell attended the reopening of a previously destroyed store, noting that "Fannie May's commitment to the city confirms what some people might have forgotten: This is a great place to live and work. It says to on-lookers that 'we are coming back.'" In 2017, the city secured $50,000 from Cuyahoga County to begin a neighborhood small business loan program. In 2020, the city administration entered into an agreement with a large area employer—working

with the state jobs services, JobsOhio, to open a $25 million production facility likely to employ at least 100 workers, including many local hires.

The county administration further bolstered this investment by approving a $3.5 million economic development loan to the company to facilitate the move. The Blackwell administration also used the Maple Heights financial recovery plan—the state ordered plan for cities in fiscal distress—to outline and pursue economic and business efforts. These included food establishments, automotive services, recreational establishments, health services, and discount stores. These were not only strategic investments and revenue generating efforts. They were directly shaped by the desire to give the city residents a high-quality urban experience.

Relatedly, the precarious financial situation of the city presented key concerns, which were addressed head on by administration. State level oversight of city financial practices can introduce significant inclusion, equity, and justice concerns (Nickels, Viswanath, and Lebovits, 2020). With the financial capacity to operate without state level oversite, Maple Heights would be able to respond to the needs of the community in a responsive manner and with control over the collection and use of local dollars. Following years of decline, in both 2016 and 2017, the state auditor admonished the city for its incomplete financial reporting. In response, the administration constructed several plans for fiscal recovery. Included in these plans were strategic increases to the tax base through direct economic development efforts, rather that increasing taxes to residents—a practice that is often introduced without resident support and disproportionately impacts those who are already struggling financially. In 2018, the city reported that it had

maintained a positive cash flow. Finally, in 2019, the city was poised to move out of state oversight, without overburdening the residents.

Identifying Governance Mechanisms for Just Acquisition in a Restorative Justice Framework

"It can't only be us." – Mayor Annette Blackwell (Lebovits, 2019)

Though the sequencing makes clear the what and who elements of the case study, it does not clearly outline how. A thematic analysis of the content of this study reveals a restorative justice process was at play within the city and centered around inclusions efforts; local equity-based policymaking; justice-centered language; and justice-centered partnerships. These practices were employed by the Blackwell administration, which served as a facilitator between the victims (residents, harmed by marginalization and the efforts to disinvest in their spaces) and the offenders (previous administrations, other governmental bodies, and public and private systems of harm towards Black communities).

Inclusive engagement and equity-centered policy actions played a fundamental role as Blackwell and the city council members brought residents to the table and used legislative and administrative powers to enable local actions that targeting barriers and burdens to equity. Housing regulations, developer agreements, and fiscal emergency plans were all crafter with the explicit focus on enhancing the ability of residents who have historically been marginalized within these systems to be able to engage with and benefit from them.

Second, the Blackwell administration's use of justice-centered language via communication and PR strategies also further developed the restorative justice effect. Through a local newspaper and enhanced communication with residents across mediums, Blackwell shared more direct information with residents about city policies and practices. Blackwell regularly attended local community functions and speaks at local church events and regional programs. She routinely spoke openly about the historical and persistent prejudice and racism that has led to the pattern observed in Maple Heights and cities across the country. Unlike her predecessors, Blackwell did not frame the state of her city as a result of personalized individual failure of her residents, instead her framing highlighted structural and institutional barriers that have created and sustained the reality observed within her municipality.

Finally, justice-centered partnerships with other groups and governmental agencies enabled larger shifts that outsized what the city could have done with its own capacity. Relationships with realtors, business owners, residents, and county planners allowed for more direct investment efforts in the residents' equitable access to resources, experiences, and opportunities. Additionally, the administration tapped into county resources, accessing $350,000 in funding for economic development and community development initiatives. An application to the State of Ohio's LIHTC program shows that the city also attempted to secure funding for senior housing, to better secure those still living in the city and create a sustainable option for future elderly residents. Further, Blackwell and her administration engaged in proactive efforts to support community planning and access to local public spaces. And, after decades of disinvestment—in only four years, the city moved out of financial ruin, regained its service capacity, supported

the opening and security of local businesses, revamped houses for market-rate purchases, and assisted potential homeowners in securing long-term housing.

Blackwell and other stakeholders within her administration, as well as the partners the city identified and worked with, spoke openly about the systemic racist efforts to immobilize Black communities. Banks, realtors, businesses, planners, and legislators created lending, home purchasing, economic development, public space, and public fiscal barriers to success in suburban communities that transition to ownership by non-wealthy and non-white demographic groups. Though her own background in the banking and communications industries undoubtedly added to her knowledge of the necessary actions that Maple Heights needed to consider, Blackwell's administration engaged with this history and those who enabled these systems to resolve the harm they had done to residents. Using the structures of the socio-spatial experience of the city, the Maple Heights city government constructed a new reality, reducing the continued harm to the current residents.

Figure X: A Visual Overview of the Case Study Findings and Analysis

Findings from Maple Heights case study

- Housing – primarily single family detached homes; housing code; tax burdens; blight and vacancies due to white flight
- Declining population
- Personal/household economics – fines and fees; lack of jobs with living wages
- Public spaces/greenery – over development; declining access to preserved green spaces
- Intergenerational support – lack of housing, transportation, and home care options for the elderly; lack of support systems and job-preparation for youth
- Local governmental services – city fiscal position a threat to supply of key services

Social concerns apparent in Maple Heights

Proposed solutions: Restorative Justice Model

- Inclusion efforts
- Local equity-based policymaking
- Justice-centered language
- Justice-centered partnerships

- Reduced tax and code burdens; new housing investments; legislative and bureaucratic efforts to support housing variation in partnership with developers, other cities, and state
- Bringing job-producing companies to the city
- Master Planning efforts and greenery enhancement in partnership with parks and county institutions
- Enhanced services for seniors; working with partners to support young people
- Stabilizing the city budget and moving out from bankruptcy

Moving towards social sustainability i.e. "just acquisition"

From 2016-2019, Blackwell's administration prioritized resolving gaps in acquisition that were institutionalized through housing, banking, planning/public space governance, public finance efforts, and economic development activities. The process by which the local government engaged in these actions resembles a restorative justice effort, one by which victims and oppressors come together to resolve the harm that has been done. Maple Heights' leadership brought key stakeholders to the table to engage with resident, while openly encouraging others to admit the historical wrongdoing. But these actions were also entirely dissimilar from her predecessors, indicating that the initial RJ effort of placing a member of the harmed population in control of its future served as a primary catalyst for the city's production of social sustainability, as well. The election of the new mayor was both a representation of where the community was at—symbolically and substantively, as well as a referendum on where the community wanted to move towards in the future and resulted from a local election process which can be

conceptualized as an RJ conferencing effort. It also allowed a long-ignored and dismissed narrative—that those harmed should be given the power to determine their future—to gain legitimacy and traction within the city.

The lived experiences of the Black community within the city could no longer be ignored both because of the display of new leadership and because of the tactics of the leader. Though only a single individual, Blackwell's election represented a community shift, as individual representatives of marginalized populations, often do. However, this shift towards inclusion did not end the cycle towards social sustainability. Blackwell did not serve as a figure head or a mere symbolic representation of this change nor was she simply the leader of an inherited hollow state, as Friesima (1969) suggests —she enabled the next stage of the social sustainability cycle via direct policies, public relations/marketing efforts and partnerships.

Looking to the future, the city's efforts to solidify the just acquisition aspect of the social sustainability framework will require continued institutionalization of the restorative justice efforts – to bend the arc towards social sustainability across the regional landscape. The city's language, with a focus on placing the city within a larger network and demanding accountability from others, suggests that this work is also underway. Her presence are local events and her testimony in news coverage indicates that the city is encouraging a more frank discussion about the nature of regional development to push back on the declining suburb narrative and instead focus on efforts to resolve the systems that enabled and forced this transition.

Conclusion

"We know what's wrong in our communities. Are we going to administer the medicine?" – Mayor Annette Blackwell (Grzelewski, 2019)

The old yearbooks stored at the Maple Heights Historical Society schoolhouse tell a story about the community's change to a predominantly Black area. The changing faces. The different clubs and activities. The jokes, memories, and quotes. And the Census documents on the filing cabinet across the room confirm the same shift. And yet, the Maple Heights city government – only a short drive away – must regularly fight to keep the state from taking control of the school. She must put countless hours into ensuring that her residents, her community, is counted meaningfully. These are the struggles of minority leaders in places where they were not intended to retain any power. Where the harm done to marginalize, segregate, and control remains so embedded within the institutional governance system.

Organizations and institutions directly control urbanization efforts, particularly through the continued creation of additional institutions, such as local governmental units. The creation of a place, from undeveloped space, involves the deeply iterative combination of a built environment combined with social norms and values encapsulated within a given geographic area (Harvey, 2010; Thrift, 1992; Tuan, 1997). Institutions within these places legitimize and concretize these values by directing collective action efforts (Burns, 1994). Essential to our understanding of social sustainability efforts is an understanding of the ways that power and dominance are amplified by and distributed across space. Social sustainability, the inclusive, equitable, and just acquisition of goods, services, and experiences, requires an institutional design intended to maximize positive social outcomes.

This study adds a new layer of depth to this discussion by connecting historical development processes to today's efforts to produce social sustainability. I note that growth and development that was oriented towards creating unjust systems of segregation and inequitable allocations of public goods, creates real harms that prevent the production of social sustainability, operationalized as the acquisition of goods and services needed to prevent social degradation over time. I theorize a connection between a specific focus on restoring justice and the capacity of a community to generate social sustainability. In a case study of a single inner-ring suburban city, I find that elements of a restorative justice process are clearly evident in the city government's efforts to provide opportunities for social sustainability and tie these efforts to city residents' ability to actually achieve social sustainability.

As first responders to crisis of social efforts (Gooden and Rissler, 2017), local governments are at the forefront of the sustainability crisis of first-ring suburban communities. Their ability to coordinate efforts, to govern, will determine the trajectory of the community. However, to tackle the social crises that face thousands of American communities, local public servants must consider the more substantive nature of social sustainability—as a system of inclusion, equity, and justice. The adoption of a polycentric regional design in the years following the Second World War ushered in an era in which private values have been solidified within public institutions (Burns, 1992), making it the responsibility of these institutions – and their actors – to eradicate these private, harmful systems and restore power to those who have been victimized by them.

"Declining" inner-ring suburban communities—thousands of localities that have essentially been branded as undesirable due to their population, economic, and housing

characteristics—social sustainability efforts require a restorative governance approach. As this case study highlights, policies/practices; language/discourse; and partnership-seeking efforts create and sustain real change in communities that have historically faced harm, exclusion, and inequities. Ultimately, this multi-pronged and interdependent process paves the way for true social sustainability.

In moving forward with this work, we must consider the practical difficulties and inherent barriers to producing social sustainability when the foundations of equity, inclusion, and justice are not developed. The historical development of inner-ring, commuter, residential suburbs placed these spaces on a path away from social sustainability, due to the classist and racist nature of this first layer of ex-urban development. As a result, when demographic, economic, and housing shifts occur—as they almost certainly do—these cities will struggle to retain a high level of service provision, access to resources, and stability. These shifts implore us to focus on governance, and to find the mechanisms by which the existing institutions can impact these social and spatial structures. But that same nature makes it exceedingly difficult to even begin to reconstruct the pillars of inclusion, equity, and justice. Though the challenges are played out in the local space, they are generated by larger concerns. As Blackwell noted, "Cities that turn Black or brown are already written off as less desirable because, 'they all live there.' Well, we're all here because racism has persisted in this country way too long and no one takes responsibility for it" (Lebovits, 2019).

Direct policy and administrative work were directed towards the specific areas that have traditionally been burdens and barriers for Black, poor residents. Housing, lending, public space, fiscal processes, economic development, were all tools used to

limit Black mobility, excellence, and success. In targeting these areas and using policy levers that enhance equity and access, Blackwell began the process of reconciliation between those who were victimized by these efforts and those who employed them. Additionally, by prioritizing relationship building—particularly with developers, realtors and other levels of government, Blackwell used these systems to enable equity—and ensure security and stability. In this way, the process to address historically punitive measures in the form of neglect and explicit disinvestment was initiated through action. Lastly, the use of language and discourse that spoke directly to the nature of race and place as defining access and determining the ability of an individual or community to succeed enabled the beginnings of a process to engage with the explicit, implicit, systemic, and personal levels of harm.

The findings in this paper suggest that an RJ approach is apparent in successful local governance efforts. Aside from the academic endeavor, these findings are important in practice as elements of the RJ framework, including discourse and networking efforts, come at little to no additional monetary cost, are effective, and are important contextual efforts that set the stage for future endeavors. Additionally, as seen in the Maple Heights case, these efforts are evident in the cultivation of more efficient and economically sound governmental systems and act as a mechanism to restore power for those currently living in the communities, rather than seeking an idealized population and set of economic conditions. Today, Maple Heights' new city logo boasts its role as a "Winning City." Winning, not because it is controlled and experienced by those who have benefited from harm done to other groups, but because it has adopted a practice of giving back power and strength.

CHAPTER IV

ENABLING SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY WITH ASSOCIATIONS

Introduction

The social element of sustainability is a key component of the broader

sustainability agenda at the intersection of the nature of the relationship between social

systems and their environmental and material surroundings. Vibrant social support

systems and community care/cohesion are key elements of social sustainability, the

ability of individual and communal systems to maintain their high-quality over a long

period of time. These elements of human life create and sustain attachment and

accountability between and within groups of people. The process of producing social

sustainability is therefore a primary goal of local governance.

The prioritization of socially cohesive and supportive systems is a common theme

in public administration research and practice (Aldrich, 2017; Coleman, 1988; Putnam,

2000; Bowles and Gintis, 2002). Social capital, care, and community cohesion—elements

of socially cohesive and supportive systems—are also key features of urban

sustainability, as long-term sustainability of the community ensures that individual and group-level systems can access and attain high-quality resources over long periods of time (Dempsey, Bramley, Power, and Brown, 2011; Manzi, Lucas, Jones, and Allen, 2010). And yet, thousands of American public administrators operate within communities physically shaped by exclusion and isolation tied to the design and density of the locality (Ewing, 1997; Freeman, 2001; Kunstler, 1993; Putnam, 2001).

Mass suburbanization efforts in the decades following the Second World War created hyper exclusive communities and segregated regions across the Northeast and Midwest (Massey and Denton, 1988). The creation of extended metropolitan regions with low-density, car dependent designs has not only segregated groups of people but individuals themselves. Presented with this dilemma, it is important that we uncover the mechanisms to produce social sustainability within places where people are less likely to engage with each other Mazumdar, Learnihan, Cochrane, & Davey, 2018) and create the ties that support social capital, care, and cohesion.

One way to shift institutional and structural norms is through grassroots organizing and mobilization efforts, particularly those that encompass a full range of demands that encourage deep and lasting social change (King & Pearce, 2010; Schneiberg & Lounsbury, 2008). These actions are sometimes responsive to existing tensions and generated through hierarchical organizations while at other times they prefigure them—ushering in new organizational structures, conversations, ideas, and actions that were heretofore not discussed, thought about, or acted upon (Calhoun, 2013; Graeber, 2013).

Within local places, both of these types of movements can be successful, in shocking the institutional system that reproduces inequities by generating enough political, social, cultural, and economic upheaval within the dynamic urban environment to begin to reorient the local system, over time (Castells, 1983). Prefigurative ones, however, are marked by their slightly different nature as highly flexible, horizontally designed, conversation starters. Like the Occupy Wall Street movement of 2011, these efforts may not be successful in the sense that they generate immediate change, but they often introduce a new, future state into the minds of the collective through an understanding of institutions and structures as comprised of humans and social interactions (Hallett, 2010; Hallett & Ventresca, 2006; Powell & Colyvas, 2008).

In places that have long been shaped by exclusion, isolation, and individualism, an active movement to promote a different future state is necessary to cultivate networks of support systems between individuals and a caring and inclusive community, despite structural mechanisms designed to limit this type of sustainability. Therefore, a deeper understanding of the practices of social change organization (SCOs) and their localized efforts can provide additional insight for public administration, as both a scholarly field and an applied one. A comprehensive view of the governance practices that such organizations use—particularly those operating in historically and persistently isolated and exclusionary places—can increase our understanding of the nature of these organizations, providing valuable insight for local administrators to connect with these efforts within their own communities, enhancing the potential for collaborative work between public administrators and SCO members.

The paper proceeds with an overview of the literature on the key themes of social sustainability related to cohesion, care and social capital, as well as the nature of the urban development process—emphasizing the ties between the production of place and social activity. I then suggest a conceptual model of governance efforts—rather than physical changes—that can generate social change efforts within places that are designed to be exclusionary, individualistic, and isolated. I note that the framework is deeply tied to prefiguration and that best way to test whether this framework is in existence and successful is to study social change organizations within these suburban places.

This section leads into the central case study of this paper: an analysis of the suburban Philadelphia branches of the Democratic Socialists of America. Methods of data collection and analysis are discussed as is the history and context of the organization. Thematic findings indicate that the group is successful in their efforts to drive social change specifically oriented towards social capital, care and cohesion, despite the persistent limitations that the suburban context presents (process). A deeper analysis, including narrative analysis and pattern matching, explains this success as a function of a unique governance model employed by the group (people and place). I revisit the model and suggest key takeaways for local governance literature and practice.

Background: Sustainability of Community

For over three decades, following the 1987 report from the World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland), sustainability has been a national, global, and local focus for countries across the world (WCED, 1987). The report and subsequent efforts suggest a view of sustainability as primarily focused on the preservation of the

natural environment and the coordination of social and economic systems to ensure that the natural environment is not over-utilized. Indeed, much of our understanding of sustainability within planning and public affairs is focused on habitat and environmental degradation.

However, the social element of sustainability argues that a key component of the broader sustainability agenda is the nature of the relationship between social systems and their environmental and material surroundings (Wu, 1998). Like all areas of the sustainability framework, social sustainability is primarily focused on the ability of a system to continue to maintain a high level of an output level over time without being diminished or degraded. In this case, the focus is on individual and communal measures that sustain social life. Social sustainability scholars ask: can the people who live, work, and interact with this geography access service to fill their basic needs? Do they have quality housing, schooling, and economic options? Can they engage in democratic, culturally-rich, and safe practices? Are they socially supported and fulfilled?

These questions are interdependent and can encompass a whole set of indicators from quality of life and well-being. The material qualities of social sustainability focus on equitable access to physical items such as housing, transportation, and public space while the interpersonal qualities of social sustainability prioritize social connection and participation within governance systems (Dempsey, et al., 2011; Shirazi and Keivani, 2017). With such a broad field, it can be difficult to capture all elements of the framework in one research effort. In this paper, I focus on the socially-supportive, humanistic elements of the process of social sustainability—the sustainability of

community—specifically focused on generating and enabling social capital, care, and cohesion.

Social capital is a key component of urban social sustainability (Bostrom, 2012; Colantonio, 2009; Manzi, et al., 2010). Though many scholars of social sustainability include a social capital element in their definitions, Knippenberg et al. (2007) suggest that social capital is the primary focus of social sustainability—noting that local efforts driven by care, education, diversity, and citizenship can further enable the goal of sustainable, long-term development. Social capital is often understood as the reciprocity, a sense of cooperative exchange, trust, and mutuality that people share with each other (Woolcock, 1998) and the degree to which they can work together to enhance the capacity of their environments to promote individual and communal well-being (Putnam, 2000; Thomson & Pepperdine, 2003; Stone & Hughes, 2002).

However, beyond trust, connections between one another, reciprocity, and the prioritization of the value of the individual and the collective are also key elements of social capital within a social sustainability framework (Bullen and Onyx, 1998). These elements of interpersonal relationships are not only useful in individual and everyday life, but they also enable communities to sustain themselves in the face of upheaval and change (DeFilippis, 2001; Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls, 1997).

In addition to social capital, Max-Neef, Elizalde, and Hopenhayn (1991) suggest that the ability of a community to care for one another is also a primary goal of urbanized places and one that should be prioritized in development and redevelopment efforts. A focus on community cohesion and care prioritizes the capacity to which the community—bounded within the social and geographic place—can be imaginative, friendly, bold, and

focused on learning and achieving a better, brighter future state (Max-Neef et al., 1991; Rogers and Ryan, 2001; Rogers, 2005). A sense of safety, support, belonging, and community are the primary indicators that measure social sustainability within this social cohesion framework (Raman, 2010; Shirazi and Keivani, 2017). Whether through a procedural context (Bostrom, 2012) or a substantive democratic one (Murphy, 2012), social cohesion is seen as integral to the long-term viability of a community. Social cohesion includes a perception of identity tied to place, a sense of safety and wellness attributed to belonging (Forrest and Kearns, 1999).

Conceptual Framing: Suburban Social Sustainability

Social sustainability, and particularly the "sustainability of community" model, is deeply context dependent. Therefore, attempts to maximize social capital, care and cohesion within local places must consider the nature of the development of space into place. This is especially true when considering the design efforts in cities across the US that were limit the ability of a community to engage in the efforts listed above. Indeed, the development of mass suburbia was generated through a process that redistributed capital across spaces, publicly institutionalized private values, and recreated social systems of exclusion tied to spatial ones (Burns, 1994; Harvey, 1973; Howell-Moroney, 2008; Jackson, 1985; Kunstler, 1993, Trounstine, 2018). Moreover, the nature of the design of these places as car and homeowner-dependent, low density communities developed and maintains a culture that keeps people focused on hyper individualized activities and disconnected from group-based, civic engagement efforts (Lang and Danielsen, 1997; Harvey, 1973; Fishman, 1987; Jackson, 1985, Oliver, 2001).

Since the post-WWII era ushered in efforts to promote mass suburbanization in the United States, we have witnessed a sustained segregation of peoples and resources within metropolitan regions. By 1980 most white Americans had suburbanized while only a small percentage of minority communities had moved outside of the central city (Massey and Denton, 1988). And though suburbs grew far more diverse into the 1990s-2000s (Massey and Tannen, 2018; Frey, 2014), this diversity has predominantly stayed in the suburban areas immediately surrounding the central city, areas where homes are cheaper, lots are smaller, and jobs are fewer (Allard, 2017; Hanlon, 2009; Kneebone and Berube, 2013; Mikelbank, 2004; Puentes and Orfield, 2002). Meanwhile. The outer-ring suburban areas, however, remain mostly white, and mostly middle—to higher-income through the use of planning, zoning, economic development, and specific actions to limit property ownership of Black individuals.

The city making process itself, though often considered a mechanism for efficient public service delivery (Ostrom, Tiebout, and Warren, 1961), creates incentives to limit the growth of the city's physical and social diversity through zoning, housing, building, taxation, and legislative systems, creating and sustaining huge regional inequalities (Burns, 1994; Fischel, 2001; Howell-Moroney, 2008; Massey and Tannen, 2018; Peterson, 1981; Rothstein, 2017; Trounstine, 2018). In short, the institutional governance of suburbanization—which shapes both the social and the spatial makeup of the community—makes these places highly individualized, intentionally homogenous, or on the verge of collapse should diversity increase.

As such, local efforts to support and maintain the sustainability of community are physically challenging. And yet, there remains little clear guidance as to how local

administrators or legislators can govern communities towards coproducing more social capital, cohesion, and care. As a management science, public administration literature does not often center the consideration of spatial and sociological factors, preferring to focus on the governmental organization and its inner workings, even at the local level. Indeed, research on social capital, care, and cohesion in public affairs literature tends to take an organizational/management behavioral approach and focus on ways to produce these efforts within and between highly structured agencies and the impact the levels of these efforts have on performance, coproduction, and management (see: Andrews, 2011; Andrews and Brewer, 2010; Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998; Ostrom, 1990; Schneider, 2006). These research efforts are non-spatial in nature and not easily adaptable to address urban efforts. Instead, they focus solely on organizational or individual-level behaviors, and with an eye towards shifting outcomes for those within government institutions—not those who interact with these agencies.

The lack of a combined place-based and sociologically-informed governance approach to producing social sustainability poses a significant threat to our ability to tackle "wicked problems" (Rittel and Webber, 1973) that are often grounded in localities, even when interconnected with regional, national, and global concerns. As a deeply iterative and interpretive process, the sustainability of community can only be achieved when those who exist within a place themselves see it as socially sustainable. As Shirazi and Keivani (2019) explain, "This perception, although rooted in the individual's mind, is constructed as the result of the aggregation of individuals' perceptions incorporated into a collective imagination" (p. 100). As developed places are both physical environments as well as social ones, the ability to generate social capital, cohesion, and care relies on the

interdependency between the design and use of a place as well as the coordination of social efforts.

Theorizing Efforts to Produce Social Sustainability

The historical development of metropolitan areas was a systemic and structural phenomenon, a production process that was not predicated on individual human actions (Ekers, Hamel and Keil, 2012). However, adopting a narrow view of the function these regional entities only at the systems-level is a mistake. Metropolitan regions are governed as singular units as well as agglomerations of smaller units, via various actors, institutions, and practices (Oakerson, 2002). Similarly, while social sustainability is a massive structural and institutional effort that requires an enormous shift in our understanding of the use and experience of a place to generate positive social outcomes, the key elements of social sustainability rely on the coordination of governance systems (Manzi et al., 2010).

Rather than view systems and individuals/organizations as separate however, a focus on their interdependence can generate clearer and more accurate results, according to Giddens' (1984) structuration theory. Broadly, structuration is a generalized sociological theory that argues that outcomes are the product of both the structural and cultural elements of human life as well as individual human agency. Interactions between human agency and the larger structures that humans take part in yet are not individually meaningful to, shape outcomes. Structuration emphasizes the inherent learning nature of individuals and groups, as well as the context in which these groups operate—and the

restrictions on their ability to utilize new knowledge to engage in better practices and pursue improved outcomes.

Though many studies of social phenomena have adopted either a structural/organizational approach or an individualized one, structuration advocates for a focus on the duality and interdependence between the two. Giddens (1991, p. 204) notes that, "In seeking to come to grips with problems of action and structure, structuration theory offers a conceptual scheme that allows one to understand how actors are at the same time the creators of social systems, yet created by them." As structures and individuals are responsive to each other, additional attention must be given to the dynamic nature of the relationship, rather than a singular context independent view of one or the other.

Taken as a whole, structuration theory is a useful framework to acknowledge the power of the individual, or groups of individuals, in the face of systems and structures that are oriented towards outcomes that are inequitable and unsustainable in nature. Actions of individuals, particularly groups of individuals who create organizations and movements, have been proven to shift structural natures. As such, it is a valuable framing for this research effort—an attempt to understand not just whether individuals can successfully advocate for socially equitable and sustainable outcomes in suburban communities, but how they can engage in this work, through civic associations— especially considering the general decline of communal efforts within the United States (Putnam, 2000; Skolpol, 2003).

The United States has a long history of civic activity via associations (De Tocqueville, 1840). In line with structuration theory and tied to the social sustainability

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elements discussed here, associations not only serve as bodies to facilitate collective action, they also enhance the political efficacy of their members (Han, 2014). Though an individual's might feel they have very little power to cultivate change within the political sphere, when they engage in activities with civic associations and particularly when those activities are successful, individuals experience an enhanced view of their degree of worth and power within larger systems (Christens & Speer, 2011). This iterative function of civic associations as both serving as a driver for collective outcomes and promoting individual efficacy makes them a valuable tool for understanding, through a structuration lens, the ways they might engage in producing social sustainability in places where radical social activity might be spatially and socially difficult.

Social change organizations (SCOs) are especially adept at this practice of empowering their members as their most significant work is geared towards producing radically different outcomes that enhance individual and collective power (King & Pearce, 2010; Schneiberg & Lounsbury, 2008). Often defined as organizations with grassroots mobilization tactics and socially progressive goals, these organizations are an important part of the political, social, and economic landscape of American life (Chetkovich and Kunreuther, 2006). Generally aligned with larger movement efforts, such as the civil rights movement, the feminist movement, and the gay rights (LGBTQ+) movement, social change organizations use a variety of tools—from direct lobbying to grassroots mobilization tactics—to pursue their goals.

Across the globe, social change organizations utilize deeply personal and interactive tools to coproduce socially desirable outcomes (Stout and Love, 2019). Social movement organizations are well ahead of public agencies in both substantive and

structural elements, prefiguring the existing state to usher in a new one. "Leaderless" movements allow for an extremely high level of adaptability and consensus building through non-hierarchical models (Clark, Danzler and Nickels, 2018). Policy efforts that have produced social welfare policies, protections for individuals and communities and increased accessibility to resources have been tied to social movement work (Giugni, 1998).

Additionally, as social movements seek to persuade and engage, organizations that take on these efforts are constantly recreating themselves to be hyper-inclusive and appealing to their intended audiences (Stewart, Smith and Denton, 2012). Social change organizations also do not take their longevity as a given. Instead they must endeavor to cultivate a collective mindset to ensure that the movement is long-lasting. This places interdependency and "mutual answerability" (Stout and Love, 2017; p. 140) at the core of social movement activities, as evidenced by the collective efforts that were an integral component of the Civil Rights and Labor movements.

Social change organizations are powerful actors that encase actions within institutional efforts, rather than one-off or grassroots activities—to better achieve their goals (Minkoff and McCarthy, 2005). Typically, SCOs exist to advocate for and push forth social changes related to individual and institutional systems (Benford and Snow, 2000). Included in the massive SCO category are nonprofits, lobbying and political groups, as well as registered movement organizations with some wholly community-based while others are nationally coordinated and/or connected to a local chapter-based model (Chetkovich and Kunreuther, 2006; Faber and McCarthy, 2005; McCarthy, 2005). By creating an organizational structure, SCOs institutionalize movement tactics to

various degrees. These efforts include goal formation, public persuasion, networking and coalition building, mobilization, funding, and long-term strategic planning, among others (Dryzek, 2000; Faber and McCarthy, 2005; Schattsneider, 1960; Benford and Snow, 2000).

SCOs are a valuable and important component of the local civic landscape and can be important partners for local efforts to promote social sustainability (Thomas and Darnton, 2006; Fischer, 2000). In line with structuration theory, these organizations can simultaneously speak to broader, global social issues that go beyond individual agency—such as human rights, women's rights, and animal rights—while encouraging change to human activities at the local, state, and national levels. This is because, though they might be aligned with broader social movement efforts, their existence as a permanent social organization makes them more tangible—particularly within a local community—even if they lack a physical building out of which to operate. Locally-based SCOs can simultaneously speak to a broader narrative around social change and exist as a very real, supportive environment for members.

As such, studying SCOs can provide a unique perspective on how local governments and their administrators—both highly structural and individually driven institutions—can generate positive social outcomes within communities that are not oriented towards them. The nature of SCOs as both a self-contained and internal organization of actors as well as a broader asset to a community makes them the ideal tool to consider the production of social sustainability, specifically. This study focuses on a federated SCO, a social change organization with a parent body and chapters across the United States.

Methodology

Through this study, I seek to understand whether and how places that were historically created to segregate people and uses can be governed towards that trajectory, with social change organizations as a mechanism to promote these efforts. The case study method can be a valuable tool to analyze social phenomena and identify the potentially generalizable elements of the case that can be replicated in other contexts. Case studies bundle together a number of qualitative data collection and analysis tools—including interviews, content analysis, and field work—to provide a deeper view into the specifics of the phenomenon being studied. Inductive in nature, this study is an effort to better understand the practices that SCOs in historically exclusionary and isolated places might use to generate social capital, cohesion, and care. The goal of this effort is to propose a governance model that can be adopted by local agencies to generate social capital, community care, and cohesion within communities that are not designed for these outcomes.

Case Study Organization and Place: Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) in Suburban Eastern Pennsylvania

The movement to promote economic justice through the institutionalization of Democratic Socialism in the United States has its roots in the social and political upheaval of the 1970s. This movement sits at a nexus between several other movements, with roots in the labor movement. As a social movement organization, DSA grew out of the similarly minded social movement organizations New American Movement (NAM) and the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC) and emerged adjacent to

the politically-motivated Socialist Party of America (SPA) (Herbert, 1989). Both of the early organizations were made up of combination of labor union members, student activists and folks advocating for a more Leftist political economy than the American Democratic party has adopted. The social movement organization organizations aligned with the social movements of the era that advocated for an economic system that prioritized the producers and laborers over consumption power and a capitalistic system of management while retaining the political systems of representation and democratic election processes. These organizations also built coalitions with other social movement groups to advocate for progressive policies related to abortion rights, tenant rights, anti-war efforts, queer rights, and the feminist movement.

In 1982, a merger between NAM and DSOC brought thousands of members together under the umbrella organization of DSA (Haer, 1982). Over the next several decades the organization continued to grow, though membership stalled for several periods, before a massive membership boom that arose when Presidential candidate Bernie Sanders gained traction in 2015. Like other social movement organizations, DSA's stated mission is to enhance economic justice, and its racial and social components—both within communities and on college campuses (DSA, 2015). While the organization does engage in direct political endorsements, electoral work is not the primary goal of the organization.

DSA chapters and caucuses have historically pursued an economic justice agenda through their own events—including sit-ins, teach-ins and rallies—as well as by mobilizing their members to form larger coalitions with other social movement organizations. In the 1990s, DSA prioritized their Medicare for All platform as well as

their work around the direct opposition to the neoliberal "reform" activities of the late 20th century. Direct mail campaigns as well as door-to-door canvassing efforts drove additional support. During much of the Bush Administration, DSA turned its effort towards anti-war rhetoric and continued to advocate for economic justice through interactions with community members and politicians.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, DSA's membership stayed below 10,000 (Baker, 2002). Over the course of the first two decades of the new millennium, DSA found more popular support for its advocacy efforts, particularly as the solidarity economy movement continued to grow. The events of Occupy Wall Street and similar protest efforts bolstered the work of the DSA, but the organization still had less than a dozen official local affiliates and fewer than ten college campus chapters, according to organizational records.

The active members included people who were mostly in their late teens and early twenties as well as veteran members in their sixties and seventies. However, with the presidential race of 2016—and the strong showing from DSA-member Senator Bernie Sanders—the organization rapidly swelled in size and filled out that 25-60 gap, according to internal reports (Alt and Hammad, 2018). In early 2020, the DSA Instagram and Twitter accounts stated that the organization had almost 70,000 members in total, however more recent membership efforts around the 2020 presidential election have projected membership at almost 100,000.

From an organizational viewpoint, the DSA maintains their own by-laws and system of governance. According to the organizational by-laws, within the organization as a whole, a hierarchical system gives significant power to a few elected leaders,

however at the chapter level, individual communities can easily maintain a flat governance structure with rotating seats, transparent meeting practices, grievance protocols and a culture that prioritizes the most marginalized voices. At the meso-level, DSA is a hierarchical organization with a dues-paying structure, governance practices and official policies and practices. However, when it comes to micro-level exchanges, most prevalent at the local chapter level, these groups can function in a highly non-hierarchical fashion to promote new ideas and internal dialogue as well as the promotion of people who identify as members of marginalized groups. The individual will also find that while the organization is officially membership driven, one who cannot pay the dues will not be turned away and some chapters will not be financially driven. In fact, recent organizational reporting shows that only 15% of members pay dues to their local chapter and one out of three local chapters does not have a bank account.

Historically, DSA has prioritized chapters and membership in large urban areas and college campuses as primed for radical, social movement activity. Like the civil, labor, and feminist rights movements, cities have historically been the most fruitful places for DSA's work. However, as the Democratic party has suburbanized in the last thirty years (Hopkins, 2019), larger metropolitan areas have increasingly become places filled with politically Left-leaning residents. DSA has extended its membership to the suburbs as well, with the rise of larger, regional chapters as well as the newly founded Rural, Suburban and Small City Caucus.

Case Selection and Data Collection

The choice to focus on the DSA was three-fold: first, I sought to study an organization that engages in local efforts but is not grassroots in nature. This is because the purely grassroots-based model does not generalize to the highly structured and institutional nature of other systems of governance. It would be difficult to make the claim that a group that is entirely non-hierarchical in nature, that has grown naturally out of the local environment, and that lacks a firm institutional structure is congruent in nature to a local governmental body, for example. As such, an organization with a firm institutional structure combined with a highly adaptive local chapter-based model would be a better model from which to extrapolate.

Once the federated structure was established as an ideal, this specific organization was chosen because of two additional criteria: first, its stated mission includes a focus on organizing activities to advocate for efforts related to just causes such as environmental justice, economic justice, racial justice, reproductive justice, feminist rights and workers/labor rights. In this way, the group clearly prioritizes the enhancement of social capital, community, care, inclusion, and cohesion. Second, the DSA is now the largest organization of its type in the entire country, providing a compelling reason to better understand the inner workings of its chapters.

Once the organizational-level case study selection was complete, the chapter-level selection began. Like most progressive organizations, chapters of the DSA are more commonly found in large, urban areas than smaller suburban or rural ones. As this is a descriptive study on an organization that has yet to be systematically studied in a geographic area that also has not been studied as a location for progressive action, the

specific chapter was chosen based on its role as a "crucial case study." The criteria for choosing this ideal case included:

1)   A geographic area with significant governmental fragmentation and sprawl—to ensure that the spatial aspects of the community as exclusionary, isolated, and individualistic were present

2)   A chapter/branch that is currently active within the geographic area

3)   A chapter/branch that would be highly accessible and data rich, with a strong online and in-person presence (to ensure the organization is accurately represented and not the result of efforts to claim a larger and more significant base, a practice known as astroturfing)

4)   A chapter/branch that would be open to engaging in the research effort with the researcher

After several months of digital "soaking and poking" efforts, between July 2018-November 2018, during which time I followed the online activities of several potential chapters, I settled on the combined metro-level branches of a DSA chapter in a mid-sized Northeastern city. The branches, heretofore referred to as B Branch and D Branch, are geographically tied to counties outside of a central city in the Northeastern/Mid-Atlantic region of the United States and are both official branches of the city DSA chapter.

Upon formation, DSA chapters provide a list of the area zip codes that the local plans to target. People who live in those zip codes can become members of the local chapter and those outside of the zip code boundary who wish to engage in DSA activities will retain "at-large" status. However, in 2017, several members of the central city DSA

chapter who lived outside of the political boundaries of the city/county decided that the

urban chapter did not do enough to support efforts in their own neighborhoods. These

members broke off from city to form their own branches, intending to mobilize and

organize in the suburbs. Still, as branches the suburban members cannot adopt their own

unique by-laws or other governance practices. These branches were chosen because they

fit the criteria listed above.

Following the digital "soaking and poking" period, the bulk of the active research

was conducted between November 2018 and February 2020. Guided by the research

questions above, the documentary data collection process involved the gathering of

publicly accessible documents, news articles, and social media information. Textual data

was collected to provide context for the case, confirmatory data for the interviews, and an

additional understanding of the language/issue framing the branches use. Additionally, I

interviewed thirteen members across the two branches. Interviews were conducted off-

site, via telephone conversations, were between 30 and 95 minutes in length and were

audio recorded and transcribed. Participants were chosen through a snowball sampling

method—following initial conversations with the leaders of the chapters, other members

were encouraged—via the internal Slack group, email conversations, and phone/in person

communications—to speak with me. I spoke to any member who reached out and anyone

who responded to my direct requests for an interview.

The interview protocol was designed to establish informational themes, collect

narratives/stories and to generate responses to additional questions and hypothetical

scenarios. These data collection goals were intended to ensure that the respondent

provided basic information on the internal and external practices of the organization as

well as allow for them to interpret the nature of the organization and its ability to promote social sustainability. There were three series of questions in each interview. The first asked about the members involvement, what the chapter does, and which actions the member engages in. The second series of questions asked the interviewee about the impact of the spatial elements of the place on their efforts to build a base of support, promote causes of the organization, and engage in social change action. In some cases, these questions looped back to specific events and campaigns identified in the first series of questions. Lastly, the third series of questions asked for responses to hypothetical situations and the future state that the member and the chapter are moving towards.

Following the 13 primary interviews, I interviewed an additional 11 individuals who were connected to the efforts of the branches, including members of other SCOs, residents, and journalists. Data from these interviews was used only to confirm statements in the core interviews and augment the document analysis.

Data Analysis

The goal of a single case study effort is to develop a rigorous understanding of the social phenomenon at play that can be evident across other similar social systems (Yin, 1998; Flyvbjerg, 2003). Adherence to data analysis strategies enable the systematic and rigorous review of case study data, ensuring that the analytical generalizability, validity, and reliability. For the purpose of this study, several analytical strategies were employed, both during the data collection process and afterwards. Efforts to analyze data during the collection process were guided by strategies outlined in Bogdan and Biklen (2007), including considerations of the limits and depth of the study, reviewing and refining

measures and questions, note and memo taking, and iterative data and literature reviews. Following the data collection, the analysis process took on several forms, including open coding for broad themes, case construction, and narrative analysis efforts.

Throughout the data collection and analysis process, I kept procedural memos of my efforts (listing the types of materials I retrieved, who I spoke with, when, for how long, etc.) and analytical memos (outlining the data analysis process and capturing thoughts and realizations along the way). These memos were in the form of written materials and voice notes. After the data were collected, three iterative phases of analysis were employed via content analysis strategies. The first was thematic coding to determine the common explanations members gave for the relationships between their work and the place they operate within (barriers and opportunities of suburban organizing) as well as the tactics they employ as a group to maximize their ability to generate social capital, inclusion, care, and cohesion. The second was pattern matching, a common case study analysis tool that enables a researcher to match the descriptions within qualitative data findings to existing research findings within other settings, thus generalizing the particulars of the case to broader social phenomena.

Lastly, stories that the members told were reviewed via a narrative analysis framework to delve into the ways that the members experience the tension of engaging in these efforts in places that have not historically been ripe for such work. Human experiences and perspectives are encased within language devices and the specific words one uses, as well as the way that people construct series of words to describe their lived experiences, provide valuable insight into the beliefs and values that underscore actions. The narrative form is a particularly effective method of encasement as it allows an

individual to contextualize their own experiences, thus enabling the researcher to understand not only what happened but how the subject understood the events and why they behaved the way they did. All interview coding was done by hand, within the margins of the transcribed interviews and then via word processing tools. The textual analysis was assisted by computer-based tools such as Excel (for social media content) and Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat (for document analysis).

Findings and Analysis

Thematic content analysis and narrative analysis of stories from members highlight the ways in which the branches work towards cultivating social capital, care, and cohesion despite the physical environment in which they operate. Since their founding, the two suburban branches have seen measurable successes in their efforts to create social sustainability within the exclusive and isolated areas they operate. Internal documents and interviews, writings from members, external documents such as legislation and local media coverage indicate that the groups have succeeded in their efforts to grow their memberships and cultivate a community within the group, encourage cities to adopt inclusive and caring legislative efforts, and collaborate with other groups to promote a mutual aid network.

The physical landscape of the two branches presents limitations on the groups' capacity, due to its expansive, isolated, exclusionary, and individualistic physical nature. While the groups felt that it was necessary to have large geographic boundaries, so as to maximize their potential membership reach, the large county sizes make it difficult for the groups to engage in efforts in every municipality or to tackle every social issue within

their geographies. The size also makes it difficult to determine where to meet. The lack of public transit creates a barrier for members without personal vehicles to come to meetings or events. Additionally, as an organizing group focused on canvassing neighborhoods, the low housing density makes it difficult to canvass quickly and efficiently.

The B-branch has done a significant amount of work in the suburban city that is the county seat, an inner-ring suburban area, both due to its social and economic diversity and its relative density. The city's housing stock includes 50% of homes that are single-family attached units, making canvassing efforts easier than in other cities. Additionally, the city's high rate of poverty (21.5%) made residents and legislators aware of the communal needs and the value of stronger social support systems. Indeed, spatial analysis trends in the area indicate that these sentiments from the branch members and materials are present—and perhaps worse than the members themselves reported.

According to spatial data from the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), while the city of Philadelphia has received significant attention for community investment support such as affordable housing, transit assistance, economic development, environmental protection, and quality of life investments yet considering their relative needs, the suburban areas have received significantly less support (Figure 11). The DVRPC's community investment index GIS map reveals that the counties in which the DSA branches operate are at a significantly lower score than the central city.

Figure XI: GIS map of Community Investment Index, provided directly from the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

GIS map based on Delaware Valley Regional Planning data, https://www.dvrpc.org/webmaps/CI2/
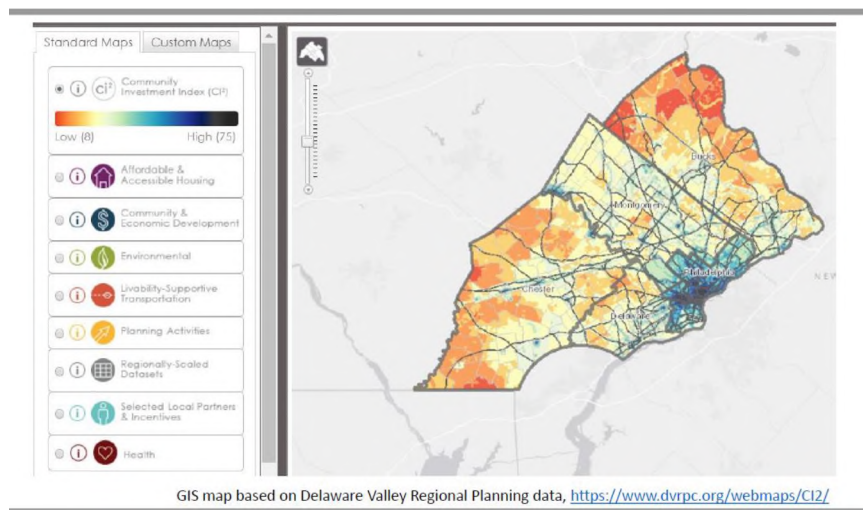
As the spatial data suggests, in communities with less diversity, density, and social investments, the branch members faced more spatial and social limitations. When members went to canvass for the election of a member in a community that is wealthier and with a significantly lower-rate of density, they reported needing to spend significantly more time and effort canvassing. The effort also did not yield a positive result.

Furthermore, social limitations, driven by the design of the areas and those who choose to live there create difficulties for the group. There are few existing progressive organizations, leading the branches to have to choose between working with the limited number of existing orgs or put in the work to create something of their own. Similarly, the counties do not have a long history of organizing work or many active local participants. As a result, the few members with any organizing experience are quickly

seen as experts and expected to learn to organize the unique place and teach others to do so.

Moreover, the social norms of the communities can make it difficult for members to find consistent meeting places. As they must reserve a space with their organizational name and 501c4 code, members report that they have been discouraged or even disallowed from holding meetings in some commonly used spaces such as libraries or restaurants. The B branch is especially impacted by this as they cover two very large county areas with little public transit and have struggled to find a consistent meeting place that is convenient for all members. Consequently, the groups will meet in any location that is low-cost and available, which can exacerbate the physical layout and infrastructure issues. These conflicts create spatial limitations for the group, not only in their attempts to meet with each other but to extend the base of membership.

A segment of one interview highlights this tension well.

> Researcher: Are there areas where you sort of think, "oh DSA is not going to go there?"

> Participant #9: Probably where I live. They probably won't do much because it is so rural. And most people here are, I will say middle-class homeowners who don't really have any investment in the kind of policy we care about. So, it makes sense, I guess. But there are a lot of apartments complexes here and it's kind of a hard place to live as a renter. So, I feel like there are issues here that would be relevant to DSA but they probably won't be able to have any real presence in the area.

Researcher: Why wouldn't they have a presence if the issues are there?

Participant #9: We don't have enough people in the area to really warrant it. We also don't have anywhere to meet around here. If we have a meeting in this area, and we have, hardly anybody will show up because it's just too far for a majority of our members.

As the member's comments show, while the group has a vested interest in their geographic place, the limitations of the geography make it difficult to even consider organizing there. This sentiment was shared by several other members who lived in the more suburban-rural areas of the counties, as well.

Lastly, member interviews and social media data indicates the branch members feel that the county locations are not home to large numbers of individuals who would be interested in DSA ideology or community work. With little social infrastructure for organizing efforts, including only a handful of historically active members and very few progressive social change organizations, members and the organization struggle to gain traction. Some members even expressed deep concerns about their neighbors or employers finding out about their membership with the DSA. As one interviewee from the D-Branch noted, "This is the kind of suburb that was created intentionally to segregate people. Like a lot of people left the city and came to D-County to get away from, you know, integrated, racially diverse areas" (Participant #12). A B-Branch member echoed the sentiment. "There are a lot of leftists and progressives that tend to be concentrated in certain areas...and I think there's this unspoken assumption that we can only organize in, you know, working class areas" (Participant #5).

However, despite these limitations, the group has succeeded in several efforts to cultivate community care, cohesion, and social capital. Internally, the chapters act as an interest-based community within a place-based community. Members report that they find intellectual and emotional support within their chapter—as a group with which they can share ideological perspectives as well as personal and professional successes and failures. In interviews, members consistently reported that the group serves as both an ideological home as well as a supportive network, on the micro scale. Members use the chapter framework—meetings, events, campaigns—to build social capital and cohesion.

These support networks provide ride shares, potlucks, recreational opportunities, and an organizational structure allows members to assist each other and lean on each other for support without creating imbalanced power structures of neediness and benevolence. The structure includes shifting titles and responsibilities frequently, while assigning jobs and activities to members based on their interests and allowing members to self-select their duties and responsibilities. Slack channels provide a space for constant communication without members needing to divulge too much private information or be constantly physically available.

Even when members often do not know highly personal information about each other—such as their full names or addresses—they feel they are supported by and continue to support each other. In a short media article, one member wrote about the Dungeons and Dragons group the BDSA branch developed as a way to enable members to connect after meetings since the number of under-age members limited their ability to meet at an alcohol-oriented establishment. The B branch also turned their monthly meetings into potluck meals so that members did not have to choose between paying for

transportation to and from the meeting or purchasing dinner. Both of these measures have created more internal community and systems of care.

In their work with the public, the branches have championed social inclusion and care agendas. With few other progressive organizations in the area, the DSA branches have built coalitions with a variety of social change organizations focused on a number of key issues. Both branches have been involved in mutual aid networks and members self-report that they seek to increase this effort. The B branch created and sustained a community garden for the purpose of enhancing access to free food and are now attempting to set up a mutual aid network to distribute the produce.

The D branch, located in a Pennsylvania county with a large publicly owned, privately managed correctional facility, has worked with other carceral groups to advocate for reform for those within the prison and criminal justice systems. Moreover, B DSA members spent almost a year engaged in an effort to encourage local councils to support the federal Medicare for All bill, to provide better direct and indirect care to all US residents. After canvassing, hosting meetings, and attending events the branch succeeded in gaining traction in the county seat. In August 2019, the council signed a resolution supporting Medicare for All. Other councils across the two counties showed interest as well, according to members.

Understanding and Identifying Governance Practices of Successful Suburban SCO

Despite significant limitations, the branches were overwhelmingly successful in cultivating social capital, care, and cohesion within places not designed to produce these

outcomes. A pattern matching analysis reveals three key governance factors of the organization that explain this success. These factors include:

A. Integrative Governance Practices: Branch members seek to enhance positive interactions between members of the organization as well as those outside of it; prioritizing highly inclusive, collaborative, and equitable actions/processes that are focused on consensus building.

B. Associational Support: The capacity of the branches is enhanced by its larger affiliation and the support it receives from other chapters and the national organization

C. Collective action, place framing: The branches use the physical geography as a backdrop for their larger movement efforts, tying the place in which they operate to a larger social phenomenon

For individual members, the DSA branches can provide a community, a sense of identity, opportunities to meet and engage with a group of like-minded people, and the chance to act on the ideals the individual might hold dear. Organizationally, as a local chapter of a larger association, the branches utilize their larger networks and associational model to generate additional capacity, sustain their impact, and ensure that the chapters do not become empty outposts for the larger organization. Lastly, as a social change organization dedicated to larger movement activities, the local branches utilize collective action framing—in this case tied to the suburban setting—to bring in new members and mobilize support.

Generating Social Capital through Integrative Governance

Integrative governance can be used to create meaningful interactions by considering the specific engagement style/needs of any single interactions and the macro-level issues that can seep into exchanges between individuals. Though focused on the interactions that occur between individuals, Stout and Love (2017,) pull significantly from the organizational and communal frameworks of Mary Parker Follett (1918) who suggested that the key to conflict resolution within groups was to ensure an integration of power and focus between those who lead the governance process and those who are governed.

As an organizing collective and an established organization with a chapter-based and national council structure, the DSA branches have tapped into this long-standing tradition of "integration," the practice of maintaining organizational structures while establishing power with—not over—individuals (Follett, 1918).

Building on Follett, Stout and Love (2017) identify several core components of the integrative governance framework:

1)   Agenda setting through consensus building

2)   Communication that stems from a recognition that humans are fundamentally emotional creatures seeking to build harmony, trust and empathy when encountering each other

3)   Action that is derived from an ethical viewpoint that assumes that humans are compelled to answer to each other

Stout and Love note that, "Human beings are inherently relational, feeling a natural bond with others. Recognition of this interconnection makes empathy, trust, and

collaboration possible if not probable and this relational character pervades all other elements" (2017, p. 139). As these experiences are hermeneutical and entirely non-objective, shaping and shaped by the social norms and understandings of the world outside of even the most bureaucratic of public institutions, a governance framework to maximize the positive impacts of these interactions will be highly adaptable, inclusive and participatory (Stout and Love, 2017). This interdependence is the antecedent that can usher in a state that naturally includes coproduction as a primary method to design and produce equitable outcomes in local governance.

Both branches exhibit clear integrative governance approaches and a direct tie between this practice and the ability to build social capital within the membership and within the geographies in which they operate. While both branches utilize a hierarchical structure for processes—including committees, chairs, the use of Roberts Rules of Order, etc.—they use this structure to give legitimacy and voice to all members. These practices cultivate trust between members and encourage honest and inclusive dialogue and activities. Taking these practices one step further, the branches enable members to connect with individuals they encounter in their organizing work, as well. Using "wedge issues" that promote dialogue and open doors, the members connect with others based on the content of the issue they are organizing for and the mechanisms by which the branches train and mobilize members.

Additionally, in both chapters, internal dynamics encourage inclusion through institutional practices such as Roberts Rules of Order and progressive stack, an adaptable social agenda that is produced together with members, and a strong and apparent prioritization of humanity, empathy, and reciprocity between members. Resources

provided to DSA chapters, from the national office, also help guide chapter activities to produce meaningful communication strategies and consensus building. The B DSA branch, while only a branch of the city chapter, held its own day-long convention to determine the upcoming agenda, rather than prioritize the interests of a few members. B also created the RSSC caucus and began to work with other chapters to build their capacity and share best practices. Both chapters also endeavor to create social events to bring members together and create a sense of community, based on shared values and interests. The Dungeons and Dragons group in the B DSA branch used a popular multi-person game to facilitate conversation and collective problem solving.

Moreover, the DSA governance practices and the members themselves seek out mechanisms to prioritize thoughtful engagement and positive interactions. This relational framework, which mirrors the integrative governance framework (Stout and Love, 2017), is not an end in and of itself but a means to more collaborative and equitable processes in the future. As one member of the B branch reported, "It's not a party connection or a class connection as much as a human connection…So that's why I feel pretty confident knocking on the door and organizing behind, you know, a campaign like this." - Participant #7. Similarly, members emphasized the nature of their group as highly supportive, adaptive, and flexible while maintaining high expectations for members and the internal support systems.

Enabling Community Care through Associational Efforts

I sort of zeroed in on the DSA generally because I was looking for an

organization that did a lot of advocacy and organize work on the ground but also

have enough of a shared organization structure that I could compare it to other places. So, not like a hyper local activism unit that doesn't exist anywhere else and not a political party that happens to show up at an event—a group that straddles both. – Participant #10

In the decades since the end of the Cold War, the urban context sits at the intersection of local, national, and global processes. Cities do not exist in isolation and cannot be governed towards social sustainability without an eye to the national and global concerns that impact both the systems of local governance as well as the experiences of residents. Housing, food, and healthcare insecurities in the United States are clearly tied to national and global trends, as are more substantive systems of democracy, culture, and social capital. Technological advances made possible by globalization have strengthened the economic potential of urban contexts yet have decontextualized social interactions in urbanized places.

And, just as the context in which social change efforts occur has changed, organizations themselves have shifted. Globalization has impacted all aspects of SCO tactics, and even shifted the missions of some organizations. Though the national level has long been the next stage up from the immediate local concerns, the impact of globalization processes now seeps into even the local work of SCOs, a phenomenon known as "glocalization" (Köhler and Wissen, 2003; Smith, 2007). Goal formation and persuasion efforts are now laced with efforts to integrate the local or national platform with the globalized nature of social concerns. Mobilization and coalition building efforts now occur through a variety of mediums, due to technological advances (Carty and Onyett, 2006). Long-term strategic planning has become more complex as needs can shift

rapidly and internal processes can be laced with a number of competing interests, some of which can now come from individuals and institutions that were historically immaterial to the movement's efforts.

For social change organizations that have already adopted a federated model (a central office with chapters in various local geographies), the era of globalization has opened up new opportunities and as well as potential risks. Organizations such as NOW (National Organization for Women) and abortion rights agencies like Planned Parenthood and NARAL, can gain support by connecting national and global trends and enacting those through broad coalitions via local efforts (Freeman, 1975; McCarthy, 2005). Similarly, members of the DSA branches repeatedly highlighted this organizational structure as a mechanism for base building (increasing the membership) as well as enacting their agendas. The nature of the branch as a local unit attached to a national movement helps sustain the effect that the SCO can have within a local community, so that their work encompasses more than a one-off activist effort. As one participant, involved in the B-branch local Medicare for All campaign noted, "We believe it's an option to build relationships because we can talk about more broad progressive goals once we knock the doors" (Participant #5). Similarly, another B-branch member suggested that focusing on larger issues is a valuable coalition tool. "It's a way to help with connections. Because the people who are coming to take on a major global issue come from different places" (Participant #3).

In both branches, the larger DSA organization provides significant support for the local efforts. Initially, this was just in the form of a branch designation, giving the 501c4 organizational legitimacy to the fledgling groups. As one of the founding members of the

B branch described, "It was hard really, in our first few months-not having any official resources, no funding. Really hard to fundraise or even rent a space if you don't have a designation…then we got our official recognition in 2018 that's when we actually started doing things" (Participant #2). Moreover, the DSA national office, as well as the central chapter, provided the branches with canvassing materials, trainings, and similar support resources such as technological tools and cloud-based storage. Though some chapter-based organizations only maintain hollow "outposts" in their more rural, small, and disconnected areas (Rodgers, 2019), these DSA branches were emboldened by their federated structure and drew down support from the organization.

These associational efforts are not only supported by the DSA organization itself but the larger political, social, and economic fabric of the local area. Collaboration with other groups is a common mechanism for social change in both branches—particularly collaboration with legislative actors. In both branches, a few members who were already engaged in local political activities added significant support to the chapter. Though the D county region has historically been very politically conservative, these few active members have an adapted ability to continue to hold on to their ideological and organizing-based beliefs, adding additional layers of care to the capacity of the branch. Similarly, in the B branch area, participatory engagement with outside stakeholders was not only a fundamental element of their work but was necessary in order to build the organization's legitimacy. The B branch members were active in local organizing efforts that engaged with the existing legislative powers and B DSA's August 2019, Medicare for All campaign success was tied directly to their relationships with legislators in the county seat (or county's largest city).

Collective action framing is a powerful tool that social change movements and organizations utilize to solidify the mobilization efforts beyond individual interests and goals (Snow, Rochford, Worden, and Benford, 1986; Benford and Snow, 2000). Communities not only provide a context for social movement activities they also generate a framing device that helps promote a unified vision of a future state.. These devices can be tied to the social and spatial nature of the area in which the participants engage in these activities, according to Martin (2003), who suggests that grassroots organizations use "place framing" to reduce individualistic tendencies and generate collective action.

By rooting the work within a sense of place and an identity tied to the place, social movements can encourage people to consider communal needs that might not match those of the individual. Furthermore, the use of place as a framing device can be a powerful driver of specific social change efforts through its concretizing effects. The Occupy Wall Street efforts, for example, tied an abstract idea of inequality to a specific place which the activists believed was substantively and symbolically tied to their cause. And, though the movement itself was unsuccessful, the legacy that it generated maintains staying power due to its model which so clearly tied the demands and the collective action perspective to the place.

Similarly, both DSA branches frequently use place-framing as a tactic to create a sense of cohesion across geographic and demographic boundaries. As both branches serve large counties with a variety of suburban settings, they use the generic sense of "suburban" place to frame their efforts and draw in participants from the most urbanized

suburban areas to the more rural suburban ones. The most basic framing effort, within their Twitter communications, use the hashtag #SuburbanSocialism to emphasize their goals within the place in which they operate.

"Tonight was an amazing moment in solidarity, from @B DSA, to B County and @p_____@B NAACP; the members of the B-city community stood up to institutional racism and police brutality. Solidaridad! "We'll be back!" 🌹🌹🌹🌹🌹" -@B DSA, 1/23/2018

"Thanks to everyone who came out to our ecosocialisthike at C___ W_____ Preserve today! Great discussions, beautiful weather, and plenty of trash collected 🌹🌹#ecosocialism#suburbsocialism" -@B DSA, 9/29/2019

Narrative analyses of stories that explain members initiation into the group also reveal that the suburban framing is a strong factor in members' decisions to join the local branches. Members reported that their choice to join the group was shaped by the framing of the activities as specifically tied to suburbia.

> I attended a [central city] DSA meeting and you know I had read some books but my comrades were involved locally and they said, 'hey, we do a lot of suburban organizing here. You know really tackling the material conditions of the suburbs.' So, I went to a meeting and I really liked it. – Participant #5

Additionally, both in the interviews and the textual materials from the branches, members express the specific socially unsustainable nature of suburban areas and frame their work as in direct opposition to the nature of these places. As one member of the D branch noted,

In the suburbs, most people—even more than other places—live in traditional

nuclear family situations. Everything is so individualized in terms of everyone's

cooking and cleaning for themselves and driving their kids from this activity to

that activity…so getting people to think in a more kind of like less individualistic

and more kind of collective mindset is definitely a challenge for us. – Participant

#12

Similarly, one of the founding members of the B branch spoke about suburban

organizing at the central city DSA Build convention in 2018, to specifically highlight the

nature of these as areas as uniquely in need of more support systems and prime locations

for DSA activity.

Limitations

The findings in this research highlight important trends and the model constructed

here is an accurate and valid representation of the member and chapter-based practices as

understood by the researcher. Still, there are limitations to an exploratory study of this

kind and claims about its transferability to every type of local organization. First, the

choice to focus on a federated nonprofit, rather than a grassroots organization, means that

this study does not capture the phenomenon of an on-the-ground, insider-lead, hyper-

local progressive effort. Though grassroots movements often do tap into global causes,

such as environmentalism, they are far more community-entrenched, and start-up minded

than even a new chapter of an already established nonprofit. Second, the focus on only

two branches limits the generalizability of this study as it is possible that these tendencies

are only evident in the cases studied here and are not replicated even in other chapters of the same parent organization.

However, as this research serves as an exploratory attempt to describe and understand a specific occurrence and relate these findings to the field, these limitations do not detract from the value of the case findings. The goal of this research efforts is not to be able to generalize to a population (all DSA branches/all SCOs) but to be able to generalize to the phenomenon (the ability of an SCO to generate social sustainability within a highly exclusionary and isolated settings). Whether the model is universally adopted or not, it has proven to be successful in the setting studied here. In this way, the research effort does establish several hypothetical tendencies which might be apparent in other groups.

Indeed, the abductive research effort ties the findings to existing and established themes, suggesting that these practices are already evident, in some mix, in other places/types of organizations. Still, while the validity and accuracy of the study are clear, the generalizability can be further studied through additional research. Future research will expand this study to other communities across the United States, to determine whether the model is commonly used in non-urban chapters across the country and in other types of organizations.

Conclusion

Suburban America is full of places experiencing deep social tensions. A central feature of the Black Lives Matter movement—the police killing of Freddie Gray— occurred in a St. Louis suburb. The school shooting that propelled the student-led March

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For Our Lives movement took place in suburban Parkland, FL. Recently elected politicians who align with the radical left represent national and state-level districts that include both urban and suburban areas. This shift is not coincidental. It is an outgrowth of the changes occurring in metro regions over the past several decades, including the suburbanization of the Democratic party (Hopkins, 2019) and the suburbanization of poverty (Allard, 2017). With the increase in suburban class and race-based diversity in the suburbs as well as the increased accessibility of information through internet and communications technology, social issues do not stop at urban borders, even when the areas are not designed or governed in a way that is cohesive to this new reality.

In this paper, I frame the creation of metropolitan areas in the mid—to late-20th century as a social sustainability concern, due to the institutionalization of spatial and social systems that are highly exclusionary, isolated, and individualistic. I ask how local actors/agencies who currently operate within these communities can utilize governance practices to promote community care, inclusion, and cohesion. In giving specific attention to the spatial and social challenges these communities present, I argue that social change organizations can offer insight for local public administrators. The findings and analysis reveal that , though the suburban areas at the core of this case study lack the essential elements of urban life and design that make social change efforts successful, the social change organization does promote internal and external systems of social capital, care, and inclusion due to the multi-dimensional governance model that they utilize.

The most essential element of the model is the application of the integrative governance framework—a framework that prioritizes micro-interactions, relationships and consensus building efforts. Beyond the interpersonal relational approach, the

governance model also includes strong ties to the larger association and other powerful groups and actors, which adds both capacity and legitimacy to the groups' efforts. Lastly, the use of place-based collective action framing—a tool that grounds the work within the communities and reduces individual differences sustains their efforts by reducing individual qualities and creating a unified interest and goal.

As the interdependence between spatial elements of an area and the social life that takes place there is so fundamental to urban policy, design, and planning studies, research on social sustainability in these fields often focuses on the design elements of an area— whether the place is already designed for cohesion, care and capital and what effects a massive redesign and restructuring effort is an available option (Bramley et al., 2009; Dempsey et al., 2011; Sharifi, and Murayama, 2013). In public affairs research, on the other hand, the focus on elements of social capital, cohesion, and care tends to be seen through an organizational management lens—with a focus on how governmental agencies and public servants can manage threats to resiliency (Andrews, 2012; Aldrich and Meyer, 2015; Ganaputi, 2012). In combining these spatial and institutional focuses through a study that looks at both an SCO and the place in which it operates, this paper recognizes that social interactions within and across geographies are a key driver in the production of the socially constructed systems that define local communities—from the way they are built and shaped to the ways these places are governed.

There are several important implications of this study, particularly as a method for local administrators to engage in efforts to promote social sustainability, even when the current physical and social state of the community is not geared towards this goal. First, administrators should consider adopting a similar model—with a focus on relational,

associational, and spatial aspects of governance. Rather than top-down engagement approaches, loose partnerships, and generic city branding efforts administrators can develop social capital, community care, and cohesion through genuine, honest, and deeply personal activities, broad and multi-dimensional networks, and specific place-based messaging.

Second, regardless of their ability to adopt aspects of this model, administrators should consider building stronger bonds with local grassroots and progressive organizations to coproduce socially sustainable outcomes. These groups often have a unique perspective and additional insight into community norms, struggles, and successes. Their flexible organizational model allows them to engage in efforts that local administrators might struggle to enact but the legitimacy and power of governmental agencies can support their efforts. Public administrators can utilize the governance model discussed in this article to engage directly with, provide capacity and support to and amplify the message of those organizations that support social sustainability.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Social sustainability, the capacity of high-quality human and communal life to be sustained over time, is not only a laudable but a necessary goal for local governments. Yet, efforts to promote social sustainability and its various elements have not been clearly laid out, in research or practices. Specifically, the existing studies and applications of the topic have not fully answered two of the most fundamental questions: "Which actions do local agencies engage in to produce social sustainability and how does the spatial nature of the city effect the ways they can, must, and do act?" Key themes of social sustainability are not well developed in existing research and practice and lack a systematic effort to truly understand how to develop and produce them.

Moreover, social sustainability is often tied to macro-level path dependency making it difficult to consider procedures without a massive systemic effort. Additionally, existing examples of moving from low levels of social sustainability to higher ones of social sustainability rely on case studies that are overly descriptive—

explaining the minutia of the case and particulars of the social sustainability measures while remaining distant from the goal of an explanation of the process.

This dissertation emerged out of the questions, above. It is both a descriptive and an explanatory question—seeking to understand the "what," "how," and "why" components of local governance efforts that generate better social outcomes for the most marginalized populations. While local places are shaped by economic activity, social interactions and built and natural environments, the public administration viewpoint considers cities as strongholds of elaborate systems of governance—providing a compelling reason to study social sustainability through the lens of local public and nonprofit institutions. However, frameworks, theories and findings related to the social sustainability efforts and the work of local agencies remain underdeveloped. This dissertation opens up this conversation, analyzing the production of local social sustainability through a lens that enhances our understanding of the city as a place that is not only managed through institutions but physically experienced.

In the second chapter, the first of three papers, I focus on the relationship between the spatial nature of the city as a place of residential settlement and governmental efforts to enable one element of social sustainability: access to goods, services, resources, and experiences. I find that increases in the percentage of occupied units that are single-family, detached homes reduces the rate at which cities adopt policies oriented towards increasing transit, housing, and childcare support access for vulnerable populations. The findings from a national survey data set reveal a significant relationship between the city as a spatial landscape and social policy making. Affordable public transit, affordable housing, multi-modal transit mobility options, and child/family assistance are all less

likely in communities where the percentage of occupied housing units that are the most exclusionary and isolating form increases. In other words, shifts in the way that people settle in the city are significant to the process of producing social sustainability via policy efforts.

The third chapter adds a new layer of depth to this discussion by connecting historical development processes to today's efforts to produce social sustainability. I note that growth and development that was oriented towards creating unjust systems of segregation and inequitable allocations of public goods, creates real harms that prevent the production of social sustainability, operationalized as the acquisition of goods and services needed to prevent social degradation over time. I theorize a connection between a specific focus on restoring justice and the capacity of a community to generate social sustainability. In a case study of a single inner-ring suburban city, I find that elements of a restorative justice process are clearly evident in the city government's efforts to provide opportunities for social sustainability and tie these efforts to city residents' ability to actually achieve social sustainability.

Finally, in the fourth chapter, I move beyond the top-down efforts of the city (policy-making and other actions) to focus on resident-led coproduction of social sustainability. A case study of the efforts of a social change organization in a suburban area reveal decentralized governance practices that can enhance attachment and accountability to and with others, another key element of social sustainability. I find that the social change organization must tackle both spatial and social constraints in its efforts to generate this aspect of social sustainability. Yet, it is successful because it utilizes governance practices that seek to maximize internal and external collaboration and

consensus, draw down resources from the parent organization and emphasize collective action via place-framing. The spatial aspects of the sprawling suburban area present significant barriers but also serves as a mechanism to emphasize identity and action.

Additions to the Discipline

Throughout this dissertation, I have explored the interdependent relationship between the spatial makeup of a city and the governance efforts to promote individual and communal ability to access, acquire, and remain attached/accountable to materials, resources experiences, and each other. Changes to space impact the likelihood of policy adoption. The historical and continued development of space presents unique challenges when social and demographic elements of the community change. And though space can present barriers to dissent, it can also serve as a valuable way to brand identity and encourage action.

Buildings, parks, streets, and other spatial elements of a city are physical objects constructed through the use of materials. However, their presence is generated through comprehensive and exhaustive governance efforts that determine the exact location, style, use, and tenure of the physical object. They also, collectively, shape the city experience, making it more or less conducive to some kinds of social efforts. It is important that local governance scholars give attention to the physical landscape of the places they study. As this dissertation repeatedly finds, the physical space of a city is a significant symbol and predictor of social systems and outcomes. From their historical development to the continued residential settlement and experiential patterns, the city space can encourage and maintain segregation, exclusion, and inequity—providing a compelling reason to

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study the relationship between space and the likelihood of social sustainability actions by public and nonprofit agencies.

Taken together, this dissertation can further explain why it is important to understand the institutional production of social sustainability in connection to the urban experience of a community. The relationship between the built environment and social sustainability efforts of local governments and social change organizations suggests that the physical landscape of a community can serve as both an impediment as well as catalyst.

Producing social sustainability is not simply a matter of ensuring that much-needed items are in existence, well-placed, or naturally occurring—but of recognizing the perceptions and meaning imbued within space (Harvey, 1969) and the ways that spaces are consistently recreated in the minds of the people utilize, live in, and govern them. While this understanding of the relationship between spatial form and social processes can be worrisome, there are significant opportunities attached to this viewpoint. A city redesign effort can be a governance tool that places the city on an entirely different trajectory. Indeed, as Harvey notes, "The right to the city is…is a right to change ourselves, by changing the city." (p. 315).

There are several important implications and applications of this research. Each paper includes concluding statements with implications and policy recommendations and, as a whole, the papers present a unique contribution to the existing literature on in public affairs and urban planning. As a collective unit, this project:

1) Furthers the development of literature on the most under-researched component of sustainability: social sustainability. By focusing on access, just acquisition, and mutual accountability, this dissertation adds a new direct and clearly defined framework to the existing literature.

2) Combines two distinct views on the nature of local places—the spatial planning focus and the institutional public administration one—to highlight the interaction between the city as spatial unit and the institutional governance practices that shape policy and advocacy efforts. It builds on important theories related to the interaction of spatial form and social processes, by intentionally tying these two lenses together.

3) Presents new and novel insight that speaks to both scholars and practitioners. Scholars gain insight into the iterative nature between space and governance efforts while practitioners can learn best practices and the ways that local physical environments might impact those. Based on the findings, zoning changes can be encouraged, a variety of governance efforts can be attempted, and different institutional practices can be adopted.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The connections between residential settlement patterns and the likelihood of policy adoption are clear in the second chapter of this dissertation. As the percentage of occupied homes that are single family detached unit increases, the likely number of social sustainability policies a city has passed decreases. Though cities looking to enhance social sustainability efforts can obviously choose to focus on those specifically, the underlying theoretical relationship between living in exclusionary communities and not passing policies intended to enhance access cannot be denied. This relationship should

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encourage policy makers and practitioners to consider the mechanisms that restrict other

housing types, specifically zoning and building codes. Upzoning efforts can enable more

density on city plots but rezoning a space for uses other than a single-family detached

home. By encouraging more density, and enabling it through the zoning code, people

might be more likely to interact with one another and the design of the city might allow

for and encourage more interest in a variety of housing, transit/bike, and family-oriented

policies.

The case studies in the third and fourth chapters also reveal important

implications for policy and practice. Both show that collaboration with other

institutions—be they horizontal or vertical—and the use of language to frame to be

integral to the social sustainability efforts. The importance of understanding and publicly

confronting historical inequities and efforts to marginalize communities is another key

finding from these case studies and has important implications, as well.

The restorative justice work that made Maple Heights' resurgence so successful

was dependent on the city administration using the past to navigate the future. As cities

look to prioritize efforts to support the social needs of those who are from historically

marginalized populations, the Maple Heights case study suggest they should directly

engage with this past, rather than ignore or simply nod to it. Additionally, other

governmental bodies as well as nonprofit institutions are important to the success of the

restorative justice work. In the third paper, a strong relationship between the chapter and

the national organization adds to the chapter's capacity and legitimacy.

The language the city administration uses to frame the need for reinvestment and

reparative efforts is also key to its success. Similarly, the chapters use of place-based

framing builds a sense of connection between the members through their shared geography. Both collaborative governance efforts and public marketing work can significantly impact a successful social sustainability production effort and should be utilized by governmental and nonprofit institutions seeking to engage in this work.

Final Thoughts

Writing a dissertation as an interdisciplinary scholar requires a significant amount of salsa dancing technique. In speaking to and with a number of fields, one goal of this dissertation is to at once solidify the importance of spatial dynamics in a management-centric context but another is to encourage attention to governance practices in a field that can be overly reliant on the spatial makeup of a space. Taken together, these three papers suggest that the process of generating social sustainability—creating and maintaining access, acquisition, and attachment/accountability—is enabled through governance efforts, direct policymaking as well as coproduction, and informed by the spatial dynamics of local communities. Changes to the nature of the city as a physical landscape that is created, settled, and experienced are tied to organizational efforts of local agencies to produce social sustainability. These findings should encourage local governance scholars to consider the spatial dynamics of communities in our understanding of policy and administrative efforts.

Like the efforts of those who have shaped my scholarly perspective, this dissertation seeks to inspire change, rather than simply observe and catalogue a state of affairs. Those who utilize post-positivist/critical theories are simultaneously uniquely aware of the systems of domination and power that are institutionalized within structural

and organizational systems, yet we remain hopeful that the very nature of institutional design means that systems can be oriented towards justice and equity through human agency. Throughout this work, I provide clear and distinct recommendations that can assist in orienting communities on a path towards social sustainability by centering the human and community-centric goals and designing space around these efforts. By tackling the historic and enduring racist and classist mechanisms that are institutionalized through the built environment and embracing strategies to promote social sustainability and human connection even when the built environment cannot be fundamentally changed.

My deepest hope is that this scholarly effort can be accessible to those who are most fundamental to the process of creating and maintaining social equity: legislators, practitioners, and residents. With that goal in mind, this dissertation has been written in a clear and accessible manner.

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APPENDICES

A. Comparative GLS and Poisson Models

The relationship between policy actions and the percentage of occupied housing units that are single family detached homes is negative and statistically significant in both models. Results for control variables were comparable as well, with the size and poverty control variables significant and positive in both models, as theorized. The one variation between the models is that the mayor variable is significant in the Poisson regression, but not in the linear regression model, though the coefficient is negative in both.

Variables	(1) Total Policy Actions GLS	(2) Total Policy Actions Poisson
Occupied housing, SFDH	-0.0164***	-0.00468**
	(0.00602)	(0.00210)
Population (ln)	1.038***	0.306***
	(0.0907)	(0.0278)
Education, BA Degree+ (%)	0.00470	0.00219
	(0.00732)	(0.00236)
Mayor	-0.164	-0.138**
	(0.171)	(0.0669)
Med housing val ($1000s)	0.000881	0.000295
	(0.000870)	(0.000245)
Poverty rate (%)	0.0419***	0.0167***
	(0.0106)	(0.00376)
Race, Non-Hisp white (%)	0.00667	0.00187
	(0.00545)	(0.00184)
2015.year	-0.0203	-0.0136
	(0.103)	(0.0316)
/lnalpha		-2.290***
		(0.397)
Constant		-2.845***
		(0.446)
Constant	-9.051***	
	(1.229)	
Observations	978	978

Cities (n)	491	491
Robust standard errors in parentheses		
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1		