The Housing Mixtape: Race, Place and Governance in the All-American City

By

Justice Mya Castañeda

A Dissertation
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
(Urban and Regional Planning)

at the

University of Wisconsin-Madison
2025

Date of final oral examination: 05.19.2025

Alfonso Morales, Professor, Urban Planning and Landscape Architecture
Kurt Paulsen, Professor, Urban Planning and Landscape Architecture
J. Revel Sims, Assistant Professor, Urban Planning and Landscape Architecture
Paige Glotzer, Associate Professor, University of Florida, History
Howard Pinderhughes, Professor, University of California-San Francisco, Social and Behavioral Sciences

Abstract: The Housing Mixtape: Race, Place, and Governance in the All-American City

City interrogates the persistence of racial and economic disparities in Madison, Wisconsin—long celebrated as a progressive city—by tracing how such disparities are produced, legitimated, and stabilized through spatial policy, institutional discourse, and administrative governance. Conceived as a three-track dissertation, each track serves as a discrete analytical contribution and a cumulative arc: from the historical discourses of exclusion, to the systemic violence they enact, to the structural constraints of reform through local government.

Track I excavates the spatial and rhetorical history of Madison's land use, zoning, housing, and planning systems. It argues that exclusionary outcomes—often attributed to bygone policies like redlining or racial covenants—are not residual artifacts but present-day expressions of enduring discursive logics. Drawing on the work of Paige Glotzer and Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, this track challenges narratives that treat segregation as the unintended result of past missteps. Instead, it identifies zoning ordinances, deed restrictions, and institutional development as patterned responses to racialized economic and social imaginaries that continue to structure the city's geography and policy language.

Track II reframes racial disparity as state-imposed violence. Using a conceptual framework that draws from Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, Loïc Wacquant, Karl Polanyi, and Thomas Piketty—as well as developmental neuroscience—this section situates harm not as incidental or historic, but as structured and sanctioned through omission, bureaucratic abstraction, and spatial governance. By connecting symbolic violence, habitus, and economic dispossession to

educational and health outcomes, the track shows how administrative and institutional systems both produce and normalize harm under the guise of neutrality, efficiency, or equity.

Track III turns inward to examine Madison's current governance architecture—its boards, commissions, task forces, redistricting procedures, and civic engagement infrastructure. Drawing on participant observation, archival review, and firsthand institutional involvement, it reveals how proceduralism, representational fragmentation, and symbolic inclusion often absorb reformist energy without delivering structural change. In doing so, this track shows how "participatory democracy" can function as a containment strategy—reifying racialized hierarchies even as it proclaims equity.

The interludes that bridge these tracks—**"Where the Maps End"** and **"Committees, Chaos, and Chords"**—serve as thematic and experiential transitions, grounding abstract theory in embodied encounters with mapping, memory, and public service. The **Coda** synthesizes the analytic, political, and personal threads of the project, rejecting narrow diagnostic framings and instead asking: *How do cities operationalize disparity while claiming to oppose it—and what would structural reimagination actually require?*

Methodologically, the dissertation blends archival research, discursive analysis, and embedded ethnography. Drawing on over a decade of civic engagement—embedded with city staff, nonprofit executive, committee chair, and institutional interlocutor—the project offers a situated and longitudinal critique of planning culture and municipal governance. Rather than treat housing policy as the singular cause or solution to urban inequality**,** The Housing Mixtape foregrounds the broader governing logics that render disparity durable—logics that are procedural, spatial, economic, and epistemic.

Ultimately, the dissertation reframes Madison not as an outlier but as a case-in-point—a city where the performance of progress coexists with the reproduction of harm. It resists closure and prescription, instead offering a critical archive for rethinking how cities define value, administer belonging, and design their own limits to transformation.

Acknowledgements:

This project marks the closing of a journey that began more than 15 years ago, shaped by the people, places, and public institutions that gave me the space to think, question, and return.

I owe everything to public education—my first and most enduring savior. To the teachers and staff at Mendota Elementary School, thank you for giving me the room to love learning. That space was the start of everything.

To Ross, Dave, and Dan, and to the Scholar Warriors at Garfield High School in San Diego: I know I have promises to keep.

To Mirle, Luz, Keith, Parke, Isaac, Wayne, Jorge, and Natalia at UCSD: thank you for showing me the path into research—and for walking it with me long enough to know that it was real.

To Bryan, Anthony, Amado, Leah, and David at Stanford: thank you for making sure I understood that the path wasn't straight or easy.

To SLOP, for keeping it simple.

To Frank and Serra, for the laughter.

To Phil, Phil, Xav, and Amy at MIT, thank you for the warning.
To Flor at UCSF, thank you for your support while I found the courage to ignore it.

To Rachel, for the Spark.
To Vivien, for seeing me in Boston.

To my committee: thank you for seeing this through.
To Paige Glotzer—your brilliance and insight shaped this project in ways I cannot fully express. I am humbled and grateful.

To Common Wealth Development: you were the seed I needed.
To Stefan—thank you for being both a colleague and a foil; for sharpening the edge, and standing in when it counted.
To the Board—thank you for trusting me, and for believing in both the mission and the person trying to carry it forward.
To SBW, thank you for your mentorship, your equanimity, and your wisdom.
To A. Hoeft, for your steadiness, intellect, and ethic. You raise the bar for everyone around you. I'm grateful for your example, your clarity, and the way your presence makes the work—*and me*—better.

To Alfonso Morales, for being a champion.
To Howard Pinderhughes, for staying with me.
To X & G—thank you for riding with me, in spite of it all.
To Liliana—thank you for your love, your strength, your edits, your clarity, and your fire.

To my family:
To Sonja, my sister—thank you for knowing the pain and loving me anyway.
To Rebecca, for leading the way.
To my grandfather, Santiago, for your courage.
To my grandmother, Elena, for your strength, your stubbornness, and your demand for accountability.

To the young people I've had the privilege to learn from:
At Garfield High School in San Diego,
at Elmhurst Community Prep in Oakland,
and here, at Common Wealth Development in Madison—
this work is because of you.

Today, I guess I will just clean the floor—
It is what we stand on
where we lay our head at night
and, when we are older
our children will play there.
So, maybe it is ok that for today—

We just clean the floor.

Table of Contents

Contents

Genealogies

In 2004, while deployed to Fallujah, Iraq, as a young Marine Sergeant, I found a litter of kittens living at the bottom of a storm sewer outlet near the makeshift building where our unit worked. Despite clear orders and health protocols regarding animals—seen as carriers of disease—I decided to secretly “adopt” them. I would sit near the outlet whenever I could, feeding them, watching them and thinking. In those quiet moments, I reflected on my childhood in Madison, Wisconsin, and on the friends who had been incarcerated before they reached adulthood. I thought about the people I was deployed with—who we were, where we came from, and what had drawn us into military service. I didn’t know it at the time, but these moments were the earliest seeds of this project.

My earliest memories of Madison were shaped not by institutions, but by violence. I moved nineteen times before I turned eighteen—an auto-ethnographic tour through the city’s low-income housing stock. I lived in every quadrant of the city. One of my first panoramic memories is from Allied Drive: a man breaking down our front door at 2237 Allied Drive, dragging my mother out by her hair and down the stairs, beating her in the front yard. That building is now an MSCR Learning Center. Later, while living in the Vera Court neighborhood, my next-door neighbor and childhood playmate—no older than I was—was murdered by one of his mother’s boyfriends. A few years later, when I was in second grade, while walking home from Mendota Elementary School with a friend, police sped into Vera Court. My friend arrived at his building just as officers were arresting his father, who had stabbed his mother to death. My friend found her body (He would later go to prison at 19, and years afterward, die from cancer). All of this happened before I turned ten.

My formal education began at Red Caboose Childcare, and that paradox—profound trauma alongside structured learning—defined much of my childhood. That contradiction, as much as any textbook or teacher, shaped the trajectory of this work. My relationship with Madison has always been lived, intimate, and somewhat fraught. It's a geography of memory as much as of streets and buildings. That relationship would come to shape my entire academic and professional journey.

By the time I enlisted in the Marine Corps in 2000, I was out of options—barely accepted after multiple waivers, with a history of instability, jail time, and academic failure. But the Corps provided something I had never experienced: steady access to basic needs, a structured environment, and a community of peers from society's margins. In that context, I took my first college course and earned an A—an unfamiliar outcome that shifted my sense of possibility. Over time, I completed an associate's degree through Central Texas College and joined a UC transfer program at MiraCosta College, all while serving as a Personnel Chief at I MEF[1], where I was exposed to planning, logistics, and operational systems at scale. The Corps didn't make me a scholar, but it created the conditions for one to emerge. It was my first encounter with the stabilizing power of structure—a lived example of the framework I would later call "wet feet and empty stomachs."

When I arrived at UC San Diego, I arrived with sharpened sense of focus born from years of institutional structure and deliberate self-discipline. I declared a major in Urban Studies and

[1] 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton California

Planning and found that the frameworks of urban design, land use, and institutional development gave language to questions I had long been asking. I became especially interested in educational space—not only in terms of buildings and boundaries, but in how systems positioned young people for engagement or exclusion. I wrote about youth like me and the friends I grew up with, whom I came to describe as “kids with character”—children who refused to conform to the contradictions embedded in conventional educational institutions. My senior thesis became the foundation for a curriculum I called the “Scholar-Warrior Academy,” and from that came an early articulation of the framework I would later refine as “wet feet and empty stomachs”: the idea that no matter how well-trained an educator might be, children living with basic unmet needs will struggle, and adding programmatic interventions will do very little to mitigate the long-term, generational, separation from access to basic needs.

This framework carried me into graduate work at Stanford University, where I earned a Master's in Policy, Organization, and Leadership Studies from the Graduate School of Education. While at Stanford, my academic inquiries aligned with a resurgence of public conversation in Madison around racial disparities, particularly during debates over a proposed Urban League charter school and the early framing of the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families' "Race to Equity" report. I used my seminar time to explore the intersections of land use, school siting, and structural inequality—especially how the configuration of Madison's attendance boundaries reflected a deeper geography of exclusion.

At MIT’s Department of Urban Studies and Planning, I pursued a second Master's degree in City Planning, focusing on housing policy, community, and economic development. While there, I

worked closely with Professor Phil Thompson, whose work on democratic wealth generation sharpened my focus on economically peripheral neighborhoods. I began to understand how neighborhoods that are socially isolated often represent untapped economic value—through procurement networks, city service contracts, and even the infrastructure of incarceration. Yet in these places, wealth rarely "sticks." That realization reinforced my fascination with Madison's spatial and economic logics.

Around the same time, I encountered data about pediatric asthma rates in the Bronx. A presentation cited that 54% of children there had some form of acute asthma or COPD. That statistic—hundreds of thousands of children who couldn't breathe—sparked a further line of inquiry: what happens when a city, or system of governance increases its funding without increasing residents' ability to access or benefit from it? This led me to explore how disparities in capacity for investment, not just revenue, can distort the outcomes of well-meaning interventions. I explored this dynamic in my MIT thesis on the Post-9/11 GI Bill, arguing, among other things, that it disproportionately benefited officers and college-educated veterans—often white and middle-class—while leaving many enlisted veterans, especially veterans of color, unable to convert the benefit into long-term economic mobility. Furthermore, using that framework, I argued that any successful workforce development strategy aimed at mitigating trauma or violence, needed to stabilize income volatility, increase short-term mobility, and reduce set-up time, which ultimately amounted to increasing the collective capacity for investment of time, energy, resources, and/or revenue.

Returning to my long-time curiosity around Madison's disparities, my thinking converged. One night, while mapping out youth justice programs and their overlaps with school boundaries and city zoning maps, I drafted a long email to then-Mayor Paul Soglin. I argued that Madison's racial disparities could not be understood in isolation from its spatial arrangements. To his credit, Mayor Soglin invited me to return and conduct research from within city government. I was given a city email address and a desk in the Mayor's office. Over the next three years, I sat in on meetings, analyzed neighborhood plans, conducted interviews, and interrogated city systems. I studied the Neighborhood Resource Teams—Soglin's adaptation of Menino-era community development strategies—as a possible mechanism for addressing place-based inequality.

From Madison, I went on to UCSF Medical Center to study violence prevention through a public health lens under Dr. Howard Pinderhughes. There, I worked with PolicyLink on the early framework for the Obama administration's "My Brother's Keeper" initiative and consulted with Prevention Institute on the "Making Connections for Mental Health and Wellbeing Among Men and Boys" initiative. I also spent time embedded in a middle school in Oakland, working alongside a former Stanford classmate who was an assistant principal. My role allowed me to observe firsthand the impact of structural violence on education, community health, and civic belonging. Through the work of the two initiatives (PolicyLink and Prevention Institute) I conducted a meta-analysis of over 430 programs or initiatives across more than 100 cities that were attempting to improve outcomes for boys and men of color.

In December 2016, I was hired as Executive Director of Common Wealth Development, a Madison-based community development organization created in 1979 as a violence prevention

initiative using the ambits of affordable housing, small business incubation, youth development and community cohesion. After nearly two decades away—eight years in the military, eight years in graduate school, and several years in direct research—I came home. I came back to integrate the questions, theories, experiences, and tensions I had been collecting since Fallujah.

This dissertation is the culmination of that work. It does not offer a single intervention or set of recommendations. It is a documentation of process, a theoretical synthesis, and a historically grounded reflection on a city whose governance and geography continue to produce and protect inequality, often under the banner of progress. This is not a linear project. It is, as the title suggests, a mixtape—layered, looping, thematic, and unresolved. A critical assemblage of voices, maps, policies, and memories. It is the intellectual inheritance of a storm sewer in Fallujah, a charter school debate in Madison, a middle school in Oakland, and the air quality in the Bronx.

It is not meant to be finished, only understood—and, perhaps, returned to.

Executive Summary

The Housing Mixtape: Race, Place, and Governance in the All American City is a three-paper (hereafter I refer to each paper as a "track" of the mixtape), dissertation that interrogates the persistence of racial and economic disparities in Madison, Wisconsin. Drawing from over a decade of embedded fieldwork, critical theory, participatory inquiry, and institutional engagement, this project traces how disparities are not simply remnants or byproducts of historical injustice, but active and evolving products of governance, policy design, and spatial organization.

The project began with a clear central question: How have historical policies and current government structures contributed to the persistence of racial disparities in Madison, and what potential solutions can address these systemic issues? From this core inquiry emerged a series of sub-questions, each probing a distinct dimension of the problem: the legacy of land use policies, the framing of disparities as state-imposed violence, the structure and function of local government, the potential of participatory democracy, and the synthesis of these insights into a deeper strategic framework. As the project unfolded, these questions were not discarded but expanded—transformed through the iterative engagement with theory, place, and practice. The analytic focus shifted from "what happened" to "what continues to happen, and why"—and from presumed failure to an examination of systems that are functioning precisely as they were designed.

Each of the three tracks contributes a unique perspective to that analysis:

- **Track I** describes the spatial and discursive history of Madison's racial geography. It shows how exclusion was embedded in the city's development through zoning,

covenants, redlining, and public investment practices—not as isolated policies, but as expressions of elite power and professional consensus. Drawing from Paige Glotzer and others, the track reframes these tools not as causes of segregation, but as *codifications* of existing racialized beliefs and governing logics.

- **Track II** repositions Madison's disparities within a framework of *state-imposed violence*, drawing from Foucault, Wacquant, Bourdieu, Polanyi, and Piketty. It argues that harm in the urban context is not always visible or deliberate—it is often institutional, epistemic, and spatial. Through the integration of neuroscience and developmental theory, it connects chronic deprivation to long-term educational and health outcomes, showing how cities govern through omission as much as through action.
- **Track III** analyzes Madison's government structure, particularly its municipal architecture of boards, commissions, and participatory processes. It assesses the degree to which democratic form can neutralize democratic function—absorbing public energy while leaving underlying systems untouched. Based on extensive civic participation, notes, interviews, meeting minutes, and public service, the track analyzes how Madison's governance disperses responsibility, constrains accountability, and protects the status quo, often through ritualized equity language.

Together, these tracks offer a layered, critical account of how racial and economic stratification persists—not because institutions are broken, but because their design protects against disruption. This project contributes to critical planning theory and interpretive policy analysis by offering a framework in which disparity is not an unfortunate outcome, but a *governed outcome*—legitimated through the very processes meant to address it.

Importantly, while the title of this dissertation is *The Housing Mixtape*, the project does not center housing policy in the traditional sense. This absence is intentional. Too often, racial and spatial disparities are reduced to questions of housing alone. This research argues that segregation is more than a housing condition—it is behavior shaped by governance structure, institutional discourse, economic policy, bureaucratic inertia, and civic imagination. To treat housing as the central solution, without attending to the broader discursive landscape of exclusion, is to mistake the ship for the current. If efforts to mitigate or reduce inequality are to succeed, housing policy must be understood as one track in a more complex mixtape—interwoven with education, violence, governance, land use, and economic development.

This dissertation is not prescriptive. It offers no checklist or closing directive. In the tradition of grounded, iterative research, it resists the impulse to simplify complexity. It offers instead a curated archive of how systems talk, behave, and defend themselves. Madison is not an exception. It is a revealing case of how American cities perform progress while operationalizing exclusion. *The Housing Mixtape* is a call to attention more than a call to action—attention to the forms, habits, and spatial logics that organize urban life, and to the deeper question of whether cities can truly change the systems they refuse to fully comprehend.

The Housing Mixtape: Race, Place and Governance in the All-American City

Situation: The All-American City

Madison, Wisconsin, occupies a unique position in the American civic landscape. As the state capital and home to the University of Wisconsin's flagship campus, it is a city steeped in institutional prominence. It consistently ranks high in national measures of educational attainment, health outcomes, voter participation, and quality of life. It is frequently invoked—by residents, political leaders, and observers—as a model for progressive governance. It is also, by many measures, a city that works: economically viable, administratively stable, and home to a wide array of public, private, and nonprofit institutions with considerable planning and policy capacity.

And yet, Madison also sustains some of the most entrenched racial disparities in the country. In education, employment, housing, health, and incarceration, Black and other BIPOC residents face disproportionately negative outcomes—often dramatically so. These disparities are not new. They have been documented in dozens of studies and reports over the last half-century, surfacing with cyclical urgency but rarely accompanied by structural transformation. They persist despite decades of public declarations, task forces, planning initiatives, and equity statements. In fact, they persist *through* those very mechanisms.

This contradiction—between the city's image and its outcomes, between its institutional capacity and its civic accountability—raises a fundamental question. Not whether disparities exist, or even why they matter, but rather: how are they organized, maintained, and justified? What systems of governance, planning, and political culture make it possible for a city with such

institutional resources and equity-oriented discourse to reproduce the very conditions it claims to redress?

This dissertation begins from that paradox. More than an exception, it treats Madison as a revealing case. A city whose reputation for progressive values coexists with spatialized racial harm, and whose civic infrastructure often functions to manage, rather than resolve, inequality. The concern here is not with the sincerity of the actors involved, but with the structure of the systems they inhabit. It is about how public goals are translated into bureaucratic routines, how historical patterns are stabilized through spatial and institutional form, and how even the language of equity can be deployed to preserve existing hierarchies. The question is not simply whether the city is doing enough. It is whether the systems through which it imagines and enacts equity are themselves complicit in producing the outcomes they claim to oppose.

General Inquiry & Framework

This dissertation began with a central question: How have historical policies and current government structures contributed to the persistence of racial disparities in Madison, and what potential solutions can address these systemic issues? That question shaped the early design of the project and reflected a straightforward assumption: that policy mechanisms, institutional frameworks, and administrative decisions could be mapped and analyzed to understand the roots of local inequality.

Over time, however, the research demanded a broader lens. The more closely I examined planning documents, governance structures, and civic decision-making processes, the clearer it became that the question of *how* disparities persist is inseparable from the question of *why* they remain permissible—both politically and procedurally. This shift did not require abandoning the

original question. Instead, it involved taking seriously the idea that Madison's stark racial disparities in economic and educational outcomes are not simply artifacts of inattention, neglect or dysfunction, nor are they byproducts of historic racism or historic racist practices. They are actively shaped by recurring institutional choices, by the organization of civic life, and by the frameworks that define what kinds of solutions are thinkable in the first place.

Through archival work, theoretical study, and years of direct engagement with Madison's public institutions, the project developed a deeper conceptual framing. Racial disparities in housing, education, and economic opportunity are shaped through ordinary systems—budget processes, land use decisions, participatory forums, and administrative routines. These systems operate with internal coherence and legitimacy, even when their outcomes reproduce exclusion. In this way, disparity is not an anomaly in otherwise well-functioning institutional design; it is patterned through the very mechanisms those institutions rely on to claim competence, neutrality, and public service.

Understanding these systems requires attention to how they define success, how they manage conflict, and how they render inequality administratively legible. A zoning decision may follow every procedural guideline, solicit public input, and appear technically sound—yet still produce outcomes that reinforce residential segregation. A public meeting may reflect institutional transparency while channeling dissent into procedurally safe formats that preserve the status quo. These dynamics are not incidental to governance. They are central to how authority is exercised and how public value is constructed.

This research treats those seemingly routine decisions as sites of political meaning. It asks what kinds of claims institutions privilege, what forms of knowledge are considered credible, and

what kinds of harm remain outside the bounds of official recognition. The coherence of the coalescence of systems investigated here does not stem from their ability to solve problems equitably, but from their ability to organize civic life around a manageable set of expectations, technical metrics, and accepted boundaries of intervention. That coherence may, in fact, lend stability—but all too often at the expense of transformation.

Legitimacy also plays a powerful role in sustaining this order. Institutions that present themselves as inclusive, data-driven, and participatory accrue symbolic authority that can shield them from deeper structural critique. Equity, in this context, becomes a language through which cities signal commitment while deflecting responsibility. The vocabulary of racial justice enters public plans and strategy documents, but rarely alters the ecology and relationships of the organizations through which those plans are implemented. As a result, Madison's governance systems can appear reform-minded while continuing to reproduce exclusion with remarkable consistency.

This disjunction between intention and outcome is rarely addressed within government systems themselves. Because systems are evaluated largely on procedural criteria—adherence to budget rules, compliance with open meeting laws, completion of community engagement checklists—the broader social effects of their decisions can be rendered secondary or invisible. Administrative success is measured internally, through the rhythms of governance itself, rather than externally, through the lived realities of those most affected by inequality. In such a context, disparities are acknowledged but rarely explained in structural terms, much less confronted.

This evolution in framing reflects the dissertation's foundational interest in structure over symptom. The research focuses less on individual policy failures and more on the routines,

procedures, and spatial logics that stabilize inequality over time. It considers how official narratives of inclusion coexist with practices that limit access, isolate neighborhoods, and defer transformative change. Understanding these mechanisms requires more than naming disparities. It requires a close reading of how cities govern—with what tools, through what assumptions, and to whose benefit.

That shift in focus also demands a different analytic vocabulary—one that accounts for power not only in overt decisions, but in institutional habits, professional norms, and governance routines that mask racialized outcomes behind administrative order. This approach reframes disparities as a systemic condition, reproduced through rules and expectations that operate with consistency and legitimacy. To diagnose these systems requires attention to the everyday ways that cities operationalize equity without altering the frameworks that gave rise to exclusion in the first place.

Introspection: Theoretical Orientation of the Housing Mixtape

The analytic foundation of this project is built from a synergy of critical urban theory, interpretive policy analysis, and sociological approaches to power, governance, and inequality. Rather than apply a single theoretical model across all three tracks, the dissertation draws from a constellation of thinkers whose work clarifies how institutions stabilize disparity and reproduce exclusion while claiming public legitimacy. Stinchcombe (1982) describes the uses of theory and I use his ideas to name the uses I am putting to the conceptual tools deployed in this dissertation. So, to examine not only what cities do, but how they think, classify, and justify their decisions—and how those decisions become embedded in space and structure, I need a variety of thinkers, each informing the arguments I deploy in this work.

The tradition and legacy of Michel Foucault's work on discourse, power/knowledge, and governmentality is central to this analysis. I see this as a set of fundamental ideas about the relationship between institutional authority and systems of classification that illuminate how certain problems—such as racial disparity—are rendered manageable, abstract, or procedural through policy language. In Madison, the frequent invocation of equity within planning and governance discourse does not necessarily signal structural transformation. Instead, more often signals the routinization of harm into formats that institutions can process without confronting their foundational arrangements. Foucault's conception of power as diffuse and productive, rather than centralized and repressive, is critical here. It enables the description of how exclusion is administered through the everyday functioning of civic systems that rely on normative categories, administrative rationality, and codified expertise, and not through singular acts or actors. For that analysis I suggest the reader turn to books like Street-level Bureaucracy (Lipsky, 1980).

To understand how these discursive forms translate into structured inequality, the dissertation relies on another set of fundamental ideas found in Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant, whose work clarifies how symbolic violence is embedded in institutional form. Bourdieu's theory of fields, habitus, and capital provides a vocabulary for analyzing how spatial hierarchies are not only reproduced materially, but also naturalized through bureaucratic, professional, and civic logics. Wacquant extends this analysis into urban space and governance, particularly in his work on territorial stigmatization and the carceral state. These insights are vital to general interpretations of how low-income and BIPOC neighborhoods in Madison have been consistently peripheralized—not just through disinvestment, but through a set of assumptions about disorder, risk, and deservingness that circulate within government and planning culture.

Jane Jacobs (1961) and Sherry Arnstein's Ladder of Participation (1969) describe peripheralization at the individual level. My concern is how institutions do not simply react to disparity; they participate in producing it through their classifications, resource distributions, and representational frameworks—even if / when they present as working towards its reduction or elimination.

Another pair of thinkers providing fundamental ideas is the work of Karl Polanyi and Thomas Piketty, whose work—separated by more than half a century--links economic systems to institutional reproduction and structural exclusion. Polanyi's concept of fictitious commodities and his critique of market liberalism underscore how land, labor, and social welfare become subordinated to economic rationalities that cities treat as neutral. Probably more important is how he shows the fundamental transformation of society from one based on generalized reciprocity into one in which the poor could be blamed for their own poverty creating the conditions for policies, programs, and the like to embed that assumption even as they attempted to make economic mobility available to the poor. Much research has specified and contextualized this analysis following Stack's classic book, All Our Kin (1974). Piketty's historical account of capital concentration offers a broader frame for understanding how wealth inequality deepens across generations—not only through market forces, but through political decisions, tax regimes, and institutional inertia. These frameworks help locate Madison's disparities within broader patterns of economic governance, where fiscal decisions are presented as apolitical even as they entrench inequity. Public investment patterns, budget allocations, and development incentives function as spatial instruments that reinforce existing hierarchies of access, ownership (of processes as much as property), and opportunity.

The work of these thinkers—Foucault, Bourdieu, Wacquant, Polanyi, Piketty—intersect in their attention to how systems stabilize themselves through knowledge production, institutional form, and economic policy. Their relevance to urban planning lies in their refusal to treat policy as an isolated lever of reform. Instead, they position governance as an ongoing negotiation—a necessarily contested space--over visibility, value, and control. Planning, under this lens, becomes a cultural and political practice ostensibly in support of human well-being, and yet without comprehending human realities, organizational realities, and societal realities about the emergence of capitalism and the market system sufficiently clearly to understand what humanizing transformation would actually look like. In short, urban planning is not simply a technical or vocational one. It carries forward histories, encodes ideologies, and performs legitimacy, often while absorbing or becoming completely impervious to, critique.

The dissertation is therefore positioned within critical urban theory and critical planning theory, both of which challenge the technocratic and managerial assumptions that have long defined the planning profession; reduced to convoluted yet redundant maps and charts, churned out within the limitations of vast deserts of cubicle farms. These fields foreground the importance of history, power, and inequality in shaping the built environment, and they interrogate the normative premises that guide urban governance. They also ask what it means to plan in contexts where the mechanisms of participation, regulation, and investment have long been implicated in the very inequities they now claim to address.

Central to this project’s analytic framework is the concept of state-imposed violence—a lens through which disparities in education, housing, and economic mobility are interpreted not as accidental outcomes, but as the consequences of organized, sanctioned, and routinized systems

of harm. State-imposed violence is not limited to policing or incarceration. It becomes present as a harm done to people in how cities allocate resources, define service boundaries, structure participation, and render certain neighborhoods permanently peripheral. This harm operates through policy documents, budget cycles, staffing decisions, and spatial logics that determine where investments flow and whose needs are legible within the system. This dissertation is not about mitigating that harm, for an example of such work, one could read Morales (2009).

Harm serves as a throughline across the three tracks. Epistemic harm (how problems are framed), institutional harm (how systems operate), and spatial harm (how geography is produced and maintained) each have a vocabulary recognizable as professional and technical, but whose use reduces people to clients, at best. By deploying this lens, the project aims to move beyond diagnosis and toward a deeper understanding of how urban governance can produce inequality while concurrently claiming to oppose it.

Methodology & Research Design

Research Position and Evolution

This dissertation interrogates the persistence of racial disparities in Madison, Wisconsin—particularly as they are reproduced through land use, local governance, and discursive practice. It is structured as a three-track project, with each track contributing to a cumulative examination of how planning institutions, governance structures, and historically contingent policy choices shape the lived experiences and life chances of BIPOC residents. While each track stands on its own, together they constitute an interdisciplinary inquiry that blends historical analysis, ethnographic observation, and critical theory.

As the project evolved, so did its methodological structure. What began as a plan for a relatively traditional qualitative study—with interviews, coding, and document analysis—shifted into a more embedded, iterative process that reflected both the researchers (my) proximity to the work and the demands of the questions themselves. Rather than adhering rigidly to the procedural commitments made at the proposal stage, the dissertation developed through continuous engagement with primary documents, committee deliberations, municipal archives, and political processes in which the author was a direct participant. The dissertation, in this way, is not just a study of Madison's governance, but a product of participation in the city's governance terrain—emerging from within it, while offering a vocabulary by which it may be understood.

Original Methodological Commitments

The original research proposal, approved by my dissertation committee, outlined a methodology that combined archival research, document analysis, qualitative interviewing, and the use of MAXQDA to support qualitative data analysis and theory-building. The project initially contemplated drawing on the traditions of Constructivist Grounded Theory, Critical Urban Theory, and Participatory Action Research, reflecting a desire to both study and engage the institutions that shape urban inequality. The proposal also identified a range of public records, municipal documents, and community meetings as key sites of inquiry and observation.

These methodological commitments were and remain valid—they represent the epistemological foundation on which the research was built. However, the implementation of these methods evolved over time. In this way, the final iteration of the dissertation emerged through continuous negotiation between planned research activities and the unfolding opportunities, constraints, and insights presented by the field itself. In particular, the use of MAXQDA was ultimately

abandoned—not out of disregard of its potential utility, but due to a combination of logistical limitations and the realization that the kind of pattern recognition necessary for this project could be more meaningfully achieved through manual memoing, thematic coding, and embedded field engagement. What was lost in software-aided precision was offset by the depth and specificity of context-driven analysis.

A Brief Discussion of Methods

The original research proposal envisioned the use of qualitative data analysis software (specifically MAXQDA) to support a systematic coding and interpretation process across interviews, field notes, and municipal documents. This approach was designed to ensure transparency and analytic rigor, particularly in the early stages of theory-building. However, as the project evolved—and as my professional responsibilities deepened during a historically volatile period marked by a global pandemic, local political shifts, and parallel institutional engagement—this plan was ultimately not implemented in its full form.

This was, candidly, a methodological trade-off. While there were conceptual reasons for shifting away from software-aided coding—such as the nonlinear nature of the data and the value of emergent, reflexive insights—the logistical constraints were significant. Had there been more dedicated time and institutional support for research alone, it is entirely possible that a more traditional and disciplined coding schema could have been carried through. Such a schema might have added an additional layer of demonstrable structure to the analytic process and may have enhanced the methodological resilience of some sections—the metaphorical tendons holding the body to the bones. This omission does not invalidate the findings, but it is a real departure from the original design, and is important to naming directly rather than allowing it to linger

unacknowledged. Indeed, one hope of this project is that other scholars might dig deeper into the specifics that this dissertation does not explore, in that regard this dissertation can also be thought of as a research design that others might use usefully adopt, develop, and deploy.

At the same time, the decision to remain embedded in practice—as a practicing planner and civic participant—was not incidental. The trade-off reflected a conscious commitment to remain grounded in real-time governance, to observe decision-making up close, and to center the rhythms of administrative life rather than extract them into academic abstraction. The insights that animate this dissertation were not derived in spite of that work, but through it. What was sacrificed in procedural uniformity was, in many ways, offset by proximity, duration, and institutional fluency.

This approach reflects both the complexity of the research subject and the intellectual commitments of the project: to understand racial disparities not as isolated data points, but as institutional patterns embedded in space, discourse, and governance. This is not a failure of rigor, but rather an adaptation with integrity—a methodological adjustment that aligns with the epistemology and subject matter of the dissertation itself.

Data Collection

The core of this research rests on the triangulation of three interrelated data sources: archival analysis, embedded observation, and field conversations. This triangulated approach allowed for a robust and nuanced view of how disparities are produced, reproduced, and rationalized across Madison’s institutions. A more specific discussion will be developed in each track.

Archival Analysis

The project draws heavily on public records, meeting minutes, consultant reports, legislative histories, and land use maps. These materials—some of them stretching back to the early 20th century—were used to trace policy lineages and to identify the bureaucratic and legal infrastructures that have sustained segregationist and exclusionary patterns. Sources include the archives of the City of Madison's Planning Division, the Common Council, the Community Development Authority, and various Boards, Commissions, and Committees (BCCs).

Embedded Observation

Over the course of five years, I participated in and observed over 200 public meetings, including service on the Task Force on Government Structure (TFOGS), the Educational Resource Officer Ad Hoc Committee, chairing the City of Madison Redistricting Committee, co-chairing the Housing Strategy Committee, and serving on the MMSD Community School District Steering Committee. Throughout the duration of this process, I also held institutional roles, particularly the Executive Director of a local community development organization, which provided additional vantage points into how public, quasi-public, and nonprofit actors intersect in the production of policy. These embedded experiences constitute a form of critical civic ethnography, wherein I am not external to the field but situated within it—and reflexively interpreted the field from that ambit.

Field Conversations

Dozens of informal and semi-structured conversations were conducted with elected officials, city staff, planners, nonprofit leaders, and housing practitioners. These conversations—were

conducted under an approved formal IRB (2024-0425)—were documented through detailed note-taking and were anonymized in citation. This choice reflects both the public nature of many conversations and the ethical commitment to protect the confidentiality of those who offered candid reflections. These exchanges were used to build the general claims made herein, by corroborating patterns, challenging assumptions, and identifying the internal logics of justification that were often not visible in formal policy statements.

This orientation was especially well-suited to a project that sought to trace institutional behavior across multiple systems—planning, education, governance, housing—while remaining attentive to local knowledge, contradictions, and embedded logics of justification. In doing so, the project moves beyond conventional “data collection” and into the realm of critical embedded research, where lived experience, institutional memory, and situated expertise are treated as core components of analytic rigor.

Analytic Approach

The analytic orientation of this dissertation reflects a commitment to a constructivist epistemology that acknowledges the co-production of knowledge through practice, experience, and institutional engagement. A constructivist epistemology holds that knowledge is not discovered in some objective vacuum but constructed through context, interpretation, and lived engagement. In this dissertation, that means understanding racial disparities in Madison not just through statistics or policy language, but through the discursive, institutional, and spatial practices that give those disparities meaning—like the persistent use of “neighborhood character” in zoning appeals, or the procedural deference granted to advisory committees despite their lack of representational equity. This project approaches interpretation abductively, that is, a

reflexive and iterative process as opposed to deductive or inductive. Insights emerge not from detached coding protocols, but through immersion, documentation, and thematic synthesis of institutional behavior, archival records, and field interactions. Reflexive and iterative process means that analysis proceeded over time, where I reflected on how institutional positions, conversations, and observations shaped the emerging insights. For example, insights about the procedural violence of Madison's BCC structure emerged after repeated observations—as a participant and a chair—of how public input was timed, filtered, or outright disregarded in meeting agendas and staff responses. I will detail this process in Track 3.

This methodological stance was grounded in a triangulated and recursive mode of analysis[2], where patterns were developed through cross-referencing field memos, committee transcripts, city planning documents, meeting records, and public-facing policy instruments. I will provide a list of these, and detail their use in a few instances. This structure allowed analytic insights to develop across each track while remaining grounded in specific institutional artifacts and practices. This mode of analysis refers to the continual process of checking themes across multiple sources—policy documents, field conversations, meeting transcripts—and then circling back as new insights emerged. For instance, the claim I make in Track 3 is that the city's governance system privileges those with time and resources to attend meetings or otherwise engage in governance. This finding was not drawn from a single interview, but from triangulating testimony from former alders, observing patterns in redistricting engagement, and repeatedly attending committee meetings that the public had little access to due to meeting

[2] This mode of analysis refers to the continual process of checking themes across multiple sources—policy documents, field conversations, meeting transcripts—and then circling back as new insights emerged. For instance, the claim that the city's governance system privileges those with time and resources wasn't drawn from a single interview, but from triangulating testimony from former alders, patterns in redistricting engagement, and repeated attendance at under-attended committee meetings with inaccessible formats or times.

formats or day/time combinations. Further, the observations producing this finding helped solidify the finding in track 1 that interlocking systems peripheralize populations.

Positionality

This project is both informed by and inseparable from my position within the civic and institutional terrain it investigates. Over the course of the dissertation, I have served as the Executive Director of Common Wealth Development, a tax-exempt community development organization in Madison, chaired and co-chaired multiple City of Madison and MMSD committees, and participated directly in the processes that shaped many of the governance structures under analysis. These roles granted proximity—access to people, conversations, internal documents, and decision-making structures—that a traditional detached research model could not replicate. They also demanded a consistent practice of reflexivity, particularly as I navigated the dual role of embedded actor and critical analyst.

The duality associated with being a student and a working professional created a number of ethical tensions. Some moments called for participation, others for critique. There were hearings I helped facilitate while also studying their structure; reports I helped author while also analyzing their procedural implications. I made conscious decisions not to include confidential or personnel-sensitive material, and I anonymized or paraphrased conversations where there was no formal consent structure in place. Remember, I was granted permission from the institutional review board as exempt, meaning my research was with information that was either publicly available or what I learned could not be linked to specific individuals (see (45 CFR 46 104 (d)(3)) and (45 CFR 46 104 (d)(4)). In other cases—especially involving elected officials and public meetings—I cited material as public record and incorporated it into the analytic

framework transparently. In each instance, the decision to include or exclude data was governed by a commitment to respect the individuals involved and to focus analysis on systems, structures, and institutional behavior rather than individual actors.

This embeddedness was not a liability but a methodological condition—one that required me to constantly interrogate the assumptions I brought into the work and the power dynamics within which I operated. At the same time, my roles offered unique analytic opportunities: the ability to observe how decisions get framed, how language is deployed in moments of institutional self-preservation, and how public processes can serve as symbolic gestures more than democratic instruments. These observations—whether in a sparsely attended public hearing or a closed-door procedural negotiation—became sites of insight, not simply field notes.

Through these roles, I observed how agendas were constructed, who had voice in official deliberations, and how civic narratives were deployed to organize political consensus. This access allowed me to witness the mechanics of governance as they were molded and unfolded—not only during headline moments, but across the slower, more routine dimensions of institutional life. I gained insights into how decisions are framed before they reach public view, how internal negotiations shape the boundaries of policy conversation, and how language is crafted to meet administrative, political, and legal expectations.

This position also enabled an examination of what might be called the "subterranean life" of institutions: the informal practices, coded language, and bureaucratic norms that rarely appear in public-facing documents but hold considerable influence over how decisions are made[3]. These

[3] See Michael Lipsky's *Street Level Bureaucracy (1980),* James Scott's *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts (1990),* or Watts et al. *Subterranean Estates: Life Worlds of Oil & Gas (2015)* Similar to Robert Merton's concepts of *latent* and *manifest* function, the subterranean life of institutions often exerts more influence

informal currents often revealed as much about institutional logic as formal rules did. They shaped what was considered feasible, which critiques gained traction, and how dissent was neutralized through proceduralism. The proximity to these dynamics allowed for a reading of governance that moved beyond the textual and into the behavioral.

The ethics of documentation in this context were shaped not only by IRB protocols but by the social fabric of Madison itself. Madison is often described as a city with a "small-town" affect, especially within its senior government ranks and community leadership infrastructure. Over the course of this research, I engaged in ongoing, iterative dialogue with many of the same individuals—planners, department heads, alders, nonprofit executives, and longtime city staff—often multiple times a week. These conversations were informal but substantive, and they formed the basis for a kind of longitudinal relationship-based data that defies the tidy boundaries of formal interviews or episodic transcription.

The anonymous meetings cited in the reference list represent only a subset of the full dialogic and observational landscape. They were chosen for their salience, not their exclusivity. In truth, most insights presented across the three tracks are the product of hundreds of such moments—small conversations before or after committee meetings, comments made during redistricting sessions, follow-up emails, or reflective conversations in the margins of public work. The project’s rigor, in this sense, emerges not from rigid documentation but from embedded continuity and triangulated sensemaking across time, roles, and institutional logics.

---

over outcomes than the formal structure alone. In project, I use it to analyze the gap between how institutions present themselves and how they actually operate—especially in relation to equity, access, participation, and power. This subterranean life of institutions, while rarely documented, is where much of the practical governance of exclusion and exception is enacted. Understanding this dimension was critical to tracing how power operates through routine action than exclusively through public policy, or conventional policy apparatus. Also, Jack Kerouac.

Finally, while it is fair to question the inclusion of interviews or observational data collected over a decade ago, it is also important to recognize Madison's institutional continuity. The inclusion of interviews and observational data from earlier phases of work may invite questions about temporal distance, however the decision to retain that material is grounded in the particular character of Madison's institutional landscape. Many of the individuals who participated in early conversations—especially during my initial analysis during my earliest graduate studies—continue to serve in leadership roles across city government, public agencies, and the nonprofit sector. The stability of personnel, and the long half-life of policy discourse in this context, have created conditions where earlier insights remain relevant to the present institutional environment.

This continuity has been especially visible across key equity initiatives, including the 2013 and 2023 Race to Equity reports and the 2019 and 2025 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing. I had access to these projects from their formative stages through their public release and observed how the ideas they surfaced moved—or stalled—across formal and informal institutional channels. My engagement was not limited to episodic interviews or isolated public comments. It extended across committee work, interdepartmental meetings, policy drafting conversations, and informal discussions—often with the same individuals in different roles or settings over time. These repeated encounters provided a layered view into how civic priorities were framed, contested, or reframed in practice.

The value of this embedded perspective lies in its longitudinal scope. By participating in recurring conversations across multiple settings—public hearings, advisory committees, staff meetings, community forums, and informal exchanges—I was able to observe how ideas evolved, how organizational memory was sustained or disrupted, and how particular narratives

gained or lost influence depending on political context. These cumulative interactions shaped my understanding of institutional behavior not through any single moment of insight, but through the patterns that became visible over time. This orientation to institutional continuity and temporality of observation informs how data is used throughout the dissertation: as part of a broader effort to understand governance as an unfolding and often recursive process. The project design itself reflects this embeddedness. Rather than isolate method from theory or theory from politics, this dissertation situates the researcher within the institutional terrain it critiques. It does not claim objectivity. It claims accountability—to the communities affected by institutional disparities, to the ethical responsibilities of embedded research, and to the obligation to interrogate one's own position within systems of power.

Limitations on Method

As with any project rooted in grounded, practice-based research, this dissertation carries a set of limitations—some logistical, others conceptual. These limitations do not undermine the validity of the findings, but they do shape the boundaries of their generalizability and the formal documentation of certain claims.

First, the minimal risk IRB-approved for conducting research within Madison's professional and civic ecosystem enabled a different calculus. Many of the individuals whose insights informed this dissertation currently work in senior roles within city government or affiliated institutions. Attempting to "go on record," or to formalize conversations through consent forms and recorded interviews, would have introduced an unnecessary layer of exposure and risk—not for me, but for them. It also would have altered the nature of the conversations themselves, which were often candid, nuanced, and predicated on long-standing professional relationships. This is a small town

in many ways, and there is simply no value in creating adversarial conditions under the banner of methodological purity—particularly not if I intend to continue working in this town after the dissertation is filed.

Second, the project does not include software-based coding or digital transcription tools like MAXQDA, despite their inclusion in the original proposal. This omission is not a reflection of analytic neglect, but of adaptive capacity. The work was conducted under time and institutional constraints, and the data—ranging from field memos to policy documents to real-time committee discourse—did not conform to tidy coding schemes. The project's analytic value lies not in the abstraction of textual fragments, but in the pattern recognition and synthesis that emerged through manual memoing, cross-case comparison, and repeated engagement with local governance systems over time.

Third, the findings presented here are not meant to be universally generalizable. Madison is not "any city." Its racial demographics, governance structure, political culture, and institutional histories make it a distinct case. But Madison is also not *so* unique that its patterns hold no relevance elsewhere. Many mid-sized cities—especially those with progressive self-conceptions and deep structural inequities, especially Capital cities that are home to flagship university campuses ("Charlie Alpha" is how I refer to these cities)—will recognize the contradictions this work exposes. The intent is not to prescribe policy but to illuminate systems, to offer frameworks for understanding institutional behavior, and to pose questions about power, process, and exclusion that transcend city limits.

Finally, some may find the dissertation's theoretical range overwhelming—an "array" of frameworks that spans political theory, urban sociology, critical planning, and economic history.

This range was not the product of undisciplined accumulation, but of necessity. The complexity of the subject—racialized disparities sustained through land use, planning, governance, and administrative discourse—demanded an equally complex set of tools. Each theorist engaged—whether Foucault, Bourdieu, Wacquant, Piketty, or Young—was selected to answer a specific analytical problem posed within the corresponding track. Their inclusion was not ornamental, but functional: to offer conceptual clarity on issues like symbolic power, procedural fragmentation, state violence, and the political economy of exclusion. The theoretical density reflects the structural entanglement of the systems under review. It is not a limitation of coherence—it is a reflection of the field's complexity.

What the project may lack in the contemporary trappings of qualitative research—such as software-driven coding schemes or formalized interview protocols—it offsets through depth of field, sustained presence, and methodological responsiveness. The analysis extends beyond surface-level policy language by tracing how historical zoning overlays re-emerge in modern development debates, and how institutional logics persist even as actors or terms change. Its longitudinal scope reflects years of direct engagement: I attended nearly a hundred public meetings of the Task Force on Government Structure, co-chaired multiple subcommittees, and held executive roles within Madison's board and commission ecosystem. This continuity made it possible to track rhetorical shifts, procedural recalibrations, and patterns of civic inclusion and exclusion that would be difficult to detect through short-term engagement. The research process also remained flexible in response to institutional constraints. When formal interviews risked undermining professional trust or compromising confidentiality, I shifted to protected, anonymized conversations. When digital coding software proved ill-suited to the texture and volume of documents and field notes, I relied on manual memoing, cross-referencing, and

iterative analysis. These were not deviations from a plan—they were responsive adaptations shaped by the demands of the institutional environment and the ethical stakes of embedded research.

Interstitial: Organization & Structure

This dissertation is structured as a three-track project, with each Track exploring a distinct but interconnected dimension of how racial disparities are spatialized, sustained and rationalized through Madison's civic and institutional logics. The format allows for differentiated theoretical and empirical emphasis while building toward a shared argument: that exclusion in Madison is not accidental or anomalous, but embedded in the logics that mediate land, policy, and participation While each Track Is designed to stand on its own, together they form a comprehensive narrative about the governance of inequality—how it is built, maintained, and naturalized across time and system.

Track I focuses on the historical production of spatial exclusion. Through archival research, public documents, and zoning histories, it traces how practices like racial covenants, redlining, and neighborhood planning created a geography of unequal access—then examines how these logics persist in contemporary land use decisions.. Track I situates Madison within broader histories of racial capitalism and housing discrimination, while grounding the analysis in local institutional behavior, including that of neighborhood associations, planning commissions, and the real estate industry..

Track II builds on this foundation to theorize racial disparity as a form of state-imposed violence. Drawing from critical theory, public health, and neuroscience, it examines how institutional procedures—though formally neutral—can produce enduring effects on bodies, families, and

communities. The Track connects spatial inequality to early life adversity, and explores how fragmented governance systems contribute to the reproduction of toxic stress, civic exclusion, and constrained developmental environments. This section frames violence as administrative, incremental, procedural, and embedded within the ordinary discourse of policy. Track III turns to the architecture of governance. Using firsthand experience across more than 200 meetings, it analyzes how Madison's political structure diffuses responsibility, routinizes inclusion, and limits the transformative potential of participation. It assesses the procedural aesthetics of civic life—hearings, advisory committees, community engagement sessions—and the way they absorb conflict while maintaining institutional continuity. The three tracks together provide a multi-scalar view of how inequality is managed over time: through rules and rituals, documents and discourses, systems and silences. Each Track can stand alone analytically, but their interdependence offers a more complete picture of how disparity becomes organized through governance.

Intervention: Why Housing, Why a Mixtape?

The title of this dissertation, *The Housing Mixtape*, is both intentional and unconventional. It signals a project that resists the linear, siloed logic that often defines academic and policy analysis. A mixtape is layered, recursive, and associative. It is curated with intention, but its meaning emerges through juxtaposition, theme, and shared context. In choosing this title, I draw on a form that privileges narrative complexity, blends registers of voice and discipline, and allows multiple stories to play alongside each other without collapsing them into a singular storyline.

The mixtape metaphor also speaks to the personal and political structure of the project. Like a mixtape, this dissertation is built from tracks--papers, reflections, theoretical movements, spatial

histories, and institutional case studies—that together create a larger affective and analytic composition. Each component operates independently but contributes to the cumulative argument. Each Track Isolates a key system—land use, violence, governance—but together they reveal the interdependence of spatial exclusion, bureaucratic harm, and institutional design. The mixtape allows for this kind of multiplicity, creating space for dissonance, repetition, and thematic return without forcing premature synthesis.

The use of the word “housing” in the title is equally strategic. While the project engages deeply with the built environment, it does not focus narrowly on housing policy in the conventional sense. There is no formal treatment of inclusionary zoning models, rent stabilization programs, LIHTC structures, Section 8 and other IRS designations, or housing finance systems. This absence is deliberate. The project takes the position that spatial exclusion—and its attendant racial and economic hierarchies—cannot be understood or addressed through housing policy alone. The structures that segregate cities are not confined to housing ordinances or real estate transactions. They are embedded in how cities define problems, structure participation, allocate legitimacy, and narrate their own institutional behavior.

Segregation, in this frame, is not simply a residential condition—it is a function of how cities govern. It is expressed through school siting, transit routing, capital budgeting, committee structure, and discursive framing. It operates at the intersection of what is built, what is funded, what is permitted, and what is rendered politically invisible. The HOLC maps didn’t *create* segregation; they are a manifestation of an already active and organized political economy of exclusion—one driven by developers, financiers, and public officials and a civic culture whose beliefs and practices had long structured access to land and credit. Focusing narrowly on housing

as a policy arena risks masking these wider systems and treating symptoms as causes. It encourages interventions that may redistribute units without disrupting the frameworks that assign racial and economic value to space in the first place.

The mixtape format offers an alternative. It makes room for a broader and more integrated analysis of spatial injustice—one that refuses to treat housing as a discrete domain. Instead, the project underscores a core belief I would argue: that efforts to reverse segregation and repair racialized spatial harm must contend with the full architecture of governance—not only where people live, but how cities imagine, authorize, and institutionalize their futures.

Scope: Limitations and Contribution

While Madison is the empirical focus of this dissertation, the questions that animate it extend far beyond city limits. Madison is a mid-sized American city with a strong civic identity, a reputation for progressive governance, and a dense infrastructure of public institutions, nonprofit actors, and participatory mechanisms. In many ways, it reflects the broader self-image of cities that see themselves as both capable and committed—places where disparities are acknowledged and addressed through planning, public investment, and engagement. Yet, as this project shows, the very structures that make a city appear responsive can also reinforce the conditions they claim to dismantle. In this sense, Madison serves not as an outlier, but as a revealing case—a site where the contradictions of American urban governance are rendered unusually legible.

The analytic frameworks developed here are therefore relevant to a broader set of urban contexts, especially those cities that pair institutional stability with enduring racial and economic inequality. The project does not seek to generalize in the conventional sense, nor to claim universal applicability. Instead, it offers transferable tools of analysis: ways of reading policy

documents as discursive artifacts, understanding planning as a form of institutional memory, and interpreting governance structures as both procedural mechanisms and symbolic forms. These tools can be adapted and applied by scholars, practitioners, and residents in other cities seeking to interrogate the systems that stabilize disparity beneath the language of reform.

The dissertation contributes to several bodies of academic work. In critical planning theory, it offers a historically grounded, institutionally embedded analysis of how spatial injustice is produced through bureaucratic form and administrative reasoning. It challenges the separation of "technical" and "political" dimensions of planning by showing how racial exclusion is reproduced through routine procedures—planning procedures---often under the banner of neutrality, data, or public engagement. The project calls for a planning discourse that confronts the lived consequences of spatial policy and attends to the genealogies of exclusion embedded in land use and urban form; in this case structures of government, specifically.

In the field of interpretive policy analysis, the project advances a methodological approach that treats policy not only as a set of decisions but as a cultural practice. By analyzing meeting minutes, planning documents, and public testimony through the lenses of discourse and institutional narrative, it demonstrates how meaning is made, contested, and stabilized within governance systems. The research shows how disparity persists not only through gaps in implementation, but through the very ways that problems are defined, actors are authorized, and evidence is constructed.

In urban governance studies, the project contributes a grounded examination of how participatory structures can diffuse responsibility, constrain accountability, and manage public dissatisfaction without disrupting the distribution of power. It offers an empirical account of how

institutional design shapes democratic possibility—and how procedural equity can mask structural reproduction. Rather than treat governance as a neutral infrastructure, the project reads it as a political technology with its own normative logic, affective force, and historical inertia.

Finally, this is not a prescriptive project. Readers will not find deep evidence for the claims made rather, my hope is to convince readers of the strength of my claims by demonstrating the reasoning behind a few of the claims I make. This work does not offer a model, a solution, or a roadmap. It offers an interpretation from a perspective informed by my interest in the theories — a slow reading of how cities like Madison maintain inequality while declaring opposition to it. It is diagnostic rather than programmatic, grounded in proximity, and shaped by the belief that understanding how exclusion is organized is a necessary precondition to any meaningful disruption of it. If there is a contribution beyond theory or case analysis, it lies in that stance: to take governance seriously, not just for what it promises, but for what it protects.

Into the Sun: Transition to Tracks I, II, and III

This project began with a question about racial disparities in Madison and evolved into an inquiry about how cities organize exclusion through systems that appear neutral, participatory, and well-intentioned. It follows a rhythm of thinking that refuses to isolate causes or assume dysfunction or even singular malicious intent. Instead, it traces how inequality and disparities persist through structures that are coherent, routinized, and largely unchallenged—because they are familiar, procedural, or professionally justified.

Across the tracks that follow, the dissertation builds an argument that is neither linear nor prescriptive, but layered and recursive—much like the mixtape that gives the project its name. Each component enters from a different angle: one through historical spatial governance, one

through institutional and embodied violence, and one through civic form and procedural constraint. Together, they offer a composite analysis of how disparity becomes embedded—not simply in land or policy, but in how cities think, plan, govern, and remember.

This is not a roadmap to equity, or the path to mitigate disparities. It is an effort to name what stands in our way in these endeavors. It is grounded in Madison, but it speaks to other cities with similar civic vocabularies—places that use the language of justice without restructuring the systems that reproduce harm. My commitment throughout the project is not to neutrality, but to diagnosis.

What follows is an invitation to read across form, scale, and system. The tracks are not discrete in their concerns. They loop, they echo, they revisit. They ask what cities mean when they say equity—and what must be made legible, dislodged, or abandoned for that promise to become structurally possible.

Track I: Institutional Memories and the Geography of Exclusion

Abstract

This track examines how racial disparities in Madison, Wisconsin, have been actively produced and sustained through spatial governance mechanisms spanning from the city's founding to the present. Rather than treating segregation as a vestige of outdated policies, the analysis reframes it as a durable system of exclusion operationalized through land use planning, zoning, racial covenants, redlining, infrastructure development, and urban renewal. Drawing from archival research, interdisciplinary theory, and local planning histories, the track explores how Madison's spatial form encodes racial hierarchy into its geography. It demonstrates how state action, inaction, and market-driven planning combined to create the conditions for enduring educational, economic, and civic inequality. This historical narrative grounds the broader dissertation project and provides an essential foundation for understanding how structural violence is embedded in the built environment.

Keywords

Segregation, peripheralization, spatial governance, racial covenants, redlining, zoning, urban renewal, land use, structural violence, planning history, civic exclusion, racial disparities

Introduction

Madison, Wisconsin—a city widely regarded for its progressive ideals and civic engagement—remains burdened by some of the starkest racial and economic disparities in the United States. These disparities, visible in housing, educational outcomes, employment, health, and political

representation, are often framed as the unfortunate legacies of a past era. Yet, this track contends that such disparities are not residual, but actively produced and reproduced through a deeply embedded spatial governance regime.

This track uses Madison as a case study to interrogate how racialized exclusion has been engineered across time, through a layered interaction between formal policies, informal practices, market dynamics, and institutional choices. Drawing from archival materials, planning theory, and the interdisciplinary urban histories of scholars such as Paige Glotzer (2020), Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor (2019), Rebecca Marchiel (2021), and Beryl Satter (2009), the track argues that the architecture of urban inequality in Madison is neither accidental nor self-correcting. It is infrastructural, intentional, and adaptive.

While many urban histories emphasize episodic shifts—redlining, zoning, urban renewal—this Track traces the continuity of exclusion. It begins with Indigenous dispossession and the settler capitalist foundations of Madison's land market, moves through the moralized aesthetics of City Beautiful planning and the legal enforcement of racially restrictive covenants, and examines the codification of exclusion through zoning, redlining, and urban renewal. These systems, it shows, were not only spatial but epistemic: they shaped not only who lived where, but who was understood to belong in the city's civic and economic future.

The methodology centers historical spatial analysis with an emphasis on the distinction between "policy" and "practice. Theoretical frames such as structural and state-imposed violence are used to understand how spatial exclusions translated into civic, economic, and educational

dispossession. The project also utilizes the concept of "peripheralization" to describe how disinvestment and displacement occurred not through physical distance alone, but through a durable pattern of resource withdrawal, representational exclusion, and administrative erasure. In this way I extend the concept articulated by Kühn (2015), applying it to the socio-spatial exclusions visible throughout Madison's planning and land-use history.[4]

Ultimately, this track aims not simply to document how segregation happened, but to challenge dominant narratives about Madison's exceptionalism. It argues that understanding the city's persistent racial and economic disparities requires more than policy reform or inclusionary rhetoric. It demands a reckoning with the built and bureaucratic systems that stabilized exclusion—and a commitment to reimagining land use, governance, and democratic participation as instruments of repair.

Methodological and Conceptual Framing

Track I engages in a historically grounded, interdisciplinary inquiry that blends methods from urban planning, critical geography, and social history. Drawing from archival records, local policy histories, cartographic analysis, and planning theory, Track I draws on a mixed set of historical, spatial, and discursive sources to examine how Madison's land use, zoning, and housing practices contributed to enduring patterns of racial and spatial exclusion. The

[4] In his theoretical synthesis, Kühn (2015) defines *peripheralization* as a multidimensional process by which certain regions or populations become structurally marginalized across economic, social, political, and discursive domains. Unlike simple geographic remoteness, peripheralization is not defined by distance but by systematic withdrawal of investment, erosion of institutional access, and the symbolic devaluation of place. Kühn identifies four mechanisms of peripheralization: (1) disconnection from economic core processes; (2) selective outmigration of capital and human resources; (3) stigmatization through public and media discourse; and (4) reduced institutional representation. This framework aligns closely with Madison's urban history. Neighborhoods like Allied Drive, Darbo-Worthington, and Truax, for example, exhibit precisely these traits—isolated not just by physical layout but by cumulative disinvestment, limited political leverage, and discursive coding as "problem areas." Applying Kühn's framework makes clear that Madison's racial-spatial hierarchy is not only a matter of segregation, but of enforced marginality—an intentional process of *peripheralization* through planning, governance, and discourse.

methodological approach follows the constructivist, embedded research orientation outlined in the Executive Summary: knowledge was developed through immersion, longitudinal field engagement, archival review, and iterative synthesis across public documents and planning artifacts.

Primary sources consulted in this analysis include City of Madison zoning ordinances (1920s – 2020s)[5], subdivision plats recorded with the Dane County Register of Deeds (esp. 1910s – 1950s), historic land use maps archived at the Wisconsin Historical Society (e.g. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1885 – 1950)[6], and planning documents produced by the Madison Housing Authority[7]. Common Council meeting minutes and Plan Commission records (2013–2025) were

[5] For historical reference, see City of Madison General Ordinances, Chapter 28 (City of Madison, 2009a), which consolidates zoning codes revised through 2024 but rooted in Madison's original 1923 zoning framework. See also the Zoning Code Analysis (City of Madison, 2009b), which provides detailed planning rationales, structural changes, and contextual background that illuminate how current land use regulations have evolved from—yet continue to reflect—the logics of early exclusionary practices.

[6] Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, produced between 1885 and 1950 for Madison, offer a granular view of the city's built environment during key phases of its spatial and political development. These maps document building materials, land use, lot boundaries, infrastructure access, and proximity to industrial or hazardous sites—critical variables in understanding how early city form was linked to institutional perceptions of risk, value, and social desirability. Reviewed in conjunction with zoning ordinances, subdivision plats, and later HOLC documents, the Sanborn maps reveal how material infrastructure encoded social hierarchies long before federal redlining formalized them. For instance, the 1909 and 1922 editions show clear investment patterns in emerging elite neighborhoods such as University Heights and Dudgeon-Monroe, characterized by larger lots, stone or brick construction, and early access to municipal utilities. In contrast, maps of South Madison and the Greenbush neighborhood depict smaller wood-frame housing, irregular lot configurations, and adjacency to rail lines or industrial uses—features later cited in redlining assessments and urban renewal justifications.

These cartographic records offer insight into what Loïc Wacquant (2008) calls the spatial production of marginality, and serve as visual evidence of what Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor (2019) and Beryl Satter (2009) describe as the moral and financial devaluation of Black and immigrant neighborhoods under the guise of market rationality. In the Madison context, the Sanborn maps are especially revealing when examined alongside the zoning overlays of the 1920s and the Madison Housing Authority's postwar planning documents. Their detail enables comparative analysis across time and place, illuminating how exclusion was stabilized through both the symbolic language of planning and the physical layout of the city. The continued infrastructure disparities visible today—such as sidewalk gaps in Owl Creek or the disrepair of Allied Drive—trace directly back to early 20th-century patterns of infrastructure prioritization recorded in these maps. In this way, Sanborn's cartography becomes a historical artifact not of fire risk alone, but of city-sanctioned spatial sorting

[7] Planning materials produced by the Madison Housing Authority, including annual reports, site development plans, and interagency memoranda, provide valuable insights into how housing policy operated as both a spatial and

reviewed via the City of Madison's Legistar system, with particular attention to debates over urban renewal, zoning reform, and site selection for public housing. Historical planning materials produced by the Madison Housing Authority (1940s–1970s) were also consulted, including planning reports and administrative documents housed at the Wisconsin Historical Society Archives [Accessed via Urban Planning collections, Madison, WI].

This archival base was supplemented by publications from the Wisconsin REALTORS Association, such as the Wisconsin REALTORS ® magazine (1940s – 1960s), which offered insight into professional discourse around neighborhood stability and market desirability.[8]

---

procedural instrument of exclusion. These documents—most of which are housed in the Wisconsin Historical Society's urban planning archives—detail the Authority's decision-making around project siting, tenant screening, and collaboration with federal housing programs. While many postwar materials remain undigitized or inconsistently catalogued, reviewed content from the 1940s through the 1970s reveals patterns consistent with national housing trends: subsidized housing was routinely sited in infrastructurally marginal or environmentally burdened areas, often justified by land cost, "compatibility," or political expediency. Public housing in Madison was rarely placed near major employment nodes, high-performing schools, or transit-rich corridors—effectively reinforcing spatial isolation.

These operational practices mirror findings by Rhonda Y. Williams (2004) and Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor (2019), who describe how public housing served not as a bridge to opportunity but as a containment mechanism shaped by racialized governance. In Madison, archival materials suggest that early decisions by the Housing Authority were aligned with broader planning logics that deprioritized integration, mobility, and resource access for BIPOC residents. The siting of developments such as Brittingham Place and Truax Park, for example, reflects the tendency to concentrate affordable housing at the geographic and infrastructural periphery of civic life. These decisions, though rarely framed as exclusionary, contributed to the long-term marginalization of low-income communities and laid the groundwork for spatial disparities that persist today.

[8] The *Wisconsin REALTOR*® magazine, a professional publication of the Wisconsin REALTORS® Association, offers key insight into the racialized logics of housing discourse in mid-20th-century Wisconsin. In particular, the June 1948 issue includes an article titled "Maintaining Neighborhood Stability: A Professional Obligation," which encourages real estate agents to guide prospective buyers toward areas in keeping with the long-term character of the neighborhood. While framed in economic language, the phrase "neighborhood stability" functioned as coded guidance for racial exclusion, warning against integration as a perceived threat to property values. Similar rhetoric—centered on "community continuity," "protection of investment," and "buyer compatibility"—appeared regularly in Realtor publications during the 1940s through the 1960s, shaping not only private practice but also local land use expectations and planning norms.

As Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor (2019) and Paige Glotzer (2020) both demonstrate, such industry publications were central to the racialization of market logic, offering a professionalized veneer to exclusionary practice. In Madison, these magazines were distributed through local boards and reinforced the city's alignment with broader patterns of white suburban formation and racial steering. The language used in Realtor bulletins overlaps significantly with the terms seen in zoning appeals, neighborhood plans, and Planning Commission debates from the same period—illustrating how informal market ideologies influenced formal administrative decisions. These publications helped

Additional source materials included the Darbo-Worthington Neighborhood Plan (1922), the Allied Drive Strategic Plan (2000), the Oscar Meyer Special Area Plan (2020), the South Madison Plan (2022), all of which were accessed through the City of Madison Planning Division. These sources were triangulated with contemporaneous coverage in *The Capital Times* and *Wisconsin State Journal* to reconstruct institutional narratives, political framing and administrative priorities. In cases were archival records were incomplete, city planning documents were cross-referenced with federal program guidelines and consultant reports archived by the Redevelopment Authority for the City of Madison (RACM; 1950's – 1970s)[9] to trace decision-making processes and procedural intent[10]

construct a shared vocabulary of exclusion that persisted even after overt discrimination was made illegal, embedding racial logics into the practice of valuation, risk, and development.

[9] The Redevelopment Authority of the City of Madison (RACM), established under Wisconsin's 1951 Urban Redevelopment Act, served as the principal entity executing federally supported land clearance and renewal programs during the mid-20th century. Redevelopment plans from the 1950s to the 1970s—such as the *Greenbush Redevelopment Project Final Report* (ca. 1962)—provide clear evidence of how racialized planning rationales were institutionalized through the language of blight, safety, and economic modernization. These reports framed predominantly immigrant and BIPOC neighborhoods as "obsolete," "transitional," or "underutilized," justifying widespread displacement and land reallocation for hospital expansion, civic buildings, and commercial use. Although redevelopment plans claimed to improve quality of life, they rarely included provisions for community return, affordability preservation, or cultural continuity.

These planning materials underscore what Arnold Hirsch (1998) calls the "second ghetto"—a coordinated process of racialized displacement under liberal civic reform. In the Madison case, the Greenbush project displaced nearly 1,200 residents, the vast majority of whom were Italian, Black, or Jewish, with relocation strategies that fragmented long-standing community ties. Internal memoranda and consultant recommendations reveal how state mechanisms partnered with city planners to operationalize exclusion under the guise of revitalization. Viewed through the lens of state-imposed violence and spatial erasure, these redevelopment plans form a central empirical link between formal planning and dispossession—reinforcing the broader thesis of Track I.

[10] This list reflects the categories of materials reviewed over several years of embedded research on Madison's spatial governance. Due to the loss of metadata stored in a third-party citation management platform, specific call numbers or titles for some archival documents cannot be retrieved within the dissertation timeframe. Nevertheless, all sources listed above were accessed through publicly available repositories—including the Wisconsin Historical Society, the City of Madison Legistar system, and the City of Madison Planning Division—or exist in verifiable public record (e.g., newspapers, zoning codes, consultant reports). Selected examples are documented in the appendices, and all claims are derived from direct engagement with those materials.

Patterns were identified through close reading, and thematic clustering. Particular attention was paid to how racialized language—both explicit and coded—surfaced in planning documents and how procedural rationales were used to normalize segregation. Embedded roles within Madison's governance landscape—such as participation in zoning reform, BCC subcommittees, and public housing consultations—provided additional insight into how historical logics persist in institutional behavior. This blend of archival and embedded data forms the foundation for understanding how exclusion was not only spatialized, but institutionalized through planning discourse, administrative practice, and civic narrative.

Specifically, As part of the analytic process, I developed a set of memos and cross-document annotations to trace the reproduction of exclusionary planning logic across time. For example, in reviewing the 1922 and 1942 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for South Madison, Greenbush, and the Darbo area, I flagged recurring spatial indicators—wood-frame housing, industrial adjacency, irregular lot sizes—that were later cited in federal HOLC assessments and local redevelopment plans as proxies for blight or instability. These conditions existed decades before the city's BIPOC population significantly expanded, underscoring how exclusionary logics were built into the physical and discursive landscape well in advance of explicit racial policy. I annotated these findings against the *Greenbush Redevelopment Project Final Report* (1962), noting how that plan justified clearance based on "underutilization" and "neighborhood renewal potential," with no guaranteed return pathways for displaced residents. Contemporary neighborhood plans—such as the *Darbo-Worthington Neighborhood Plan* (1992) and *Oscar Mayer Special Area Plan* (2020)—rely on similar language of "opportunity areas" and "targeted reinvestment," often absent of historical reckoning. The memoing process revealed a persistent

procedural vocabulary in Madison's planning discourse, where investment decisions and civic narratives converge to manage inequality without directly confronting its spatial origins

The distinction between *policy* and *practice* is used throughout this track to examine how well-meaning or seemingly neutral laws and regulations translate into exclusionary outcomes. Many examples throughout this track demonstrate how codified policies—such as zoning ordinances or housing authority procedures—may not explicitly reference race or class, but when filtered through real estate practices, financing norms, or administrative discretion, result in racially segregated or spatially unjust outcomes. The distinction is particularly important in understanding how exclusion continues even in the absence of overtly discriminatory intent.

Similarly, while racial *segregation* remains a powerful framework for understanding the persistence of racial inequality in cities, this track makes a case for extending our analytical frame to include what I call *peripheralization*. This concept reflects the idea that racialized populations in Madison have not only been segregated from access to public goods and housing opportunity but have been actively placed at the margins of decision-making, political voice, and spatial centrality. It is a logic of structural removal—placing people at the edge of both space and power—rather than simple racial separation. This framing builds upon work by Wacquant (2008), Kühn (2015), Marchiel (2021), and others who have explored how stigmatization and marginalization operate in tandem with political exclusion.[11]

[11] Wacquant (2008), Kühn (2015), and Marchiel (2021) each contribute critical frameworks for understanding how spatial marginality and political exclusion are co-produced and institutionalized. Wacquant's concept of territorial stigmatization highlights how neighborhoods become marked as deviant or deficient through coordinated discursive and institutional action, leading to targeted policing, disinvestment, and civic disenfranchisement. Kühn introduces the idea of *peripheralization* as a structural process in which neighborhoods are distanced—not necessarily geographically, but administratively and representationally—from the flows of capital, infrastructure, and policy influence. Marchiel shows how the language of stability and financial stewardship served as a post-redlining mechanism to maintain white middle-class exclusivity through local governance structures and planning discourse.

This work was deeply shaped by the work of Paige Glotzer, whose archival reconstruction of elite real estate networks in *How the Suburbs Were Segregated* provided both a methodological model and a conceptual vocabulary for this project. Her concept of "the business of exclusionary housing" refers to the historically coordinated, though often informally aligned, efforts by real estate developers, financial institutions, and civic leaders to normalize racial segregation through land-use decisions, private deed restrictions, and public planning discourse. Glotzer shows how housing development became a vehicle for embedding racial hierarchies into suburban landscapes—particularly through elite networks that spanned public-private boundaries and relied on professional codes, aesthetic ideals, and market-based logic to frame segregation as stability. In the Madison context, this framework helps illuminate how land use decisions—such as the strategic deployment of streetcar lines, aesthetic zoning overlays, and subdivision approvals—often served dual purposes: advancing economic interests and reinforcing the demographic boundaries of political legitimacy and property ownership.

Glotzer's work not only introduced me to scholars like Rebecca Marchiel and Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, but also shifted the way I understood the role of discourse, informal professional networks, and bureaucratic routines in producing racialized space. Taylor's analysis, particularly her concept of the "illusion of inclusion," helped me name the postwar dynamic in which symbolic civic investments—often made through public-private partnerships or federal housing initiatives—gave the appearance of racial progress while reinforcing underlying

---

These insights help contextualize Madison's governance history, where neighborhoods like Darbo-Worthington, Allied Drive, and South Madison were discursively framed as zones of concern, risk, or decline. In these areas, exclusion has operated both spatially—through land use, zoning, and housing policy—and politically, through representational deficits in neighborhood planning, funding allocation, and formal governance. The themes developed by these scholars directly inform Track I's analysis of how spatial inequity is sustained by both institutional practice and civic narrative.

structures of exclusion. Rather than dismantling segregation, these programs managed access under constrained and conditional terms, preserving market interests and institutional legitimacy at a time when overt discrimination had become publicly untenable. This framework is especially useful for understanding Madison's land use patterns, where zoning, infrastructure, and aesthetic regulation were deployed not only as technical solutions, but as tools for racial sorting and managed visibility. Taylor's insights clarified how apparent civic modernization could mask deeper processes of spatial containment and moral regulation—patterns that would become central to the argument of Track I.

Together, this methodology and conceptual framework provide a structure for analyzing how exclusion operates not as a vestige of past injustice, but as a system that is actively maintained through bureaucratic language, professional norms, and planning practices that appear neutral on their face. Track I aims to make those systems visible.

Foundations of Spatial Inequity: 1830s – 1900s

To understand the architecture of exclusion in Madison, we must begin with its founding—not only as a civic project but as a spatial and political endeavor that reflected settler colonial logics, speculative capitalism, and elite consolidation of land. The area now known as Madison sits on the ancestral lands of the Ho-Chunk people, who were forcibly removed through a series of treaties and coercive acts between the 1820s and 1830s. This history, though often erased from city planning narratives, represents the foundational moment of racialized spatial displacement in Madison's urban trajectory. As Glotzer (2020) and Campney (2015) argue, the racial ordering of American space began not with suburban redlining, but with the dispossession of Indigenous peoples.

James Duane Doty, the land speculator and future governor, exemplified this convergence of personal ambition and state formation. In 1836, Doty promoted the area between lakes Mendota and Monona as the future seat of the Wisconsin Territory, a campaign steeped in political patronage and private gain. Doty owned large swaths of land on the isthmus and lobbied the legislature to select it as the territorial capital, offering discounted parcels to lawmakers in what amounted to legalized bribery. As Margaret Bogue (1985) details in her regional history *Around the Shores of Lake Michigan* , this act of speculative manipulation was central to Madison's founding. While Bogue's work is descriptive in tone, it documents how Doty's speculative maneuvering—leveraging land titles and legislative influence—functioned as a foundational act of spatial governance. This early episode signals that land use in Madison was never ideologically neutral or apolitical. From the outset, space was constructed through mechanisms of power, profit, and manipulation. This speculative act set the tone for Madison's early development: land use was from the outset a function of power, profit, and spatial manipulation. As Glotzer (2020) emphasizes in her analysis of Baltimore and its developers, such speculative logics often laid the groundwork for exclusionary urban futures long before the formal zoning codes of the 20th Century emerged.

The implications of these decisions were not limited to institutional geography; they set a precedent for the social ordering of space through planning, infrastructure, and aesthetics. The establishment of the University of Wisconsin in 1848 further entrenched the centrality of land and knowledge production in shaping civic identity. Under John Bascom's presidency (1874–1887), the university cultivated a progressive public image, yet that ethos was not extended to

Madison's growing immigrant and Black populations, who remained physically and symbolically peripheral to the university's imagined civic ideal (Thelin, 2011).

Thus, even before the codification of racial exclusion in zoning and redlining, Madison's spatial form was already deeply shaped by inequitable access to land, decision-making power, and the symbolic capital attached to place. From the Ho-Chunk dispossession to Doty's land maneuvers to the early imprint of the university, Madison's nineteenth-century growth was neither organic nor benign. It was structured by layered exclusions—legal, economic, and epistemic—that set the conditions for the enduring disparities examined in the following sections.

Zoning, Streetcars, and City Beautiful: 1900 – 1930[12]

Nolen's Vision and the Politics of Aesthetic Control

John Nolen's 1911 plan for Madison is often celebrated for its environmental foresight and civic ambition. Yet its underlying logics were deeply exclusionary. Inspired by the City Beautiful movement, Nolen's vision fused aesthetics with moral order, embedding elite preferences for spacious boulevards, lakefront parks, and hierarchical land uses into the city's design. His planning ideals—shaped by Progressive Era anxieties about immigration, urban crowding, and

[12] While this section, and much of Track I more generally, traces the interplay of zoning ordinances, transit infrastructure, and planning aesthetics, it does not suggest a singular, coherent intent among actors or institutions. Rather, it reflects how multiple systems—sometimes overlapping, sometimes fragmented—converged in ways that reinforced racial and class-based spatial ordering. These forces often operated not through formal coordination but through shared assumptions, compatible logics, and demographic alignment. This pattern resembles the contemporary functioning of Madison's Boards, Commissions, and Committees (BCCs), where influence is not always wielded explicitly or hierarchically, but through procedural norms that advantage certain participants. In both historical and modern contexts, governance emerges less from unified design than from recursive decision-making shaped by who has access, fluency, and legitimacy within the institutional landscape.

disease—resonated with contemporaries who saw racial and class homogeneity as essential to civic health (Wilson, 1987; Shah, 2001).

While Nolen's blueprint emphasized beauty and cohesion, it also revealed profound demographic limitations rooted in his vision of "ideal" urban society. Nolen repeatedly argued that cities should remain small and well-ordered—ideally capped at populations between 30,000 to 50,000 residents—to maintain moral, social, and environmental health (Nolen, 1919). For him, larger cities risked moral degradation, overcrowding, and social disorder. This idealization of small-scale urbanism was rooted in aesthetic sensibilities as well as a preference for demographic control, reinforcing a vision of the city that prioritized order, exclusion, and social homogeneity at the expense of no/low-income residents, immigrants, and communities of color. His work shows how the pursuit of civic beauty was frequently entangled with restrictive visions of who belonged in a city, and how many. Nolen's aversion to growth was not simply about infrastructure; it was a strategy of social selection embedded in land use regulation, urban form, and planning discourse.

Early Zoning and the Codification of Exclusion

Madison's zoning laws, adopted in the 1920s[13], were directly informed by Nolen's plan and similar models from other cities, especially New York and Los Angeles. These ordinances were less about protecting residents from incompatible uses and more about preserving property values and excluding multifamily housing from desirable areas (Silver, 1997). As Freund (2010) and Glotzer (2020) note, early zoning was often modeled on racially restrictive covenants and

[13] As part of the 1923 Standard State Zoning Enabling Act, all US cities had to create zoning codes. Madison's was created in 1922 and updated in 1945 and again in 1966. This is widely known/cited in numerous publications and news articles, including Tarr w(2011); Garfield (2023); Garfield, (2023); Hiorns, (2023).

provided a legal mechanism for segregating space long after explicit racial zoning was ruled unconstitutional. In Madison, this translated into an increasingly rigid landscape where wealthier, whiter neighborhoods retained access to infrastructure, transit, and green space, while others were denied those investments.

Zoning in Madison functioned as a powerful mechanism of exclusion, particularly during the early-to-mid 20th century when residential development expanded in and around the near west and near east sides. Following the adoption of the city's first zoning code in the 1920s, single-family zoning quickly became a favored tool for reinforcing neighborhood exclusivity . On the near west side—home to some of the city's oldest and most stable white middle-class enclaves—zoning ordinances prevented the introduction of multi-family housing, thereby ensuring that only those who could afford single-family homes could settle there. Similar patterns emerged on the near east side, where historic districts and early deed restrictions helped consolidate a socioeconomically and racially homogenous population despite the area's proximity to downtown. These restrictions worked in tandem with mortgage discrimination and real estate steering to effectively block BIPOC families from accessing the amenities, schools, and transit infrastructure concentrated in these areas. As Glotzer (2020) and Freund (2010) argue in broader urban contexts, zoning was not simply a matter of orderly development—it was a racial project cloaked in legal neutrality. In Madison, it entrenched boundaries of privilege, giving spatial permanence to social hierarchies under the guise of land use regulation.

Streetcars, Infrastructure, and the Creation of Suburban Prototypes

Streetcar expansion in Madison during the early 20th century reinforced these emerging spatial divides. While ostensibly designed to connect the city, the routes favored neighborhoods

adjacent to the university and Capitol, facilitating speculative development and rising property values in these areas. As Logan and Molotch (2007) argue, infrastructure development is never neutral—it is a political instrument of growth coalitions. In Madison, streetcar lines helped form the spatial prototype for de facto suburbanization: areas physically within the city but functionally and demographically insulated from working-class and BIPOC communities.

The alignment of Madison's original streetcar routes provides a spatial blueprint for the city's enduring socioeconomic hierarchy. From Union Corners on the East Side, streetcar lines ran along Milwaukee Street and Atwood Avenue before converging on the Isthmus via Jenifer Street and Johnson Street. These lines looped through Capitol Square and then fanned west along State Street and Main Street, connecting to neighborhoods such as Dudgeon-Monroe, Shorewood Hills, Regent, Vilas, and eventually Forest Hill Cemetery via Monroe Street. Another branch moved south through the Greenbush neighborhood and into Bay Creek and Olin Park. These routes prioritized access to the university, Capitol, and downtown economic core while bypassing areas that would later become home to the city's lower-income and BIPOC populations.

The effect was not simply improved transportation for central neighborhoods; it was an infrastructure of privilege. The near east and near west sides became magnets for white middle- and upper-class residents, drawn by enhanced mobility, access to jobs, and proximity to cultural amenities.(Lothes, 2013) This transit-fueled land speculation, coupled with racially restrictive covenants and later zoning ordinances, priced out many potential residents and consolidated racial and economic homogeneity in these areas. These neighborhoods—Tenney-Lapham, Marquette, Dudgeon-Monroe, Westmorland, and others—remain among Madison's most

desirable and exclusive, reflecting a land value hierarchy established over a century ago. (East Side History Madison's Blog, 2009)

Meanwhile, neighborhoods beyond the reach of the original streetcar system were left with fewer transportation options, contributing to their spatial and economic marginalization. This historical geography of mobility persists: areas that once enjoyed streetcar access continue to benefit from robust transit infrastructure, while peripheralized neighborhoods experience longer commute times, reduced service frequency, and limited economic connectivity. The original geography of the streetcar network continues to mirror the geography of political and economic capital in Madison, defining both where people live as well as how they access opportunity.

This infrastructure legacy also influences the politics of density and development today. In many of the historically streetcar-served neighborhoods, proposals for low-income or high-density housing are met with vocal resistance. Despite their walkability and access to transit, these areas are often framed as inappropriate for affordable development, revealing how historical investments in connectivity now serve to defend exclusivity. By contrast, peripheral neighborhoods—already burdened with fewer services and lower land values—are often targeted for the very kinds of development that more affluent areas successfully resist. Thus, the spatial logic of the streetcar era continues to guide where Madison grows, who benefits, and who remains on the margins.

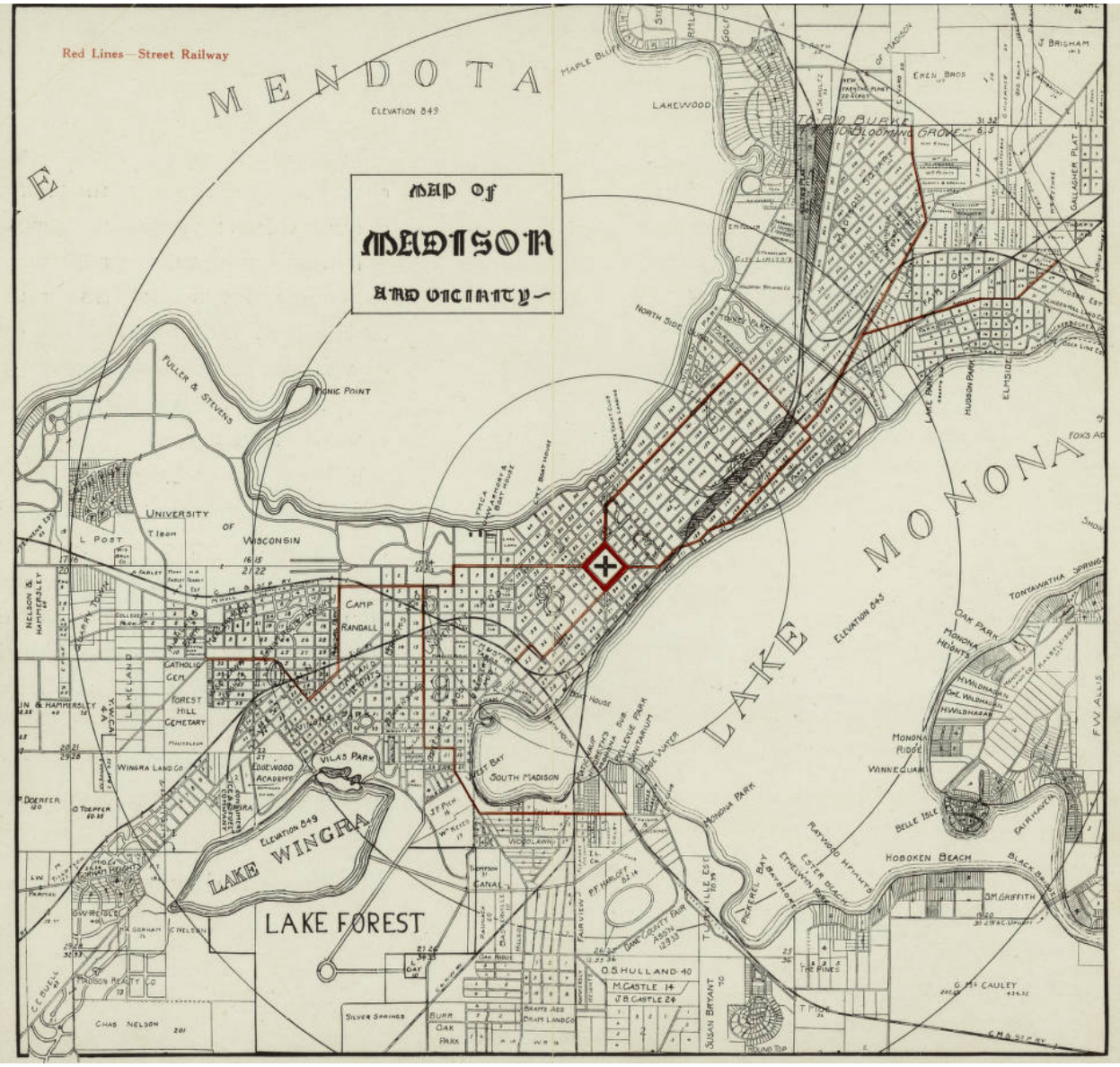

Figure 1: Madison Railways Company. “Map of Madison and Vicinity, 1920.” *Wisconsin Historical Society*. The map highlights the original streetcar lines; this pattern, where access to the isthmus center is prioritized, contributed and continues to contribute to the challenges with intra-neighborhood transit, particularly affecting neighborhoods outside of the downtown area.

The City Beautiful Movement and the Moral Geography of Place

The design of Madison’s public spaces during this era—lakefront parks, Capitol vistas, and cultural boulevards—was driven by an aesthetic vision deeply tied to ideals of social order and uniformity. As Roberts (2009) and Satter (2009) demonstrate, the embrace of moralized spatial

planning often masked underlying fears about racial integration, immigrant influx, and perceived urban disorder. As Michelle Robinson (2018) documents in her dissertation, city leaders disproportionately funneled resources toward areas like the isthmus and near-west side neighborhoods that aligned with middle-class, white sensibilities of beauty and order, while neglecting or actively stigmatizing racially diverse and working-class communities such as Greenbush and South Madison. Robinson notes that municipal priorities—such as the placement of public parks, the concentration of public infrastructure, and the framing of "blight"—were infused with racial and moral judgments about which spaces were worth preserving and which were marked for clearance or neglect. These decisions were not simply aesthetic; they translated into concrete disparities in infrastructure, amenities, and civic representation, laying the groundwork for future displacement and reinforcing spatial hierarchies rooted in whiteness and elite cultural norms. Communities characterized by higher density, racial diversity, or geographic distance from the city's symbolic core were often excluded from investment, and later targeted for urban renewal projects that further displaced their residents under the guise of progress and revitalization..

Implications for Racial and Economic Sorting

By the time of Roosevelt's New Deal legislation, Madison's land use framework already bore the hallmarks of racialized governance. Zoning ordinances, infrastructure planning, and planning discourse had collaboratively produced a city stratified by race, class, and access. While not always explicitly racial in language, the effects were clear: emerging Black and immigrant communities were confined to areas with fewer amenities, higher exposure to industrial uses, and less political influence. This spatial sorting laid the groundwork for the codified exclusions that would soon follow in the form of racial covenants and redlining.

This period represents the entrenchment of exclusion through legal, infrastructural, and aesthetic logics that were framed as civic progress. In Madison, zoning ordinances, capital improvements, and streetcar extensions aligned with newly formalized land-use regimes to consolidate privilege in white neighborhoods while reinforcing marginality elsewhere. The appearance of modernization—especially through Works Progress Administration projects, park investments, and selective housing initiatives—gave the impression of broad public benefit, even as it intensified existing racial and class stratification. As Taylor (2019) argues, such moments exemplify the "illusion of inclusion": where public investment communicates equity while entrenching managed access and spatial containment. In this context, civic growth was less a corrective than a repackaging of exclusion—less a rupture than a reinforcement of racialized land governance.

Covenants and Deed Restrictions: 1910–1940s.

The Rise of Racial Covenants as Spatial Governance

By the 1910s, as the racial composition of American cities began to shift with migration and demographic change, private actors—especially developers and homeowners' associations—increasingly turned to racially restrictive covenants to codify segregation into the landscape. These covenants, baked into property deeds and subdivision plats, prohibited the sale or occupancy of homes to nonwhite residents, particularly Black families. Though technically private, they were enforced through public means—tacitly by local officials, and explicitly by courts (Gonda, 2015). As Glotzer (2020) and Marchiel (2021) argue, covenants were not isolated legal tools but instruments of a broader racial project where real estate development merged with white suburban identity.

Covenants became a preferred tool in cities like Madison where the city's elite sought to spatially insulate neighborhoods from what they perceived as social instability. Nationally, they gained traction after the 1917 Buchanan v. Warley decision struck down racial zoning ordinances.[14] In this vacuum, restrictive covenants offered a legally permissible workaround to enforce racial boundaries while appearing "voluntary." The growth of Madison's suburban-style neighborhoods during this period—University Heights, Vilas, and parts of Dudgeon-Monroe, where property deeds included race-based exclusions, often exempting domestic labor. A particularly stark example appears in the 1931 covenant for the Nakoma Homes Company, which read: "No part of these premises shall ever be owned or occupied by any person of the Ethiopian race"—a clause approved by future University of Wisconsin president Conrad Elvehjem and unchallenged during Madison's formal annexation of the neighborhood that same year (Robinson, 2018). This language reflected not just market preferences but a deeply racialized logic embedded into land governance. As Freund (2010) and Glotzer (2020) argue, covenants were not legal anomalies but central instruments of white suburban formation and spatial control, reinforcing the idea that "stability" was a racialized construct.

[14] Buchanan v. Warley (1917) is often cited as a landmark victory against formalized racial zoning, its practical impact was limited. The decision did not outlaw racial segregation itself—only government-mandated residential segregation based explicitly on race. In response, many cities, including Madison, shifted toward race-neutral zoning ordinances that achieved similar ends through indirect means, such as use-based restrictions and minimum lot sizes, which disproportionately excluded BIPOC and low-income residents without invoking race directly. Similarly, nearly 30 years later, in the Shelley v. Kraemer (1948) decision, the U.S. Supreme Court held that racially restrictive covenants were not themselves unconstitutional, but that state enforcement of such covenants was. The ruling made enforcement of such covenants legally unenforceable, but did not ban or outlaw their use.

Legal Precarity and the Endurance of Covenants Through Subtle Mechanisms

While the Supreme Court's ruling in Shelley v. Kraemer (1948) made the judicial enforcement of racial covenants unconstitutional, the decision did not prohibit their use or invalidate their existence. In Madison, as in many other cities, covenants persisted as social deterrents, communicated and tacitly enforced through neighborhood associations and real estate networks, and were repurposed through zoning overlays and density restrictions (Gonda, 2015; Satter, 2009). Realtors in Madison, for example, routinely avoided showing homes to Black buyers, with one NAACP study finding that "their businesses would be threatened if they acquired a reputation for showing properties to Blacks" (Robinson, 2018). Similarly, neighborhood associations sometimes acted collectively to prevent integration, as in the case of Carson Gulley, a prominent Black chef, and his wife, who were blocked from building in the Crestwood subdivision after the board voted 64–30 to deny their proposal following neighbor petitions. These informal but powerful actions helped ensure that even unenforceable covenants retained social and economic teeth. The continued demographic homogeneity of historically covenanted areas demonstrates their effectiveness, even without formal enforcement. Moreover, as Taylor (2019) shows, the illusion of legal progress masked the ongoing informal and institutionalized barriers to Black homeownership and neighborhood integration.

Despite being technically unenforceable, post-Shelley covenants endured through symbolic enforcement and layered legal mechanisms, including deed restrictions that enforced aesthetic codes, minimum square footage requirements, and prohibitions against multifamily construction. These legal holdovers achieved similar exclusionary outcomes by pricing out less affluent

residents—disproportionately BIPOC—without overt racial language. Municipalities, including Madison, often upheld these zoning devices under the guise of “neighborhood character,” a euphemism that became central to land use discourse throughout the mid- and late 20th century (Glotzer, 2020). As Robinson (2018) documents, this framework was maintained in Madison through what she terms “structural proxies” for race—tools such as aesthetic zoning, minimum lot sizes, and homeownership requirements. Robinson’ analysis of developments like Wexford Ridge and University Hill Farms illustrates how “neighborhood character” functioned as a rhetorical shield to maintain racial and economic exclusivity. These mechanisms, though facially neutral, embedded exclusion into the design standards, approval processes, and land use regulations that continue to shape the city’s spatial and demographic landscape.

Madison-Specific Plats and the Architecture of Exclusion

Covenants appeared in Madison’s residential plats as early as the 1910s and became more common in the 1920s and 1930s. Subdivisions such as Wingra Park, University Heights, and Westmorland included deed restrictions that explicitly barred nonwhite residents, often excepting domestic workers. In Westmorland, for instance, a 1928 land contract stated: “No land in the said plat shall ever be conveyed to, leased to, used, owned or occupied by Negroes” (Robinson, 2018). These restrictions were recorded with Dane County and were often promoted in marketing materials to white buyers seeking “stable” neighborhoods. The developers of University Heights, in particular, crafted their image around exclusivity and proximity to the university, reinforcing both racial and class-based segregation through formal and informal means (Glotzer, 2020; Plat Records, Dane County Register of Deeds, *University Heights Block 16 Ely & Henderson Replat*).

In Wingra Park, a 1923 plat filed with the city included restrictions barring “any person of African or Asiatic descent” from owning or occupying property except in the capacity of domestic help. These documents are publicly available in the Dane County Register of Deeds and serve as stark evidence of how racial ideology was inscribed into the very fabric of Madison’s neighborhood formation. Such restrictions were part of the broader racial real estate economy described by Taylor (2019), in which Black families were systematically confined to areas of disinvestment through both legal tools and market discrimination.

Additionally, developers frequently used newspapers and promotional materials to advertise the racial exclusivity of these subdivisions without explicitly naming race—relying instead on code words like “select,” “restricted,” or “exclusive.” In the *Wisconsin State Journal*, classified ads for homes in neighborhoods such as Nakoma and University Heights often included phrases like “restricted neighborhood” or “select area,” signaling to white buyers that these homes were protected by covenants or informal exclusion without invoking race explicitly (Robinson, 2018).Glotzer (2020) and Freund (2010) have documented how such marketing strategies became widespread across the country. In Madison, these advertisements embedded the logic of segregation into public discourse, reinforcing a public-private synergy in maintaining exclusion through both legality and suggestion.

The Interplay with Zoning and Infrastructure

Racial covenants in Madison did not operate in isolation. They complemented emerging zoning codes and infrastructure investments, reinforcing spatial hierarchies. For instance, covenanted neighborhoods overlapped with zones designated for single-family housing and were prioritized

for sewer expansion, street paving, and park development. These alignments were not coincidental but reflective of what Glotzer calls “the business of exclusionary housing”—a concerted effort by developers and civic leaders to shape Madison’s urban geography in ways that maintained racial boundaries while enhancing property values.[15]

Madison’s earliest zoning schema and infrastructure rollouts favored subdivisions like Nakoma and Westmorland—areas already associated with racial covenants and upper-middle class white homeowners. According to Robinson (2018), these neighborhoods were among the first to receive consistent municipal services such as street lighting, stormwater systems, and public park maintenance. Their prioritization reflected material affluence as well as a close alignment with the city’s early land-use vision, which emphasized low-density, single-family residential development rooted in ideals of order, uniformity, and exclusion. Planning commission records and public works investments from the 1920s through 1940s reveal how infrastructure expansion routinely followed the path of perceived neighborhood stability—defined in terms of property value, racial homogeneity, and aesthetic conformity to emerging suburban ideals. These decisions reinforced existing spatial boundaries by making covenanted neighborhoods more desirable and structurally advantaged, while systematically withholding comparable investments from South Madison, the Greenbush neighborhood, and other racially or economically diverse

[15] Paige Glotzer’s concept of “the business of exclusionary housing” refers to the historically coordinated, though often informally aligned, efforts by real estate developers, financial institutions, and civic leaders to normalize racial segregation through land-use decisions, private deed restrictions, and public planning discourse. In the Madison context, this framing illuminates how land use decisions—such as the strategic deployment of streetcar lines, aesthetic zoning overlays, and subdivision approvals—often served dual purposes: advancing economic interests and reinforcing the demographic boundaries of political legitimacy and property ownership. While not always formally orchestrated, these practices reflected a shared ideological commitment to racialized spatial order, made durable through bureaucratic discretion, planning language, and property valuation norms.

areas.. In this way, zoning and infrastructure spending operated in tandem, mutually reinforcing instruments of spatial privilege.

The Rhetoric of Stability and the Codification of Risk

Covenants were often justified as tools to ensure neighborhood “stability,” “character,” and “value”—terms that masked racial exclusion behind the language of market rationality and community standards. Marchiel (2021) and Satter (2009) both show how such rhetoric framed Black families as threats to property values, enabling white homeowners and officials to invoke economic logics while enacting racial exclusion. In Madison, this was echoed in newspaper editorials and real estate listings that linked racial homogeneity with civic virtue and neighborhood desirability (Robinson, 2018).

The use of such language persisted even after explicit racial terms were removed from covenants. Planners, realtors, and city officials continued to warn against “transitions” or “instability” in neighborhoods—coded references to racial integration. For example, Plan Commission meeting minutes from the early 1960s include concerns about “maintaining neighborhood character” in areas bordering public housing development, with officials expressing fear that “declining property values may follow if we allow too much change too quickly” (Robinson, 2018). Another hearing noted that “rental conversions could accelerate deterioration,” referring implicitly to the demographic shifts taking place in South Madison. These rhetorical gestures supported what Taylor (2019) describes as the re-coding of racial exclusion through the language of risk”. Even as legal tools changed, these logics of exclusion

endured through professional norms, planning discourse, and civic concern about neighborhood "health." .

Legal Ambiguity, Social Enforcement, and State Complicity

Although formally "private," covenants functioned within a matrix of state complicity. Title companies, banks, real estate boards, and municipal planning departments all played roles in normalizing and upholding racially exclusive development. for example, a Dane County circuit court enforced the Westmorland covenant in 1931, blocking a sale to a Black couple on the grounds that it would "compromise neighborhood stability" (Robinson, 2018). After *Shelley* enforcement declined in the courts but continued through administrative inaction. As Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor (2019) argues, the retreat of overt legal segregation was accompanied by a shift to structural delegation—where the state outsourced its housing authority to private market actors while shielding itself from accountability. This blend of public abstention and private enforcement produced what Taylor calls a regime of "interlocking complicities," in which legitimacy and exclusion were co-produced across legal, economic, and bureaucratic domains. In Madison, this dynamic was visible in the city's failure to proactively challenge racially restrictive deeds, its selective enforcement of zoning and planning codes, and its administrative passivity in the face of documented exclusion./

These patterns manifested locally across multiple institutions. The Madison Board of Realtors, for example, published guidance in the 1940s encouraging agents to uphold neighborhood "standards" and quietly avoid showing homes to Black buyers in "restricted" areas—a practice supported by internal memoranda flagged in Robinson (2018). Title companies routinely refused

to insure deeds that violated recorded covenants, citing “market risk” and “neighborhood stability” as underwriting concerns. Meanwhile, planning staff worked with developers in shaping subdivisions like University Hill Farms and Wexford Ridge, where zoning overlays and lot size minimums replicated the exclusionary logic of earlier covenanted neighborhoods under the guise of aesthetic cohesion and compatible use. These overlapping practices aligned with national patterns, but in Madison they gained added durability through the city's liberal political veneer and fragmented accountability structure.[16] Even post-*Shelley*, legal ambiguity created room for informal enforcement. Courts rarely invalidated covenants unless challenged directly, and municipalities showed little initiative in removing or publicizing their presence. Land records, zoning regulations, and assessment systems continued to treat these restrictions as obsolete curiosities rather than ongoing instruments of spatial exclusion. As a result, the architecture of segregation persisted---not as an artifact of the past, but as a live system encoded in administrative routine and professional judgement.

Legacy and Afterlife in Postwar Housing Patterns

Even as explicit racial covenants declined in use by the 1950s, their spatial logic endured. Areas once protected by covenants remained disproportionately white and affluent, benefiting from

[16] In her dissertation, Robinson (2018) references a 1931 Dane County circuit court case involving the Westmorland subdivision in Madison, where residents and the neighborhood development board challenged the prospective sale of a home to a Black couple, citing concerns that it would “compromise neighborhood stability.” The court upheld the covenant and blocked the transaction, reaffirming the legal validity of the deed restriction at the time. While not widely publicized, this case illustrates how local courts actively enforced racial covenants prior to *Shelley v. Kraemer*, embedding exclusion into judicial precedent and reinforcing the legitimacy of private discrimination through public adjudication. Such rulings aligned with broader state and national trends, where judges interpreted market risk and neighborhood preservation as legally sufficient justifications for racial exclusion. In the Madison context, this example reveals how formal legal structures worked alongside informal real estate norms to produce a racially ordered housing market—one in which the boundary between public law and private prejudice was deliberately blurred.

accumulated infrastructure investment and stable property markets. In contrast, neighborhoods excluded from covenant protections—often those near railroads, industrial corridors, or already racially mixed—were targeted for disinvestment, mortgage discrimination, or urban renewal,. As Robinson (2018) details, Madison's postwar urban development strategy frequently leveraged redevelopment as a means of displacement, not repair, systematically converting exclusionary legal boundaries into enduring material disparities. For example, she describes how public investment flowed into former covenant-protected areas under the guise of modernization, while disinvested communities—particularly those in South Madison and the Greenbush area—were fragmented, stigmatized, or absorbed into institutional expansion. These interventions hardened patterns of segregation into infrastructural permanence.

During the analytic process, I compared notes from Robinson's documentation of urban renewal in Greenbush with earlier covenanted development in neighborhoods like Westmorland. These notes tracked how areas that were once protected by explicit deed restrictions often became sites of sustained investment and protection, while those historically excluded were later identified as targets for removal or clearance. Robinson's work provided language from planning documents and redevelopment justifications that described Greenbush as "underdeveloped" or "transitional"—terms that echoed the earlier spatial logics of racial exclusion. The memoing process helped me understand how postwar planning narratives repackaged exclusion through the vocabulary of modernization, institutional growth, and public benefit.

Furthermore, the long-term effects of covenanted development created a feedback loop in Madison's housing market. Schools in historically covenanted neighborhoods received higher

private funding through PTOs and foundations. These areas attracted continued investment and political protection, while neighborhoods with histories of exclusion from such protections bore the brunt of austerity, surveillance, and environmental burden. The racial geography produced by covenants did not fade with legal rulings; it hardened into an infrastructural reality that shaped who belonged—and who did not—in Madison's urban future.

Redlining and Federal Policy Interventions: 1930s – 1960s

The National Architecture of Redlining

Redlining as a federal policy mechanism emerged in the 1930s through the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC), which produced residential security maps that evaluated neighborhoods for mortgage risk based largely on racial and ethnic composition. These maps, later adopted by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and private lenders, became institutional tools of exclusion, rendering entire neighborhoods—often those with Black, immigrant, or working-class populations—ineligible for federally insured loans (Jackson, 1985; Freund, 2010; Robinson, 2018). As Aaronson, Hartley, and Mazumder (2021) show, the effects of HOLC redlining endure, correlating with contemporary disparities in credit access, homeownership, and health outcomes.

The grading criteria for redlined neighborhoods extended beyond housing stock or infrastructure. They explicitly emphasized racial "hazards" and the "infiltration" of undesirable populations, embedding white supremacist ideology into federal land use guidance. Despite public narratives emphasizing financial prudence, redlining was an exercise in racial cartography—drawing literal lines between creditworthy whiteness and disinvested Blackness (Taylor, 2019; Satter, 2009).

The bureaucratic production of HOLC maps was itself a racially coded process. HOLC field agents were instructed to consult with real estate professionals, lenders, and local government officials—many of whom had direct interests in maintaining segregation. These collaborators frequently described racially integrated or Black-majority neighborhoods as “hazardous” or “undesirable” due to supposed risks of depreciation, regardless of housing quality or occupancy rates (Nelson et al., Mapping Inequality, 2020). As such, redlining was not just a product of federal indifference, but of coordinated local and national interests. It codified a racial epistemology of urban space, where whiteness signified stability and value, and Blackness was a proxy for financial and social risk. This logic became foundational to a host of urban policy decisions—from lending to policing—and remains embedded in how American cities perceive “neighborhood change.”

Madison’s HOLC Map and Localized Redlining

Madison’s own HOLC map, created in the late 1930s, delineated portions of the isthmus and southside as “D” or “hazardous” zones—citing the presence of Black families, Jewish residents, and industrial proximity as disqualifying characteristics As Robinson (2018) writes, “the area was redlined in the 1930s, in part because of the presence of large number of Negroes, Jews, and ‘foreign-born whites’”. Neighborhoods including parts of the Greenbush, Darbo-Worthington, and South Madison were systematically cut off from investment. Meanwhile, areas closer to the university, Capitol, and lakefront received favorable ratings, cementing their advantage through public and private financing streams.

The Madison HOLC map survives and has been widely reproduced in local reports and scholarly work. Its legacy is apparent in the overlap between historically redlined areas and present-day census tracts with low homeownership, lower household incomes, and higher rates of housing code violations.

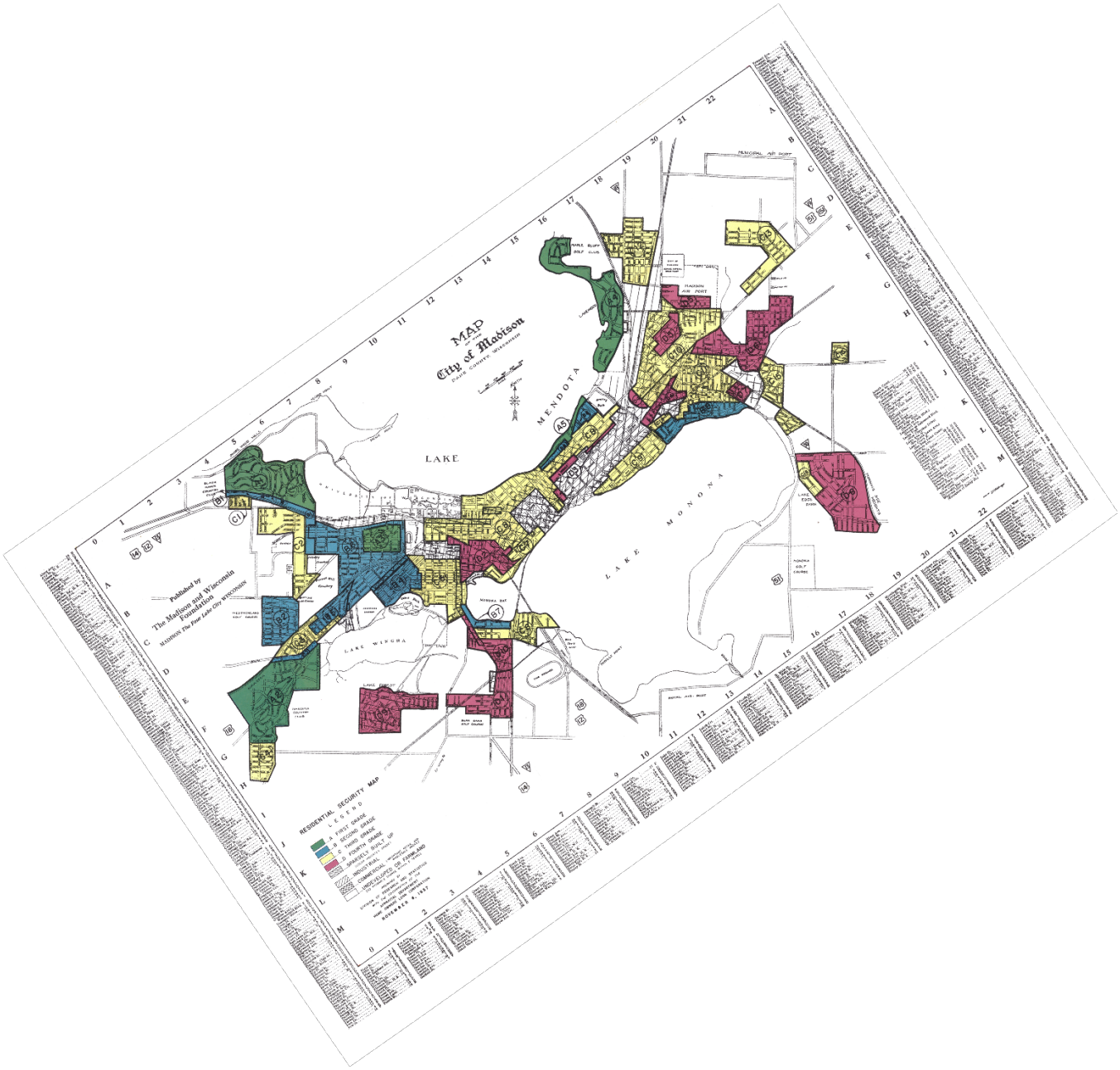

Figure 2: – Original HOLC map of Madison, WI. Source: University of Richmond, Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America; https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/data/WI-Madison#cityData

Federal Housing Administration Lending and the Codification of Exclusion

The FHA, established in 1934, not only adopted HOLC's maps but formalized their racial logics in underwriting manuals. Through risk management guidance, the FHA discouraged investment in racially "mixed" neighborhoods and required racially restrictive covenants for developments seeking financing. In Madison, developers used this institutional framework to secure financing for segregated subdivisions, especially on the west side and near campus.

As Taylor (2019) argues, even reforms aimed at increasing Black homeownership often embedded new forms of extraction. FHA Section 221(d)(2), for instance, was promoted as a tool for racial inclusion, but in practice it concentrated Black buyers in depreciating housing stock and saddled them with exploitative loan terms. While direct Madison-specific documentation of 221(d)(2) implementation is limited, the city's early experiments with subsidized housing and scattered-site development in the 1950s–60s—including projects in South Madison and the Greenbush—suggest a local alignment with national risk displacement strategies. Future archival research into Madison's federal housing project files—particularly those stored in the Wisconsin Historical Society's *State Archives Collection* under the Department of Local Affairs and Development or in Madison's Planning Department records (via Legistar or WHS microfiche)—may yield more precise evidence of 221(d)(2) financing in local developments.

Disinvestment and Resource Retraction Redlining didn't just shape access to credit—it redirected entire streams of public and private investment. In Madison, neighborhoods graded

poorly by the HOLC and stigmatized through local planning narratives faced chronic underinvestment in infrastructure, school facilities, and sanitation. These areas were more likely to be targeted for urban renewal, road expansion, or industrial use, even as their residents were denied relocation resources or housing alternatives (Hirsch, 1998; Freund, 2010).

This period reflected a significant shift in both the spatial focus and rhetorical language of in Madison's planning documents and public meetings. References to race were increasingly replaced with terms like "blight," "incompatibility," "transition", which often appeared in Plan Commission minutes and redevelopment proposals from the 1950s and 1960s. As Robinson (2018) notes, Greenbush was labeled a "blighted" area in official planning language just prior to its clearance, despite evidence of community vitality and structural soundness in many of its households.

The retraction of resources from redlined areas was not passive neglect. It emerged from planning reports and budget frameworks that routinely deprioritized neighborhoods marked as unstable or transitional. For instance, South Madison and Greenbush were repeatedly identified in capital improvement plans as needing "major upgrading," while investment was instead funneled toward infrastructure expansion in the isthmus and near-west side. Although comprehensive per capita maintenance data remains elusive, a pattern of under-maintenance in roads, sewers, and public spaces is evident in contemporaneous news coverage, budget justifications, and neighborhood planning documents from the 1970s onward—particularly when compared to service expansion in predominantly white neighborhoods.

Presumably, this uneven resource allocation shaped long-term housing and education outcomes. This spatial mismatch created a structural feedback loop: neighborhoods with weak infrastructure and declining assessments struggled to advocate for reinvestment, while their conditions were used to justify further deferral. As Taylor (2019) argues, this form of “managed deprivation” was a central feature—not a failure—of urban governance under racial capitalism. Additional archival or budgetary research into Madison’s facilities management, school board records, and Department of Public Works capital budgeting would either reinforce this argument or reveal contradictions that merit further analysis.

Strategic Endurance of Redlined Patterns

Although redlining as an official policy was curtailed by the 1968 Fair Housing Act, its spatial legacies persist. In Madison, the neighborhoods once assigned "D" grades by HOLC—particularly portions of South Madison, Greenbush, and Darbo-Worthington—continue to show lower rates of homeownership, higher code enforcement actions, and a persistent lack of infrastructural parity relative to historically favored areas. These areas are now marked by seemingly contradictory trends: increasing private investment alongside intensified municipal surveillance. Robinson (2018) documents this duality in Madison, noting that many formerly redlined areas have become “zones of concern” for both urban renewal and law enforcement, with heightened scrutiny often justified by narratives of disorder rather than empirical risk. This bifurcated geography reflects what Wacquant (2008) theorizes as the “double regulation” of marginal space—a dynamic wherein vulnerable neighborhoods are both punished and profited from. In Madison, examples of this include the expanded code enforcement focus on South Madison amid its concurrent targeting for high-end redevelopment proposals (City of Madison,

2019; 2021). These patterns suggest that even as redlining is no longer policy, its spatial blueprint remains operative through other bureaucratic means.

As Glotzer (2020) argues, the tendency to treat redlining as distinct from covenants, zoning, and urban renewal artificially segments what was a cohesive and mutually reinforcing architecture of exclusion. These tools worked together across decades to entrench spatial stratification.[17] In Madison, the HOLC map did not rupture prior logics—it reinforced and institutionalized them. For example, areas already subject to deed restrictions or "blight" designations were frequently labeled as "hazardous" by HOLC, effectively blending private administration with state-backed investment guidance. This fusion ensured that exclusion was maintained across institutional domains---real estate, lending, insurance, and planning---even as the legal language evolved. Public misunderstanding of redlining's demise has compounded these dynamics. While the public narrative often frames the Fair Housing Act as a turning point, the endurance of exclusion stems not from law alone but from the repurposing of racial boundaries through tools like zoning overlays, landlord screening policies, and credit algorithms. The City of Madison's own planning materials from 2019 to 2025 reflect concern over gentrification and displacement, yet offer few mechanisms to preserve affordability or prevent forced relocation. Robinson, 2018; City of Madison, 2019; City of Madison, 2021; City of Madison, 2025) This contradiction—targeting the same space for revitalization and regulation—has entrenched what could be termed the spatial afterlife of redlining. Here, containment and profit operate in tandem, with speculative investment masking surveillance and displacement behind the veil of progress. The geographies of exclusion have become more fluid but no less intentional.

[17] This is why the epochal organization of this track overlaps.

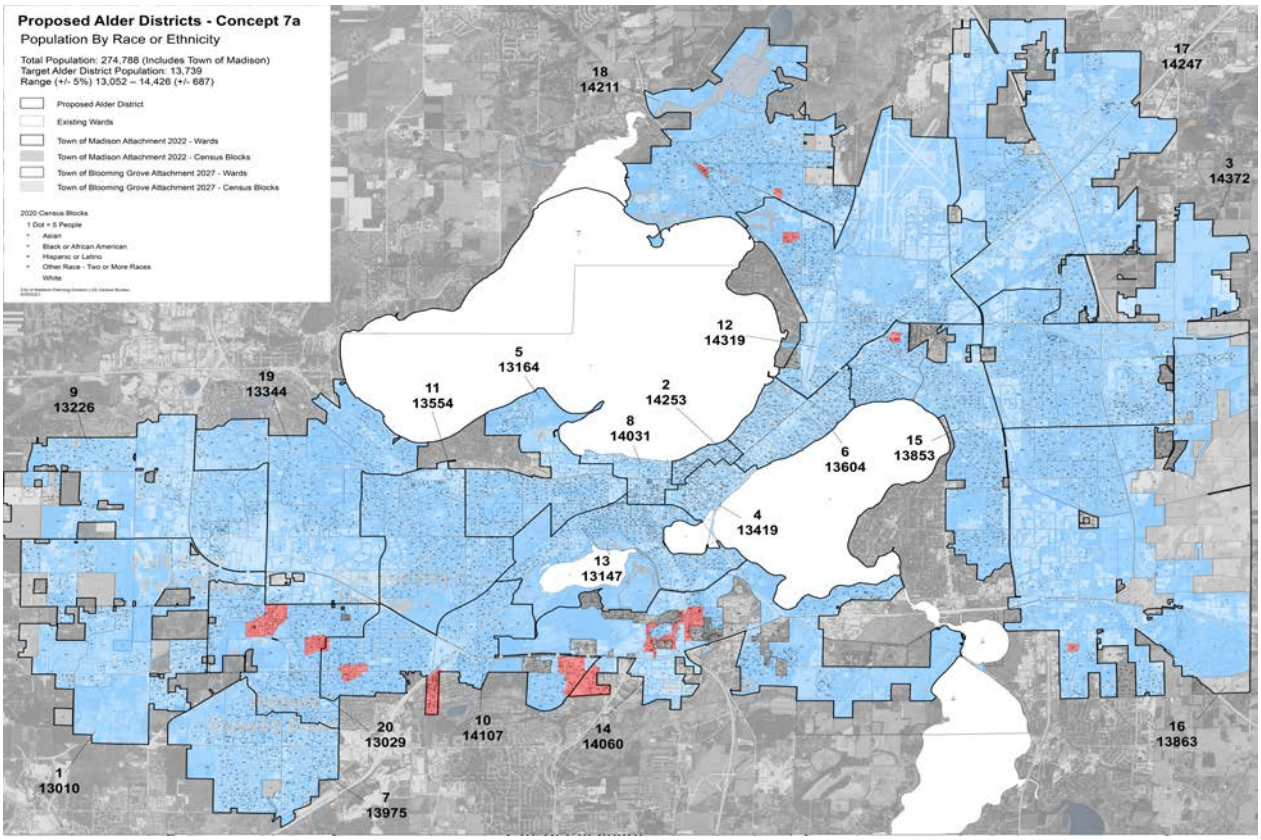

Figure 3: City of Madison's Neighborhood Resource Teams (in red). Source: City of Madison: https://www.cityofmadison.com/civil-rights/programs/neighborhood-resource-teams; map is also in Legistar under the redistricting files for the 2021 redistricting

Urban Renewal and Public Housing: 1950s – 1970s

Blight and Bulldozers: National Origins of Urban Renewal

The Housing Act of 1949 inaugurated a new era of federal urban intervention under the banner of "slum clearance" and "renewal." Championed as a response to substandard housing and urban decay, the program provided local governments with federal funds to acquire and raze "blighted" areas, which were often disproportionately Black and low-income (Hirsch, 1983; Teaford, 2000). The policy created financial incentives to remove dense, older neighborhoods in favor of modern infrastructure, institutional expansion, or private redevelopment. As Hirsch argues in Making the Second Ghetto, renewal was not simply spatial—it was ideological, recoding poverty and racial concentration as threats to city progress. This logic justified the displacement of tens of

thousands of families in cities across the country, while rarely fulfilling promises of replacement housing.

Greenbush: Displacement in the Name of Progress

Madison's Greenbush neighborhood—historically home to Italian, Black, and Jewish residents—was the city's most prominent target of urban renewal. Framed as a deteriorating district in need of rehabilitation, Greenbush was designated "blighted" in the 1950s and subsequently razed in the early 1960s under the city's Model Cities program (Goldberg, 1995). While officials claimed the area was unsafe and overcrowded, photographic and anecdotal evidence shows that Greenbush contained a thriving multiethnic community with businesses, churches, and stable housing stock. The project displaced over 1,100 residents, most of whom were offered little support for relocation. Promised replacement housing never materialized at scale, and much of the land was transferred to the University of Wisconsin and private developers. As Glotzer (2020) notes, this form of redevelopment frequently masked elite expansionist interests under the veneer of public good.

Naming and Framing of "Blight": A Rhetorical Weapon

The concept of blight served as a malleable and racialized justification neighborhood clearance during Madison's urban renewal era. Greenbush, designated as "blighted" in the 1950s, became the most prominent local case of this logic in action. Official accounts pointed to aesthetic and infrastructural deficiencies, but these criteria were unevenly applied. As documented by Goldberg (1995) and expanded by Robinson (2018), Greenbush contained a stable and thriving

multiethnic community with viable housing stock, active churches, and neighborhood businesses. Yet it was targeted for demolition, while areas with comparable physical conditions but located further from the Capitol or university were spared.

This selective designation suggests that location and land value—not just building condition—drove decision-making. Robinson notes that redevelopment in Greenbush aligned with the expansion goals of local institutions, including the University of Wisconsin and emerging medical facilities. Meanwhile, displaced residents—especially Black families—faced limited relocation options due to the absence of anti-discrimination protections and the persistence of racial barriers in housing markets (Robinson, 2018).

As Pritchett (2008) and Gordon (2008) argue, across U.S. cities, “blight” was often less about material deterioration and more about the perceived threat that working-class and racialized communities posed to surrounding property values. In Madison, the application of this term in Greenbush reveals how aesthetic standards were wielded not as neutral policy tools, but as rhetorical weapons—used to justify removal and redevelopment while masking underlying racial and economic motives. In this sense, urban renewal extended the exclusionary logic of redlining—it simply replaced the tactic of denial with the machinery of demolition.

Public Housing as a Containment

Simultaneous to clearance programs, federal and local governments promoted public housing as a remedy for the displaced. Yet in practice, the siting of Madison’s public housing developments—such as Brittingham and later Truax Park—were sited in marginal,

environmentally compromised, or infrastructurally isolated areas, reflecting a patter of containment rather than inclusion. As Robinson (2018) documents, during the Greenbush renewal process, over 300 families were displaced, many of whom qualified for public housing. The Madison Redevelopment Authority initially identified the Brittingham area as a potential site for relocation, but the land was sold to a private developer, leaving no plan for where displaced residents—particularly Black families—would go (Robinson, 2018).

With equal housing laws not yet in place, Black families encountered systemic resistance across the city and were often pushed into the few zones where housing was available and affordable—chiefly South Madison and the city's north and east peripheries. Some of the most economically vulnerable residents were ultimately relocated to public housing at Truax Field, near the airport, which Robinson characterizes as geographically and infrastructurally isolated from civic life (Robinson, 2018). This reflected what Taylor (2019) describes as "second-order segregation": after removing Black residents from central areas, the state resettled them into less visible, under-resourced spaces, ensuring their continued disconnection from civic life.

Urban Renewal as Institutional Expansion

The Greenbush clearance not only displaced residents—it enabled institutional growth. Much of the land was ultimately absorbed by the University of Wisconsin and the expanding medical complex (Robinson, 2018). This pattern mirrored trends in other university towns, where higher education institutions functioned as "growth machines" (Molotch, 1976), driving urban development through land acquisition and partnership with local elites. By aligning urban renewal with academic and health infrastructure, city officials could frame displacement as

progress while reinforcing racial and class stratification. As Satter (2009) and Marchiel (2021) both observe, this type of elite coalition-building transformed land into a vehicle for exclusion cloaked in public interest rhetoric.

The Racial Politics of Rebuilding

The post-renewal landscape in Madison bore the marks of calculated selectivity. White homeowners displaced from Greenbush were more likely to receive compensation and relocation assistance than Black tenants, many of whom ended up in overcrowded or substandard housing elsewhere in the city (Robinson, 2018). Furthermore, attempts to rebuild Greenbush as a mixed-income community fell short. As in many cities, the promised "integration" of the urban core gave way to private development, tax-exempt institutional growth, and the dispersal of displaced residents. The rhetoric of civic uplift was never matched by restorative practice. Instead, renewal reproduced the spatial logic of segregation by reframing displacement as progress—using the language of modernization, growth, and public benefit to justify exclusion.

Connecting Renewal to Present-Day Development Politics

The legacy of urban renewal in Madison persists in present-day land use debates. Current controversies over redevelopment—such as those surrounding South Madison, Allied Drive, and the Oscar Mayer site—echo past tensions between community voice and institutional power. Many residents in South Madison, for instance, view ongoing development as a form of "renewal redux," where aesthetic and economic improvement portend displacement rather than investment. These dynamics demonstrate what Glotzer (2020) calls "the endurance of segregationist urbanism": even in cities like Madison that disavow racist planning,

redevelopment continues to operate through exclusionary logics. A full reckoning with this history requires not only acknowledgement of harm but material commitments to repair / provide / ? affordable housing, and produce authentic community-led planning processes.

Zoning, Segregation, and the Myth of Reform: 1970-2020s

The Durability of Exclusionary Zoning

By the 1970s, explicit racial language in zoning and housing laws had been struck down or repealed, but the exclusionary effects of land use regulation remained entrenched. In Madison, zoning ordinances continued to prioritize low-density, single-family residential zones across much of the west and near-east sides. This pattern reflected what Richard Rothstein termed "intelligent discrimination"—using race-neutral laws to entrench segregation. While overt redlining had ended, zoning remained a powerful administrative tool for limiting affordable and multifamily housing in high-opportunity areas, thereby reinforcing spatial inequalities (Robinson, 2018).

Rhonda Y. Williams (2004) theorizes that public housing and affordable developments were often routed into disinvested neighborhoods through federal siting strategies that reinforced marginality. While her work addresses national patterns, similar dynamics were evident in Madison. As Robinson (2018) notes, local officials and neighborhood associations in majority-white areas frequently resisted affordable housing initiatives, framing them as threats to "neighborhood character" and property values—a phrase that appeared repeatedly in public meeting minutes and letters to the Common Council during development debates in the 1990s

and 2000s. These objectives echoed City Beautiful-era tropes that linked aesthetics and order to civic virtue and social worth, just without overt racial references (Robinson, 2018).

For example, the *Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Plan* (2008) explicitly emphasizes "neighborhood character" as a guiding principle, with language prioritizing visual continuity, structural consistency, and predictable residential form—even when adjacent to commercial zones. While such framings avoid overt racial language, they reproduce the boundary-maintaining logic of earlier zoning paradigms. The City's own *Equitable Development in Madison Report* (2019) further acknowledges how affordable housing placement continues to be shaped by community resistance. The report notes that areas like South Park Street are ineligible for new affordable units due to existing concentrations, while high-opportunity areas remain protected by exclusionary zoning and community opposition—resulting in a de facto containment strategy. These policies, though framed in terms of balance and cohesion, reproduce spatial inequalities under the banner of procedural fairness.

Density, Public Housing, and Siting Debates

Public housing, particularly in the latter half of the 20th century, became a site of intense political contestation in Madison. Developments such as the Allied Drive complex and Northport Apartments were heavily stigmatized and became synonymous with crime and poverty in public discourse—despite offering some of the few affordable options for low-income BIPOC families. As Rhonda Williams and Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor (2019) argue, siting practices for public housing often followed a pattern of "planned containment": deliberately placing subsidized housing in under-resourced or environmentally compromised zones while insulating affluent areas through zoning barriers.

In Madison, this containment logic manifested through persistent patterns of opposition to affordable housing in higher-opportunity neighborhoods. While not always discussed inexplicitly racial terms, housing proposals outside of historically disinvested areas frequently faced coordinated pushback from neighborhood associations, real estate interests, and elected officials. The city's own data shows that over 85% of low-income housing units built since the 1990s were sited in neighborhoods already designated as "high poverty" or "racially concentrated" (City of Madison Community Development Division; 2025 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Report). A more comprehensive archival investigation—examining Plan Commission deliberations, zoning petitions, and neighborhood plan updates—would be necessary to trace the full extent of racialized decision-making in this context.

Beyond institutional resistance, structural impediments to equitable housing in Madison persist through legal mechanisms such as Wisconsin Statute 893.33(6), which governs the enforceability of deed restrictions and real estate covenants. Although racially restrictive covenants were rendered unenforceable by the 1948 Shelley v. Kraemer decision, other deed restrictions—particularly those targeting density or mandating single-family structures—remain legally viable. Under 893.33(6), these restrictions can be enforced for up to 40 years from the date of recording, and may be extended indefinitely through timely re-recordings.

In practice, this statute functions as a shield for exclusionary development. A 2021 case involving a nonprofit affordable housing developer in Madison illustrates this point: restrictive language recorded in a mid-century plat prevented the proposed construction of low-income

townhomes on a parcel slated for redevelopment. Despite full alignment with local zoning, the title insurer refused to provide coverage unless the deed restrictions were removed or judicially extinguished—an expensive and uncertain process. This legal friction forced the organization to substantially revise, and ultimately abandon the project. Such cases reveal how statutory design can quietly override public planning intent, allowing private restrictions to limit inclusionary development even in areas targeted for upzoning.

In neighborhoods such as Dudgeon-Monroe, Nakoma, and University Hill Farms— areas with long-standing deed restrictions and high levels of homeownership---multifamily development remains scarce. Covenants in these plats commonly include clauses prohibiting two-family dwellings or enforcing minimum lot sizes. While some of these restrictions may be dormant, their legal enforceability under 893.33(6) allows property owners or associations to invoke them in opposition to new development. The net effect is a structural veto power that fragments planning authority and enables private actors to maintain racial and economic homogeneity through seemingly race-neutral means.

This statutory loophole poses a serious constraint on Madison's capacity to equitably densify its urban core. If local governments lack authority to override deed restrictions that were designed, in part, to preserve racial exclusion, then zoning reform alone cannot achieve the goals of housing equity. Without legislative or legal mechanisms to extinguish these provisions—many of which reflect the racial logics of mid-century land use planning—the city's stated commitment to affordability risks becoming more rhetorical than material.[18]

[18] Wisconsin Statute 893.33(6) states that "[a]ctions to enforce easements, or covenants restricting the use of real estate, set forth in any recorded instrument shall not be barred by this section for a period of 40 years after the date

The Ideology of Local Control

Zoning reform in Madison—particularly the loosening of density requirements and the introduction of "missing middle" housing—has often been framed as a step toward racial and economic equity. Yet, these reforms have frequently faltered under pressure from local opposition and bureaucratic inertia. Planning commission meetings and public hearings regularly feature residents invoking traffic, parking, and school overcrowding as concerns, though data often shows these fears to be unfounded.

While Madison has issued high-profile declarations about its commitment to affordable housing implementation has frequently lagged behind rhetoric. For example, the 2021–2023 effort to revise single-family zoning to permit fourplexes citywide was met with considerable public opposition, much of it couched in concerns about “parking,” “neighborhood character,” or “overcrowded schools.” (City of Madison, 2021) Although city staff provided data showing minimal projected impact on traffic or classroom sizes, the volume and tone of public comment led to the proposal being significantly scaled back. Rather than a full reclassification, changes

---

of recording such instrument, and the timely recording of an instrument expressly referring to the easements or covenants or of notices pursuant to this section shall extend such time for 40-year periods from the recording." In one recent case involving a Madison-based affordable housing nonprofit, a project involving townhome development on a three-parcel site was halted when the title insurer refused coverage due to active deed restrictions tied to a 1950s plat. Despite zoning compliance, the insurer invoked 893.33(6) to deny coverage, citing the covenant’s enforceability and absence of judicial invalidation. No city process existed to remove or supersede the restriction. This case illustrates how private land-use controls remain structurally protected and enforceable, even when they conflict with contemporary land use goals.

were limited to targeted areas near transit corridors, and additional regulatory hurdles were added for design approval.[19]

The Common Council and Plan Commission deliberations over these reforms often showcased the political influence of organized homeowners, particularly in wealthier, whiter districts. Meetings included lengthy testimony warning of "irreversible neighborhood change" and declining property values. Despite citywide data suggesting that most new multifamily permits were being issued outside of high-opportunity zones, efforts to proactively redistribute housing types were repeatedly postponed or diluted. This pattern exemplifies what Marchiel (2021) describes as “homevoter democracy,” where property owners exert disproportionate control over development processes to protect asset value and social capital.

Taylor’s (2019) framework of "progressive retrenchment is equally relevant: while Madison’s planning documents embrace equity in theory, procedural norms and participatory rituals frequently serve to contain redistributive outcomes. Deliberation is extended, plan revisions prioritize neighborhood buy-in over equity outcomes, and city staff are discouraged from advancing aggressive reform without broad consensus. In this environment, zoning reform is permitted—but only under conditions that neutralize its most transformative potential. Thus, the

[19] Public resistance to zoning reform in Madison has been well documented in public records and hearings. During the January 25, 2021 Plan Commission meeting, multiple residents raised objections to proposed fourplex legalization, citing concerns about traffic congestion, pedestrian safety, parking scarcity, and loss of neighborhood character. These objections often drew on aesthetic and infrastructural language to oppose modest increases in density, even in areas with strong transit access and housing demand. Similarly, at the March 29, 2022 Common Council meeting, several alderpersons referenced neighborhood opposition as a key reason for delays and compromises to the proposed Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) overlay. These revisions included the scaling back of building heights, parking exemptions, and density allowances in areas originally targeted for equitable infill development. Taken together, these examples reflect how participatory governance can, at times, reproduce exclusionary outcomes—particularly when property owners frame housing equity reforms as threats to stability or neighborhood quality.

language of participation and procedural fairness becomes a buffer against structural disruption, even when that disruption is necessary to address long-standing disparities.

Land Use Reform as Symbolic Politics

Recent zoning reforms in Madison, including accessory dwelling unit (ADU) legalization and proposals for transit-oriented development, represent partial steps toward inclusion. But these policies are mostly symbolic since they lack the enforcement mechanisms, funding support, or anti-displacement protections needed to materially alter segregation patterns. As Glotzer (2020) and Gordon (2008) both note, liberal planning rhetoric can function as a mask for continuity. Without changes to property tax structures, school funding formulas, and the distribution of public amenities, zoning reform risks becoming a technocratic gesture rather than a structural transformation.

Moreover, the rhetoric of “market solutions” often dominates these conversations. Pro-housing advocates argue that increasing supply will reduce costs and integrate neighborhoods. Yet, Taylor (2019) and Satter (2009) warn that unregulated development often leads to gentrification and speculative investment—not equitable outcomes—unless paired with redistributive housing policy and tenant protections. In Madison, inclusionary zoning is banned at the state level (a result of preemption laws passed by the Wisconsin legislature in 2017), further limiting local authority to ensure affordability in new development.

The Geography of Disparity: Mapping Spatial Harm

The Historical Stratification of Urban Space

Madison's geography of inequality is not incidental—it is the spatial residue of planning choices, private market behaviors, and political design. From the 1910s through the present, neighborhoods have been built, valued, and maintained according to a racialized logic of desirability. Central to this process was the shaping of the built environment not just through zoning and covenants, but through the cumulative siting of infrastructure, schools, transportation lines, and environmental hazards. The result is a layered cartography of disparity that has both physical and symbolic permanence.

This historical stratification is visible in maps from the 1930s HOLC assessments, where neighborhoods closest to downtown, particularly the isthmus and near-west, were considered desirable and low-risk, while adjacent neighborhoods—such as Greenbush and parts of South Madison—were redlined and labeled “hazardous” due to their racial and immigrant composition. By the 1950s, as the city expanded, these patterns became embedded in land values, school catchments, and infrastructure investments (Robinson, 2018).

Peripheralization as Process, Not Position

The concept of “peripheralization” may apply to interpret the bureaucratic technical system of exclusionary land use described above. While redlining is often associated with urban cores, in Madison the logic of exclusion also operated within the city’s boundaries, effectively suburbanizing white privilege. Early 20th-century streetcar routes connected elite residential enclaves near the University and Capitol to investment and amenities, insulating them from

downtown working-class communities and areas of immigration. These zones—like University Heights, Vilas, and Dudgeon-Monroe—were not suburbs in jurisdiction, but in function: racially homogenous, economically privileged, and buffered by infrastructure (Glotzer, 2020).

As the city expanded post–WWII, newer subdivisions followed similar logics of spatial sorting. BIPOC residents—particularly Black families displaced by urban renewal—were directed toward marginal areas like Allied Drive and the Northport corridor, where services were sparse and access to downtown jobs or schools required long, often unreliable commutes. By the 1990s and 2000s, these neighborhoods were treated as zones of intervention—policed, surveilled, and the focus of cyclical redevelopment efforts—while exclusionary areas remained untouched and under-analyzed.

The mechanics of peripheralization in Madison are not defined solely by outward geographic expansion. Rather, they operate through layered and recursive processes—subtle shifts in investment, transit reconfiguration, and regulatory boundaries that render certain communities increasingly isolated despite their nominal proximity to the urban core. For example, the South Park Street corridor—once central to Madison's commercial and cultural life—saw a gradual withdrawal of capital in the postwar years. Although located near the Capitol and the UW campus, the area became politically and symbolically peripheral, especially after the dislocation of Black and Italian families from the Greenbush neighborhood. The absence of proactive reinvestment—despite South Park's strategic location—suggests a spatial marginalization rooted in social and racial valuation, not distance.

Similarly, the Allied Drive neighborhood provides an example of how infrastructural and administrative neglect can create de facto peripheries within city limits. Positioned along the Beltline Highway and technically part of the southwest side, Allied was hemmed in by transportation arteries but disconnected from political power and public services. The area experienced cycles of targeted surveillance, episodic redevelopment, and chronic underfunding—all of which were rationalized through narratives of dysfunction rather than the policy legacies that produced its disrepair. As Wacquant (2008) argues, the production of social marginality is often reinforced by institutional “benign neglect,” where the absence of public resources is framed as natural or inevitable rather than strategic.

Moreover, the language of peripheralization itself is contested terrain. What planners define as "emerging opportunity zones" or "transitional areas" often mask processes of spatial abandonment or aggressive containment. In Madison, neighborhoods such as Darbo-Worthington, Brentwood Village, and Truax have long been sites of euphemistic redevelopment efforts. These are areas where city investments come with strings—such as the presence of concentrated supportive housing, or narrowly targeted workforce initiatives—without corresponding commitments to infrastructure, schools, or civic inclusion. This creates what Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor (2019) refers to as the “politics of difference management,” in which marginalized neighborhoods are not lifted into parity but managed as permanent sites of deficit.

Administrative Boundaries and Symbolic Exclusion: Street-Level Governance

While the citywide maps of redlining and zoning establish a broad geography of exclusion, the effects of spatial governance are also felt through hyperlocal, administrative decisions—

particularly in how neighborhoods are named, bounded, and categorized by the city. These street-level geographies are not neutral; they are produced through planning, redistricting, and bureaucratic designation, which together shape access to political voice, public goods, and community recognition. In this section, I examine how administrative boundaries (aldermanic districts, school zones, neighborhood names) function as instruments of inclusion or exclusion—revealing how spatial governance continues to encode and legitimize urban inequality, even within the boundaries of a single city.

The geographic patterns of inequality in Madison today mirror those engineered in the mid-20th century. Districts such as South Madison (especially the Bram's Addition and Burr Oaks neighborhoods), parts of Northport- Packers, Allied Drive, and the far southwest corridor (such as Park Edge/Park Ridge and Theresa Terrace) continue to exhibit lower homeownership rates, higher child poverty, environmental hazards, and reduced civic participation. Conversely, wards in the near-west and near-east (Districts 5, 6, and parts of 13) remain overwhelmingly white and affluent, buffered by zoning protections and school district lines that reinforce class boundaries. This geography is institutionalized through aldermanic boundaries, school catchments (MMSD), and even polling locations—each reinforcing disparities in representation, resources, and accessibility. The clustering of poverty in Districts 14 and 15, for example, correlates directly with restricted transit options, limited park access, and underinvestment in school facilities, even as these areas absorb the city's affordable housing stock.[20]

[20] Gotham (2002) argues that urban space is not a neutral backdrop to social inequality but a material and symbolic structure through which inequality is actively produced and maintained. His analysis of racialized housing markets in American cities shows how spatial boundaries—zoning maps, school catchments, aldermanic districts—operate as instruments of stratification, encoding access to resources, infrastructure, and political representation. In the Madison context, these insights clarify how contemporary geographies of exclusion are not incidental, but are institutionalized through the very design and governance of place.

The significance of naming and boundary-making in Madison cannot be overstated. In neighborhoods like Kennedy Heights and Owl Creek, physical and administrative boundaries have long served as proxies for belonging or exclusion, reflecting the spatial governance strategies first encoded through zoning, planning maps, and urban renewal. Kennedy Heights, a predominantly Black community originally built as cooperative housing in the 1970s, became defined not only by its architectural distinction but also by its administrative isolation from adjacent neighborhoods like Northside and Sherman, despite their geographic proximity. Owl Creek, located just off highway 51 on the south side of the interstates 12/18, remains a community where residents must navigate limited transit access, a near-total absence of sidewalks, and a sense of political invisibility—despite being within city boundaries.

These dynamics are further complicated by how aldermanic redistricting processes reproduce unequal representation. The consolidation or fracturing of BIPOC-heavy neighborhoods into or out of specific districts has direct implications for participatory governance. In 2010, for example, debates over redrawing Districts 14 and 15 raised concerns about whether Latino and Black voters would be able to elect candidates of choice. As Colin Gordon (2008) notes in the context of St. Louis, “municipal fragmentation is the signature tactic of modern segregation”—and in Madison, fragmentation doesn’t always require new borders, only the continuous reshaping of existing ones.

Visualizing Exclusion: What Maps Reveal and Conceal

GIS-based demographic maps of Madison, especially those tracking race, income, and housing tenure, show concentric rings of inequality—an archipelago of privilege surrounded by zones of

managed poverty. Yet maps can both reveal and obscure. They rarely capture the cumulative impact of cross-jurisdictional fragmentation: where Madison's boundaries end, Monona or Fitchburg begin, often with different planning regimes and resource allocations. The visual contrast between the affluent Nakoma neighborhood and the Allied Drive corridor—only blocks apart—illustrates how the politics of mapping silence histories of displacement, denial, and deferred investment. Similarly, neighborhood names like "Allied" or "Darbo-Worthington" carry histories of stigmatization. In Madison, these labels have calcified, often reinforced by philanthropic and nonprofit programming that codes these spaces as "high need" while eliding the mechanisms that made them so.[21]

The Myth of Organic Segregation: Governance, Rhetoric, and the Normalization of Spatial Inequality

The previous sections have traced the structural and spatial mechanisms that built and sustained racial inequality in Madison through land use policy, redlining, exclusionary zoning, and redevelopment. Yet these mechanisms also required a parallel ideological infrastructure—narratives and norms that masked the intentionality of segregation by framing it as natural or unchangeable. This section examines how civic discourse, planning language, and institutional practices reinforce the idea that segregation 'just happened'—what I term the myth of organic segregation. By revealing how institutional decisions are recast as market inevitabilities or aesthetic preferences, this analysis underscores the deeply governed nature of spatial inequality.

[21] Wacquant (2008) describes this dynamic as territorial stigmatization—a process through which neighborhoods become marked not only by poverty or disinvestment, but by symbolic degradation. In this framework, place becomes a proxy for person: spatial labels like "Allied" or "Darbo" come to signify deviance, dysfunction, or deficiency in the public imagination and in policy practice. These moralized geographies shape everything from law enforcement to school zoning to the targeting of philanthropic initiatives, often producing feedback loops of surveillance, marginalization, and divestment under the guise of service.

Madison's political and civic discourse often frames spatial inequality as either a product of "market forces" or as an unfortunate legacy of past mistakes. But this erases the active role of institutions in creating and maintaining geographic disparities. Every transit route that skips a low-income area, every denial of a housing proposal based on "density," every school boundary that carves through or intentionally evades historically BIPOC neighborhoods is a choice—a reiteration of the spatial logics that have defined the city for over a century.

The empirical record makes clear that inequality in Madison is not simply racial in composition, but spatial in construction. From the earliest streetcar lines to the latest transit-oriented development proposals, geography has been used to sort, marginalize, and manage populations.

As Dorceta Taylor (2014) notes in her work on environmental racism, spatial decisions carry long shadows.[22] In Madison, those shadows stretch across lakes, campuses, and council

[22] Dorceta Taylor's work in *Toxic* Communities (2014) explores how environmental racism operates both through the direct siting of hazardous industries and/or infrastructural neglect, and also through histories of spatial decision-making that accumulates inequality over time. The lasting presence of earlier policy choices—land use, housing segregation, or the locations of public amenities—manifest decades later as health disparities, political underrepresentation, and limited access to environmental goods. Taylor emphasizes that outcomes are rarely the result of isolated decisions. Instead, they reflect patterned exclusions embedded in planning practices, zoning regimes, and the political geographies of infrastructure investment.

In Madison, these dynamics are especially visible in the uneven distribution of environmental assets and risks. Black and low-income residents have historically been concentrated in areas with limited park access, proximity to arterial roads, and low-no integrity housing stock vulnerable to toxic exposure. Meanwhile, neighborhoods benefiting from early planning protections—particularly along the near west side and Isthmus corridor—enjoy lake access, preserved tree canopies, and well-maintained recreational infrastructure, functioning transit access, proximity to commercial corridors—including grocery options, options for leisure, and casual access to schools. These environmental advantages translate into measurable differences in health, property valuation, educational access, and political influence.

Moreover, spatial decisions in Madison have long been justified through seemingly neutral criteria—compatibility, traffic volume, historical character, or visual coherence. Yet, as Taylor and others argue, these rationales often serve as proxies for racial and class-based exclusion. When Madison's commissions reject affordable housing proposals based on neighborhood "fit," or "design standards" they are not making purely technical judgments. They are

chambers. One of the most enduring myths in Madison's civic imagination is that segregation "just happened." This notion—often couched in references to market dynamics, personal choice, or neighborhood character—obscures the role of deliberate governance in creating and maintaining racialized space. For instance, the city's commissions—especially the powerful Plan, Landmarks and Urban Design Commissions-- routinely invokes "neighborhood compatibility" when denying proposals for affordable or multifamily housing, despite overwhelming need. These decisions, rarely framed as exclusionary, reflect the enduring logic of spatial governance, where administrative discretion and professional discourse become vehicles for maintaining segregation without invoking race explicitly.

The use of design review, historic preservation overlays, and neighborhood plans also contributes to this myth by giving the veneer of community consensus to exclusionary outcomes. In neighborhoods like Marquette or Dudgeon-Monroe, homeowner associations and neighborhood planning councils exert outsized influence on land use decisions, often opposing density, supportive housing, or transit corridors on ostensibly technical grounds. Yet behind these objections lie long-standing anxieties about demographic change, property values, and control—an echo of the same logics that drove redlining and restrictive covenants.

Finally, the myth of organic segregation is perpetuated through the selective use of data and storytelling in public discourse. While city officials may cite improvements in aggregate poverty or education metrics, they often fail to disaggregate by race or geography. This leads to a celebratory narrative of "progress" that obscures growing disparities in Madison's southwest and

---

invoking a lineage of land use governance that has repeatedly used the language of preservation and planning to protect privileged space and defer redistribution. The shadows of those decisions are not metaphorical—they appear in life expectancy gaps, school enrollment patterns, and the distribution of public investment across the city.

northeast corridors. Even well-intentioned policy conversations—such as those around equity impact assessments—risk reifying this myth when they treat inequality as a present-tense condition divorced from the spatial and historical mechanisms that created it. The myth of organic segregation functions as both a civic narrative and an institutional habit, framing racial inequality as the residual effect—the natural outcomes---of past practices rather than as the ongoing product of current planning, policy, and governance—thereby distancing responsibility and obscuring the spatial logics that actively sustain exclusion.

Bridge to Track II: Spatial Legacy and Institutional Disparities

While Track I primarily traces the spatial logics that structured Madison's built environment, the downstream effects of those logics are visible in domains often treated as distinct—such as education, health, and civic participation. The subsections that follow preview how spatial exclusion, though historically grounded in land use, covenants, and zoning, continues to shape institutional disparities across multiple systems. These examples are not exhaustive analyses, but serve to illustrate the material and political afterlives of geographic inequality—setting the stage for the deeper theoretical engagement with harm and violence developed in Track II.

Interdependence of Social Outcomes and Spatial Governance

The disparities visible in Madison's schools, health systems, and political processes are not just the residue of economic inequality. They are the logical, cumulative outcomes of spatial sorting mechanisms—redlining, zoning, housing disinvestment, and infrastructural exclusion—that have governed the distribution of life chances. The material layout of the city has always carried ideological freight: who belongs where, who deserves what, and whose needs are prioritized.

Madison's educational and public health outcomes are thus not epiphenomena; they are the institutional expression of racialized geography.

The interdependence of urban outcomes is clearest when spatial governance is treated not simply as a set of technical interventions, but as a mode of regulating life itself. Health, education, and political participation are not governed in isolation—they are deeply co-produced by decisions about where to build, whom to consult, what counts as "public interest," and how institutions define value. In Madison, racial disparities in one domain are often replicated or compounded across others not due to coincidence, but because the same spatial logics undergird each system. A student burdened by long school commutes, for example, likely lives in a neighborhood with limited healthcare access, reduced transit investment, and few channels for political voice. Recognizing these intersections reveals a structural pattern: disadvantage is not randomly distributed; it is territorially assigned.

Educational Disparities: Residential Sorting and School Boundaries

As Kevin Fox Gotham (2014)[23] argues in *Race, Real Estate, and Uneven Development*, the spatial politics of schooling are inextricable from housing discrimination. In Madison, this relationship is made explicit in school attendance boundaries that mirror historical patterns of racial and economic segregation. School district lines track closely with neighborhood zoning

[23] Kevin Fox Gotham's *Race, Real Estate, and Uneven Development: The Kansas City Experience, 1900–2010* (2014) traces how racialized housing markets and school policies co-evolved through deliberate spatial governance—particularly in the form of attendance boundaries, zoning laws, and disinvestment. His analysis demonstrates how redlining and exclusionary zoning were not only tools for housing segregation but also mechanisms to shape educational inequality. Applying Gotham's insights to Madison reveals parallel dynamics: attendance zones often reproduce historical racial divisions embedded in the city's planning history, contributing to unequal educational landscapes even amid formally race-neutral funding regimes.

and redlining maps, often resulting in schools with higher BIPOC student populations receiving fewer material and informal supports—even when direct per-pupil funding is equalized.

This is compounded by the phenomenon of "educational anchoring," wherein high-performing schools located in whiter, wealthier neighborhoods benefit from extensive PTA fundraising, volunteerism, and philanthropic support. Meanwhile, schools serving predominantly Black and Latino neighborhoods—such as those on the north and southwest sides—face higher student turnover, lower social capital, and a greater concentration of trauma-related needs. These dynamics cannot be disentangled from the historical legacies of covenants, exclusionary zoning, and urban renewal that sorted families into under-resourced neighborhoods.

The geography of school access in Madison is also shaped by literal distance and infrastructure. Students in peripheral neighborhoods such as Owl Creek or Truax Field contend with longer commutes, fewer extracurricular options, and less access to advanced coursework. Bussing becomes a logistical necessity rather than an integrative strategy, reinforcing the sense of separation between "neighborhood schools" and marginalized students. As Glotzer (2020) these patterns reflect not just policy failure but the endurance of exclusionary spatial logics repackaged as administrative neutrality.[24]

[24] In How the Suburbs Were Segregated, Glotzer (2020) demonstrates how the spatial architectures of racial exclusion persist under new guises long after the formal mechanisms of segregation are dismantled. What once operated through overt racial covenants and overtly discriminatory policies now reappears in the language of planning rationality, administrative efficiency, and educational logistics. This is especially visible in school infrastructure and access, where the burdens placed on families in neighborhoods like Owl Creek or Truax are framed as the result of geography or resource limitations, rather than as the cumulative outcomes of deliberate planning decisions. Glotzer's analysis underscores how technocratic governance can reproduce segregation while claiming to transcend it.

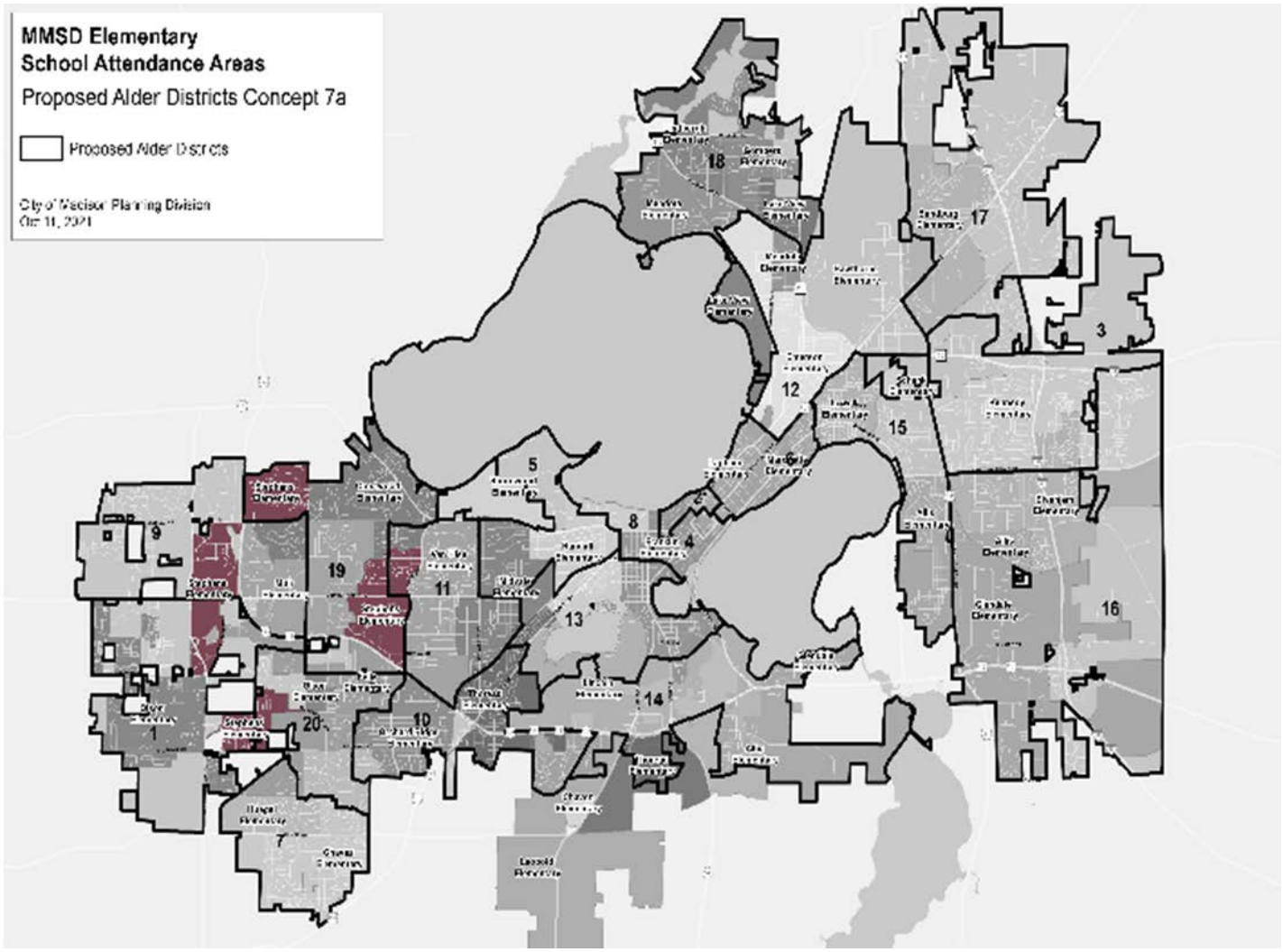

Figure 1: Stephens Elementary School Attendance area. Source: Madison Metropolitan School District, Redistricting Committee Legistar File; emphasis is my own.

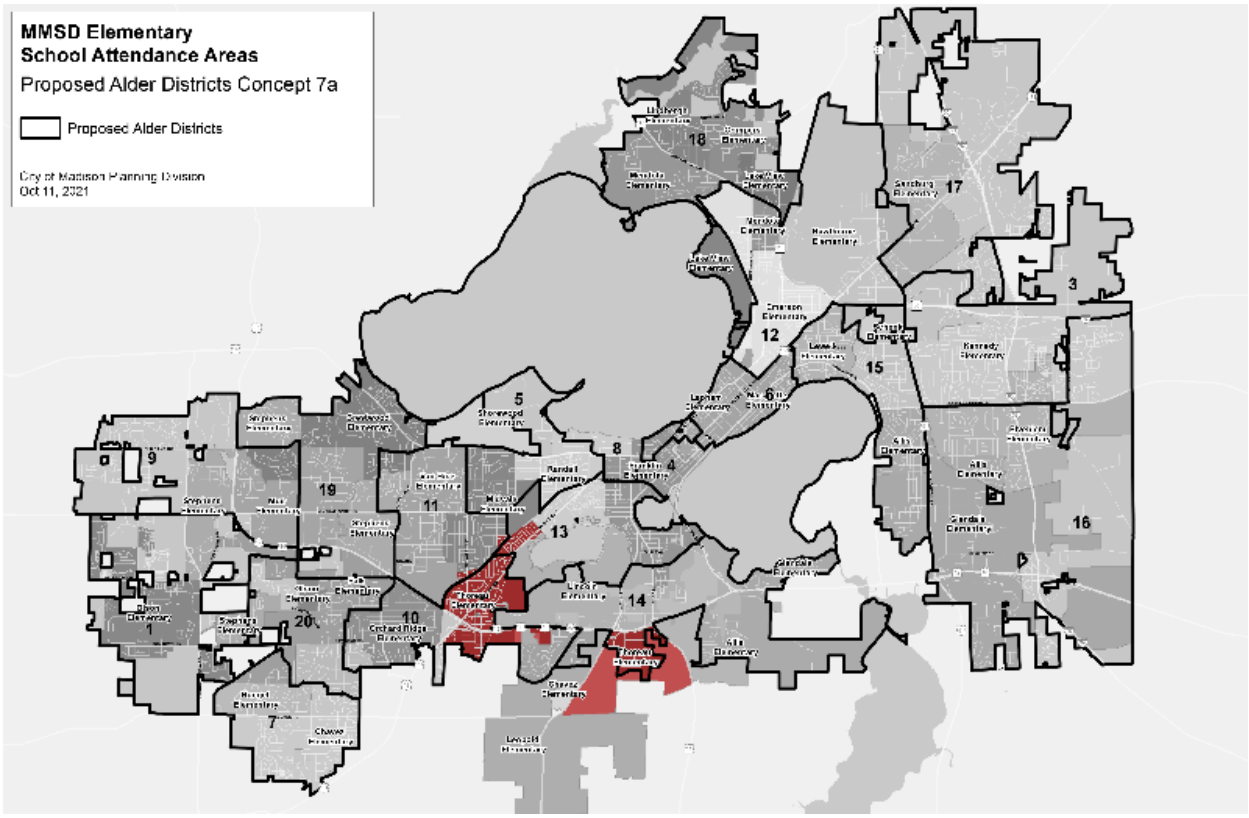

Figure 2: Thoreau Elementary School Attendance area. Source: Madison Metropolitan School District, Redistricting Committee Legistar File; emphasis is my own.

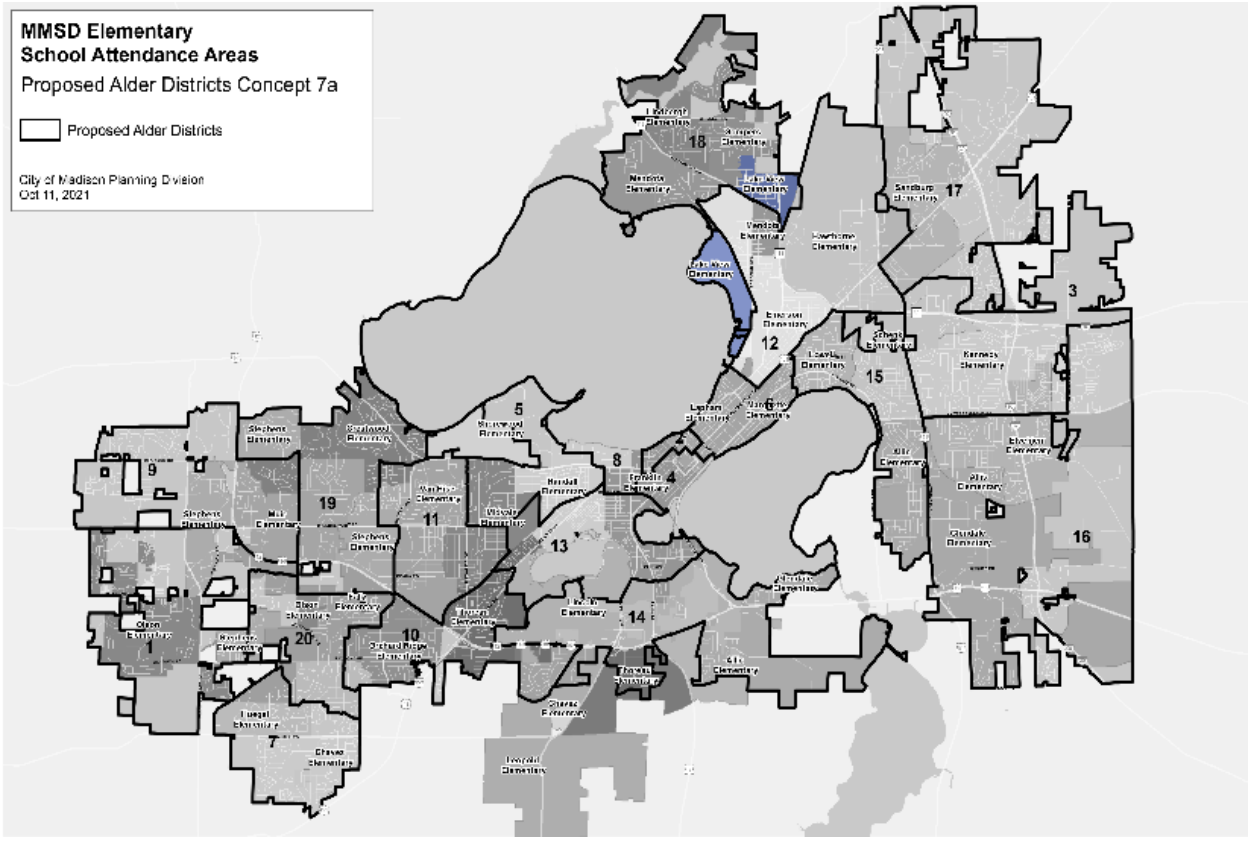

Figure 3: Lakeview Elementary School Attendance area. Source: Madison Metropolitan School District, Redistricting Committee Legistar File; emphasis is my own.

Health Disparities: Environmental and Infrastructural Violence

Madison's public health landscape is similarly patterned by its land use history. BIPOC residents report higher rates of asthma, diabetes, hypertension, and mental health crises. These conditions are frequently attributed to individual behaviors or systemic healthcare gaps—but they also reflect environmental injustice in siting decisions, housing stock quality, and infrastructural neglect.

In Madison, industrial uses, highways, and marginal housing are often co-located in historically redlined or disinvested areas. For instance, mobile home parks and older housing stock in

peripheral areas like Northport and Hammersley-Theresa lack consistent city investment in stormwater, walkability, and air quality mitigation. Meanwhile, these same areas often face heightened surveillance and lower levels of primary healthcare access. The geography of health is thus not accidental—it is the physical imprint of policies that isolated certain communities and left them out of Madison's "livability" narrative.

Compounding this, the city's planning decisions have long overlooked the link between zoning and health outcomes. High-density, low-income housing is rarely paired with investments in clinics, healthy food access, or recreational space. These omissions perpetuate a cycle in which already-marginalized populations are left to absorb the health costs of historical disinvestment. The legacy of planning as moral engineering—seen in the City Beautiful movement and early zoning codes—resurfaces here in more insidious form, dictating not just how neighborhoods look, but who thrives within them.[25]

Civic Disparities: Representation, Boundaries, and Disempowerment

Political disenfranchisement in Madison is spatialized through the drawing of aldermanic districts, public meeting access, and the structure of civic engagement processes. Residents in historically disinvested neighborhoods often face barriers to participation that are not simply

[25] Dorceta Taylor (2014), Nayan Shah (2001), and Natalia Molina (2006) each illustrate how racialized narratives of disease and disorder have historically justified the spatial marginalization of communities of color. Taylor's work in environmental justice highlights how BIPOC neighborhoods are disproportionately exposed to environmental hazards and routinely excluded from health-promoting infrastructure such as parks, clinics, and clean air protections. Shah's historical analysis demonstrates how public health systems deployed racialized fear of contagion to justify segregation, surveillance, and the unequal provision of care. Molina extends this analysis in Fit to Be Citizens, tracing how scientific discourse and urban policy pathologized Mexican, Japanese, and Chinese communities in Los Angeles—rendering them both racially inferior and medically suspect. Together, their work offers a framework for understanding how Madison's current geography of health—marked by infrastructural neglect, disinvestment, and differential access—is not accidental, but the product of a deeper spatial ideology that governs who is seen as a public health priority and who is rendered expendable.

procedural but geographic. Meetings held in inaccessible locations, reliance on digital communication, and the absence of local organizing infrastructure all contribute to low turnout and underrepresentation.

Moreover, aldermanic districting in Madison has at times fractured cohesive communities of interest—particularly on the north and southwest sides—by splitting them across multiple districts. This has diluted voting power and complicated coalition-building efforts. As with school boundaries, the drawing of political boundaries carries the weight of historical segregation. Despite reforms such as the city's Independent Redistricting Committee (which I chaired), the legacies of fragmented participation and symbolic exclusion persist.

Planning boards and public commissions also reflect a skewed geography of participation. Testimony and influence often come from neighborhood associations with deep roots and legal acumen—most of which are located in whiter, wealthier parts of the city. In contrast, newer or more diverse neighborhoods frequently lack the bandwidth, access, or recognition needed to shape development decisions.[26]

[26] Wacquant (2008) refers to this phenomenon as a “double exclusion,” wherein marginalized communities are denied not only access to economic and spatial resources but also to the institutional processes that govern their distribution. In Madison, this is evident in how public planning structures—such as neighborhood planning councils, zoning hearings, and design review boards—tend to privilege participation from residents with procedural fluency, time flexibility, and social capital. Wealthier, whiter neighborhoods often have longstanding associations with formal charters and legal experience, enabling them to mobilize quickly around land use decisions. Meanwhile, more diverse or under-resourced communities face barriers not only in being heard, but in being recognized as legitimate stakeholders in the first place. The result is a participatory imbalance that reproduces spatial inequality under the banner of democratic input.

The deep structure of civic disenfranchisement in Madison was clearly outlined by the Task Force on Government Structure (TFOGS)[27]. The task force's findings revealed that Madison's political institutions were both fragmented and opaque—built to serve a mid-20th-century population and never adequately restructured to reflect the city's demographic and geographic evolution. The city's unusually high number of boards, commissions, and committees—nearly 100 at the time of the TFOGS report—diffused power in ways that often excluded those without time, institutional knowledge, or advanced degrees. Moreover, the at-large committee appointment system enabled political gatekeeping, where the appearance of "open government" concealed entrenched barriers to BIPOC participation. As the report noted, these structures "produce inefficiencies, confusion, and barriers to inclusive governance," especially for residents unfamiliar with Madison's complex procedural culture.

The drawing of aldermanic districts further complicated this picture. As chair of the 2021 City of Madison Redistricting Committee, I oversaw efforts to make the process more equitable and transparent. Yet, the process itself revealed the limits of structural reform in the absence of deeper spatial justice. The historical design of neighborhoods, themselves shaped by redlining, exclusionary zoning, and transit accessibility, constrained how equitable districts could be drawn. For example, efforts to maintain "communities of interest" often ran up against the reality that many BIPOC communities were fragmented by previous waves of displacement and economic marginalization. In some cases, district boundaries that appeared neutral on paper actually bisected natural communities—weakening their political cohesion and reinforcing the

[27] I was part of TFOGS for its entire existence

civic invisibility born from land use segregation. In short, redistricting was a mirror reflecting decades of spatial harm, not a tool capable of redressing it in isolation.

This civic fragmentation has produced profound downstream effects. Neighborhood associations, often elevated in planning and development processes, are not evenly distributed across the city and often reflect older, wealthier, and whiter constituencies. Many BIPOC and low-income neighborhoods lack formally recognized associations altogether, meaning they are functionally absent from deliberative processes around zoning changes, public investment, and planning initiatives. Even when residents from these areas are able to engage, they often encounter procedural hurdles—such as requirements for formal testimony, limited translation services, or inaccessible meeting formats—that reduce their efficacy. The result is a participatory ecology that reproduces inequality: voice is unevenly distributed, and representation is structurally constrained. As the TFOGS report concluded, the city's current government structure "does not equitably represent or serve all residents," particularly those most impacted by the historical housing policies detailed earlier in this track.

Structural Outcomes and Planning's Epistemic Role

What unites these educational, health, and civic disparities is not only their severity but their origin in a shared infrastructure of exclusion. The Madison planning apparatus—however progressive in rhetoric—has long operated as a knowledge system that normalizes and rationalizes uneven outcomes. Decisions made in the name of neutrality or efficiency often conceal value judgments rooted in class and race. Planning documents, school maps, zoning overlays, and districting processes become archival evidence of the city's segregationist logic.

This section reaffirms a central theme of this track: that spatial exclusion was never just a question of physical location. It was, and remains, a question of power—of who has the right to dwell, to participate, and to shape the future. In Madison, these rights have been systematically constrained by policies and practices that place BIPOC communities in a position of managed inequity. The disparities we observe today are thus not failures of implementation, but enduring expressions of a historically racialized urban design.

Spatial Implications of Madison's Economic Transformation

While prior sections have established the spatial foundations of exclusion in Madison's planning history, this section examines how economic restructuring advanced and adapted those foundations through institutional pathways. It situates Madison's post-industrial transformation within broader spatial logics of speculative redevelopment and labor market restructuring, showing how economic transitions reconfigured rather than replaced segregationist geographies—embedding inequality through shifts in zoning, infrastructure allocation, and land use prioritization. These dynamics set the stage for the deeper theoretical inquiry into institutionalized harm (Track II) and the administrative mechanisms that sustain it (Track III).[28]

[28] Numerous scholars have examined how post-industrial urban transitions—particularly the shift from manufacturing to knowledge and service economies—have intensified racial and spatial inequality through land use decisions, planning norms, and institutional discretion. For example, Saskia Sassen (2001) and Thomas Piketty (2014) link labor market bifurcation to global capital concentration and wealth extraction, often mirrored in urban spatial stratification. Lawrence Vale (2007), in *From the Puritans to the Projects*, demonstrates how U.S. public housing policy has long reflected cultural anxieties about poverty and social order, embedding exclusionary ideals into the built environment even under the guise of reform. Loïc Wacquant (2008) extends this analysis by showing how zoning regimes and urban "revitalization" efforts can function as instruments of territorial stigmatization and carceral containment. Xavier de Souza Briggs' *The Geography of Opportunity* (2005) emphasizes how place continues to shape life chances under conditions of formal legal equity, showing that geographic context—especially when underpinned by decades of disinvestment and racialized planning—remains a primary determinant of institutional outcomes. His later work with Popkin and Goering (*Moving to Opportunity*, 2010) critiques the assumption that mobility alone can disrupt concentrated disadvantage, arguing that unless institutional systems adapt to support inclusion, new geographies can re-inscribe the harms of the old. These works underscore a key insight:

The final decades of the twentieth century marked a profound economic transformation for cities across the Midwest, and Madison was no exception. As the industrial base that once provided economic mobility for working-class and BIPOC residents began to erode, Madison's economy shifted toward a service- and knowledge-based model increasingly centered around government, education, and technology. This transition, while framed as progress, effectively narrowed pathways to economic stability for large segments of the population, particularly those without access to higher education, professional networks, or intergenerational wealth. These shifts did not simply "happen to" Madison; rather, they occurred through land use decisions, speculative investment, and uneven planning priorities that converted spaces of labor into sites of exclusion.

The decline of manufacturing in Madison paralleled broader national patterns of deindustrialization, but with uniquely local consequences. As plants closed or relocated and industrial lands were rezoned or repurposed, entire neighborhoods—especially those on the North and East Sides—lost both employment centers and their economic anchors. What remained was not only joblessness, but also disinvestment, stigmatization, and eventual displacement. The closure of the Oscar Mayer plant in 2017 offers a striking example: a formerly high-wage employer for a racially diverse workforce was supplanted by redevelopment plans aimed at higher-income, white-collar residents and businesses. While marketed as mixed-use revitalization, the Oscar Mayer Special Area Plan lacked clear provisions for preserving affordable housing or employment opportunities for the communities most affected by the

---

economic restructuring does not simply map onto existing inequalities, but actively deepens them through systems of governance, spatial ideology, and managed investment. These themes are carried forward into Track II's analysis of violence and Track III's treatment of civic design and discretionary governance.

closure (City of Madison Planning Division, 2020). Rather than healing historical harm, the site became a symbol of contemporary spatial inequity.

Simultaneously, Madison's emergence as a hub for education and health services—as well as the meteoric rise of companies like Epic Systems—shifted the city's economic emphasis toward a professionalized labor market. This new economy disproportionately benefited highly educated, often white, in-migrants while effectively excluding many local residents, especially BIPOC youth, who face compounded barriers in housing, employment, and education. High school graduates from Madison increasingly find themselves competing for entry-level work with university graduates, further marginalizing those who were already structurally disadvantaged by previous land use and education policies. As Thomas Piketty (2014) and Loïc Wacquant (2008) argue, these forms of exclusion compound over time, reinforcing intergenerational stratification through state-sanctioned economic design.

Land use policy has not simply mirrored this economic transition—it has actively enabled and sustained it. Through a series of planning decisions favoring higher-density, market-rate development—often in formerly industrial or disinvested zones—the city has incentivized gentrification. Redevelopment efforts in areas like Park Street, East Washington Avenue, and the Northside have frequently adopted anti-gentrification language while simultaneously implementing zoning and investment strategies that catalyze the very displacement they purport to mitigate. Paige Glotzer (2020) warns that "inclusion" rhetoric often masks exclusionary outcomes, especially when political power and neighborhood influence are unevenly distributed. In Madison, this dynamic is evident in the disparate outcomes of redevelopment debates in the Northside versus the Westside. While Northside residents voiced concerns about affordability

and displacement during the Oscar Mayer redevelopment process, their influence was marginal. In contrast, Westside residents, largely white and affluent, successfully pushed back on proposed upzonings in the West Area Plan—mobilizing political capital to preserve neighborhood "character" and resist densification, even while publicly affirming equity.

These political asymmetries are not accidents; they are structured features of Madison's civic landscape. The governance structures explored in depth in Track III—especially aldermanic districting, the advisory powers of neighborhood associations, and the fragmented distribution of planning authority—favor residents with time, resources, and institutional literacy. As a result, gentrification in Madison is not only a market phenomenon—it is a bureaucratically managed process that reproduces historical exclusion in new guises. Even as planning language shifts to emphasize inclusion and justice, the infrastructural and procedural frameworks remain optimized to uphold the spatial and political dominance of affluent constituencies.

Madison's economic transformation cannot be disentangled from its spatial history. Deindustrialization, gentrification, and exclusion from the knowledge economy are not standalone issues—they are cumulative, compounding, and governed. The marginalization of BIPOC and low-income residents continues not simply because of market forces or policy neglect, but because of deeply embedded institutional preferences that reward existing power and preserve historical geographies of privilege. By examining these patterns through the lens of land use governance, this section highlights a crucial dimension of urban inequality that will be explored further in Track III: the institutional design of local government and its role in structuring access to opportunity, voice, and place.

The dynamics traced in this section reflect more than just economic adaptation—they represent the cumulative imprint of decisions made over decades, encoded into Madison's physical and institutional landscape. Deindustrialization, professionalization, and redevelopment did not emerge in a vacuum; they unfolded along pathways already shaped by racialized land use, zoning, and exclusionary planning. These pathways have guided not only where growth occurs, but who that growth includes—and who it displaces. What appears today as the city's natural economic evolution is, in fact, the latest expression of a historically contingent system of spatial governance.

This reframing invites a more critical reading of contemporary planning efforts. It reveals how policies that appear race-neutral or economically rational often reproduce the same exclusionary outcomes as their historical antecedents. In doing so, they preserve the structural conditions that shape who can live where, who can access which institutions, and who participates meaningfully in civic life. These disparities do not persist by inertia—they are upheld through layers of procedural, infrastructural, and ideological design.

As the analysis throughout this track has shown, the disparities seen in Madison today are not accidental or anomalous. They are the result of decisions—often fragmented, occasionally contradictory, but always patterned. To understand these patterns is to unearth the governing logics that have ordered space, allocated opportunity, and stratified power across generations.

This recognition leads naturally to the final section of the track: a reflection on the imperatives for change. It is here, in the conclusion, that the project returns to its foundational research questions and considers how a historical lens enables not only diagnosis but also transformation. By tracing Madison's segregation through its land use history, we are better equipped to

understand how structural violence becomes normalized—and what it might take to reverse its course.

Conclusion

This track has traced the arc of Madison's spatial history, revealing how the racial disparities that define its educational, economic, and civic outcomes today are rooted in a complex interweaving of exclusionary land use practices and legal instruments, institutional inertia, and state-enabled fragmentation. Across each historical phase—from the dispossession of Indigenous land, to early planning ideologies and speculative governance, to the layered implementation of covenants, redlining, renewal, and zoning—segregation was not a byproduct of natural growth or benign neglect. It was crafted. Manufactured. And then repeatedly reinforced through decisions dressed in the language of progress.

In showing that urban racial segregation in Madison was neither accidental nor anomalous, this analysis offers an alternative lens for understanding how inequality takes root.[29] The research presented here introduces a key premise of this larger project: that systemic disparities in education, health, income, and representation are not just symptoms of economic inequality, but also of infrastructural, political, and epistemic violence. That is, they are not simply outcomes of

[29] Much of the mainstream policy discourse on racial inequality has historically emphasized either behavioral explanations (e.g., "culture of poverty" frameworks), market dynamics (e.g., job mismatch or housing supply shortages), or the legacy of past discrimination as opposed to ongoing institutional design. Seminal work by Massey and Denton (1993) challenged this perspective by showing how residential segregation is not simply a historical artifact but a contemporary structural process reinforced by housing markets, public policy, and institutional gatekeeping. Subsequent scholarship—including Taylor (2019), Glotzer (2020), and Wacquant (2008)—has extended this critique by demonstrating how spatial governance itself acts as a mechanism for producing and maintaining inequality. This track contributes to that tradition by showing how Madison's spatial landscape—formed through zoning, covenants, redlining, and renewal—continues to administer opportunity and exclusion through ostensibly neutral planning processes. It suggests that understanding contemporary inequality requires tracing not only economic factors or historical injustices, but also the enduring spatial and institutional logics that shape urban life.

failed governance—they are outcomes of governance functioning as it was designed to. Through this lens, housing and land use policies, often framed in technocratic terms, emerge instead as deeply racialized instruments of spatial stratification, defining who belongs, who decides, and who benefits.

This first track, drives the following questions: How have historic and contemporary land use, housing, and institutional policies described above, operated as forms of state-imposed violence that systematically deny BIPOC communities access to democratic processes and institutions? And what are the individual, structural, and societal consequences of this denial? This track helps found the theoretical and empirical investigations that follow.

Track II builds on this foundation by deepening the conceptual framework for understanding these policies and practices as forms of violence. Drawing on theorists such as Karl Polanyi, Thomas Piketty, Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, and Loïc Wacquant, it reframes urban inequality not as a deviation from the norm, but as the expected consequence of institutionalized scarcity, biopolitical control, and economic dislocation. It expands the analysis to include neuroscience and developmental science, linking housing instability, toxic stress, and spatial insecurity to long-term educational and health outcomes. Through this multidisciplinary model, Track II establishes that violence is not always overt—it can be infrastructural, symbolic, and embedded in governance itself.

Track III, the final track, turns to the mechanics of that governance. It interrogates how local government structures—including council composition, administrative design, participatory frameworks, and bureaucratic discretion—contribute to or mitigate state-imposed harm. Using Madison as a case study, the track draws on your direct experience in city governance, including

the Task Force on Government Structure, redistricting, and committee reform. It asks: What would it mean to reimagine local government not simply as a site of service delivery or democratic representation, but as an active participant in the reproduction or dismantling of spatial injustice?

What emerges from this arc is a core insight: Madison's contemporary racial and economic disparities did not emerge as the unanticipated byproducts of urban growth or market fluctuations. They emerge from a confluence of decisions and institutional logics—materialized in planning routines, zoning frameworks, and governance norms—that have administered spatial inequality across generations From the city's founding as a settler-capitalist venture to the professionalization of its economy in the 21st century, exclusion has not only persisted but evolved. What this track has sought to establish is that the lines separating privilege from precarity in Madison are not incidental or accidental; they are the visible remains of spatial governance systems designed to distribute access, opportunity, and belonging unevenly.

This historical analysis redirects attention away from individual- or behavior-based explanations of disparity toward the spatial and institutional logics that produce and reproduce inequality. Rather than locating disparity in deficient communities, misguided programs, or failed intentions, it redirects attention toward the physical, legal, and administrative architecture that continues to structure who benefits—and who remains constrained. The language of reform often misidentifies the problem: It assumes the current distribution of outcomes is fixable without a deeper interrogation of the systems that produce those outcomes. What the historical record suggests is that inequality has been structured into the city itself—through zoning, infrastructure, institutional silences, and the spatial politics of inclusion and exclusion.

By anchoring the narrative in land use, covenants, zoning, redlining, urban renewal, and planning discourse, this track has offered a localized genealogy of structural violence. It has shown how ideas about race and risk translated into land value and policy; how neighborhood boundaries evolved into civic boundaries; how past investments and disinvestments have compounded across generations. The analysis draws from and builds upon the insights of Glotzer, Taylor, Marchiel, and Satter, who collectively remind us that exclusion is not simply historical—it is active, adaptive, and often hidden within the routines of governance and planning.

In this way, Track I is not only a historical account—it is a methodological invitation. It insists that if we are to craft interventions capable of disrupting entrenched disparity, we must begin with a clear-eyed assessment of how that disparity came to be. Only then can planning, policy, and public engagement be aligned toward equitable transformation, rather than unintentionally reinforcing the very structures they seek to reform.

Interlude I: Where the Maps End

Track I traced the story of Madison's design—of how the city came to be arranged, divided, protected, and denied. It followed the quiet force of planning: the language of zoning, the place of transportation, how investments were allocated. In these systems, exclusion was not an accident. It was encoded. Spatial hierarchy was drawn into the grid of the city, carried forward by parcel maps, land use rules, and investment regimes that made segregation seem rational—even necessary.

But the map is not the territory.[30] Models and classifications offer structure, but they do not convey the full ecology of lived experience. Maps outline parcels, buffer zones, and regulatory overlays—but they do not reflect the rhythm of disrupted households, the temporal costs of relocation, or the slow erosion of trust that follows repeated institutional disconnection. They do not reveal the turbulence of income volatility, where families must constantly recalibrate budgets, reconfigure priorities, and defer long-term planning in response to short-term precarity. They miss the grind of short-term mobility, where displacement—whether due to rising rents, policy shifts, or eviction—fractures social ties and interrupts educational trajectories. And they ignore set-up time: the lag between a move and the restoration of stability. During this period, families are not simply out of place—they are out of sync, navigating unfamiliar systems without the embedded cues or informal support that signal how to re-enter civic life.[31]

---

[30] "The map is not the territory" originates with Alfred Korzybski, who used it to describe the disconnect between abstract representations and lived experience (Korzybski, 1933). Economist John Kay later applied this concept to economic modeling, critiquing how the discipline's reliance on internally consistent but oversimplified models often leads to policies detached from real-world complexity. See: Alfred Korzybski, Science and Sanity (1933); John Kay, "The Map Is Not the Territory: An Essay on the State of Economics," September 2011, available at johnkay.com

[31] The conceptual framework of income volatility, short-term mobility, and set-up time was originally developed in my prior research on veterans' transition dynamics and small-unit military cohesion. The typology draws on

In my earlier research, I used the military platoon as a reference point for what stability can look like under conditions of complexity or duress. (Castañeda, 2013; Castañeda & Potter, 2014) The platoon functioned as a stabilizing force precisely because it minimized income volatility, made mobility legible, and reduced set-up time through constant training, shared language, and mutual recognition. That structure made trust ambient—available at every step, embedded in daily routine, and reaffirmed through collective purpose. What happens in cities like Madison is often the inverse. Public systems are not built to absorb disruption but to manage it administratively. And the loss of informal anchors—neighbors, caseworkers, school staff, routine—renders every move a reentry, every encounter a recalibration.

So, if Track I asked how city's organize exclusion into space, Track II asks what happens to people who live within that exclusion—especially when there is no structural analogue to the platoon. It is a shift from architecture to embodiment, from planning history to the biology of stress and the policies of constraint. What does it mean when a child's life is shaped not by singular acts of harm, but by a compounding set of systemic demands—each requiring adaptation, but offering no scaffolding for recovery?

---

sociological, economic, and organizational scholarship. Income volatility refers to the unpredictability of earnings and its impact on household stability and long-term planning (see Ray Boudon, Education, Opportunity, and Social Inequality (1986); Tom Hertz, "Understanding Mobility in America" - Center for American Progress, 2006; Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, The Spirit Level (2010); and Joseph Stiglitz, The Price of Inequality (2012)). Short-term mobility concerns the frequency and involuntary nature of household moves that disrupt continuity and diminish social capital, particularly in low-income environments. Set-up time, adapted from industrial operations literature (see Bartel et al., 2007: International Differences In The Adoption And Impact Of New Information Technologies And New HR Practices: The Valve-Making Industry In The U.S. And U.K." NBER Working Series), refers to the lag between displacement and the reestablishment of functional routine—schooling, services, medical access, etc.—and was critically interpreted through the sociological work of Richard Sennett (The Culture of the New Capitalism, 2006). This triad was further developed through applied planning analysis and participant observation.

The next track introduces state-imposed violence—not as spectacle, but as routine. It is the violence of fragmentation, of eligibility churn, of decisions that defer intervention while citing process. It shows how public systems—designed to serve—can operate in ways that isolate, destabilize, and wear down. And it asks: what if the harm is not in the breakdown, but in the ongoing function of the system itself?

Where the maps end, another narrative begins—etched not in zoning ordinances or parcel lines, but in the nervous system, the classroom, and the patterned stress of navigating civic life without a shared infrastructure of support.

Track II: Theoretical Intersections of State-imposed Violence, Economic and Educational Disparities

Abstract:

This track reconsiders violence as a structural and administrative force, shaped by political economy, urban planning, and institutional form. In Madison, Wisconsin, disparities in education, health, housing, and economic mobility are regularly attributed to social dysfunction or personal deficit. This analysis offers an alternative: that these conditions emerge from an architecture of governance designed to manage inequality through exclusion, fragmentation, and spatial dislocation. By drawing on the work of Karl Polanyi and Thomas Piketty, I examine how commodification and wealth concentration form the economic foundation for structural vulnerability. I then engage post-structural theory—particularly Michel Foucault's analytics of power, Pierre Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence, and Loïc Wacquant's analysis of territorial stigmatization—to explore how violence takes shape through norms, policies, and institutional routines. Building from these frameworks, I introduce findings from developmental neuroscience and my own research in Madison, connecting toxic stress and instability to state-mediated deprivation. This track bridges the historical foundations laid in Track I with the governance analysis to follow in Track III. It shows how racial disparities in Madison reflect more than benign neglect or failed reform; they stem from the daily operations of political, spatial, and epistemic systems that constrain agency and corrode opportunity. Understanding violence as a governing logic invites a shift in focus—from mitigation to transformation.

Key Words: State-imposed violence; structural inequality; urban governance; land use policy; spatial dislocation; toxic stress; symbolic violence; territorial stigmatization

Introduction

Efforts to address violence in Madison often begin with individual behavior or criminal enforcement, bypassing the deeper policy logics that produce vulnerability in the first place. These logics are embedded in how land is allocated, how wealth circulates, and how bureaucracies structure access to resources. They are not episodic. They are consistent, replicable, and sanctioned through the language of order and efficiency.

This track takes the position that violence can be understood as a form of governance. In my bracket governance itself in favor of showing its harmful effects understood through the literature on violence and how such violence is becomes accepted and questioned part of people's lives. I reserve a more complete discussion of governance and its production of harm for track three. Governance is expressed through the historical (Track 1) processes of creating zoning map, the school boundary, the administrative queue, and the funding formula and the implications of those interlocking systems. Racial disparities in education, housing, and economic mobility are symptoms of this system—not as accidents, but as outcomes of how decisions are made, how institutions behave, and how space is organized.

Violence, in this frame, is not solely interpersonal or criminal—it is structural, administrative, and often bureaucratic. It occurs when systems produce harm not through malice or mistake, but through the routine application of policies that constrain opportunity, erode agency, or deny care. Drawing from theorists like Wacquant, Foucault, Bourdieu, and Young, this track treats violence as an outcome of institutional design. It is embedded in how needs are assessed, how risks are distributed, and how eligibility for support is defined. These are not neutral decisions. They shape life chances across generations and geographies, particularly for low-income and BIPOC

residents whose experiences with the state are often conditioned by surveillance, exclusion, or misrecognition.

In Madison, these forms of harm are observable not only in the outcomes of racial disparity reports, but in the procedural machinery that sustains them. The part-time nature of city council service, the fragmentation between public agencies, and the administrative burdens placed on the most vulnerable all contribute to a civic landscape where harm is organized rather than mitigated. This track is not an abstract theory of violence—it is a grounded exploration of how institutional form produces patterned harm in daily life. What follows is an analysis of how violence operates through the logics of governance, and how inequality is maintained not through exceptional decisions, but through the ordinary functioning of local systems.

The analysis in this track is grounded in a method of critical interpretation shaped by direct institutional participation, field observation, and abductive reasoning. As with the other tracks in this dissertation, the inquiry does not follow a linear hypothesis-testing model. Rather, it proceeds through iterative engagement with empirical materials—memos, minutes, meetings, public testimony, reports, and lived experiences—using theoretical frameworks to clarify how institutional logics and bureaucratic forms produce violence over time.

My positionality is not incidental to the method—it is central. I served on the Ad Hoc ERO Committee, chaired the TFOGS Subcommittee on Boards, Commissions, and Committees, and co-chaired the Common Council Subcommittee. These were not passive roles; they involved agenda setting, testimony review, internal negotiation, and long-term exposure to how governance narratives are formed, constrained, and circulated. This embeddedness created the conditions for institutional interlocution: a form of analytic access that allowed me to trace how

decisions were made, how dissent was managed, and how harm was translated into administrable formats. This method reflects what Charles Mills describes as an “epistemology of ignorance”—a lens that exposes how systems obscure the operations of power by structuring what is seen, said, or known (Mills, 1997). In contrast, this project adopts an embedded stance that seeks to surface that structure through participation, observation, and interpretive analysis.

At the center of this process is abduction—a reasoning strategy that moves from empirical fragments toward the most plausible theoretical explanation. I used pattern recognition to interpret how city documents framed risk and responsibility, how equity efforts were narrated or deflected, and how administrative silence functioned as a mode of harm. Memos and analytic notes were used to track recurrences: phrases in minutes, framings in reports, omissions in process, and contradictions between stated equity goals and operational decisions. These traces were then annotated against theoretical concepts drawn from Polanyi, Piketty, Wacquant, Foucault, and Young—not as decorative citations, but as analytic tools to interpret the structure beneath the surface.

Ultimately, these methods and abductive approach presented in this track suggests that violence in Madison is not a rupture in the system—it is the system functioning as designed. Through an interdisciplinary synthesis of economic theory, post-structural analysis, and local empirical observation, I aim to advance a framework for understanding state-imposed violence not as a deviation, but as a predictable consequence of embedded political and spatial choices. This framework invites us to reimagine violence prevention as a matter not of policy adjustment, but of structural transformation.

The discussion is grounded in Madison—a city whose public commitments to equity have not prevented the durable concentration of harm. Drawing from personal fieldwork and institutional leadership across city and regional efforts, I explore how violence is structured into place. Track II, in this sense, forms the conceptual link between the historical narratives of Track I and the institutional critique that follows in Track III. Together, they help explain how structural violence is maintained, and potentially how it might be confronted.

Theoretical Framework: Violence as Institutional Atmosphere

In this track, violence is approached not as a singular act or aberration, but as an institutional atmosphere—an ambient condition shaped by layered bureaucratic, economic, and spatial practices that wear on bodies over time. It is less a discrete event than a patterned exposure, internalized and metabolized unevenly depending on one's position within systems of care, extraction, and neglect.

Foucault's (1978, 1991) accounts of biopolitics and disciplinary power illuminate how institutions shape conduct through norms, classifications, and techniques of control that appear neutral but carry unequal effects. In Madison, these dynamics operate through housing waitlists, school discipline procedures, and service eligibility metrics that differentially distribute opportunity and containment. These are not overt acts of aggression, but cumulative modes of exposure—what Bourdieu (1990, 1991) might call the symbolic violence of institutional habitus, where exclusion becomes a feature of ordinary operations.

This violence is not static. It flickers in feedback loops between spatial governance and social judgment. Wacquant's (2009, 2010) work on territorial stigma reveals how neighborhoods become repositories for risk narratives and management practices, intensifying surveillance

while eroding political voice. Polanyi (1944) helps situate this in a broader economic arc, where land and labor are treated as commodities disembedded from social meaning. Piketty's (2014) analysis of capital accumulation further clarifies how inequality becomes durable when institutional logics prioritize market value over human need.

In concert, these frameworks offer a vocabulary for naming the slow saturation of institutional life with harm. They help make visible how Madison's most vulnerable residents—often Black, poor, or displaced—navigate not a malfunctioning system, but one calibrated to administer precarity through routine.

Rhythm of Interlaced Findings

This project developed its analytic rhythm through a recursive, abductive process of synthesis. Working across field notes, archival materials, policy documents, and committee deliberations, I tracked how harm surfaced—not as a singular finding, but through thematic reverberation.[32] Key insights did not emerge in isolation. They materialized when fragments from one site echoed in another: when a housing allocation policy mirrored school enrollment practices, or when public testimony on redistricting repeated rationales once used to justify police presence in schools.

The method was not one of formal coding or linear extraction, but of thematic attunement—revisiting notes, testimonies, and deliberative exchanges to trace recurring patterns and points of

[32] This line of inquiry reflects the longest arc of my intellectual and professional work. Long before the dissertation, I explored these questions through academic study and applied leadership: from early framing efforts like the "Scholar-Warrior Curriculum" and "wet feet, empty stomach" at UC San Diego, to field research at Stanford on subtractive schooling, to work at MIT on workforce development as trauma mitigation. Through national initiatives working with PolicyLink and via Prevention Institute, as well as later scholarship at UCSF and a peer-reviewed paper presented at the Pacific Sociological Association, I have returned to this analytic terrain repeatedly. These ideas were also shaped through over two decades of professional practice—leading teams and designing interventions in contexts ranging from Marine Corps platoons to public schools and community-based organizations. Though distinct from the formal structure of this dissertation, that cumulative experience anchors the epistemic grounding of this track and reflects my long-standing expertise as a scholar-practitioner in systems-change work.

institutional friction. Over time, certain dynamics became legible: legitimacy scaffolding, data opacity, symbolic equity claims, and procedural containment. These were not deduced through a pre-structured analytic tool, but through lived immersion and retrospective pattern recognition—especially as similar discursive moves appeared across distinct domains.

To hold these patterns in view while preserving contextual specificity, I engaged in interpretive cross-referencing—holding one institutional logic against another to examine how equity was claimed, deferred, or displaced. These interlaced findings revealed that harm in Madison is not reproduced through any single mechanism, but through structurally consistent processes of filtration, displacement, and misrecognition. This logic parallels what scholars of medical sociology have called the medicalization (Conrad, 2007)[33] and / or biomedicalization (Clarke et al., 2003)[34] of social life—processes through which broad social conditions are reframed as

[33] The concept of medicalization, as articulated by Peter Conrad (2007), describes the process by which aspects of everyday life—such as childbirth, menopause, aging, sadness, or deviance—are redefined and treated as medical problems requiring diagnosis, intervention, or clinical management. In this framework, medical knowledge extends beyond its traditional boundaries to reclassify human experiences as symptoms, syndromes, or disorders. As Conrad explains, medicalization entails the expansion of medical jurisdiction and the application of medical knowledge to areas previously not deemed medical phenomena (p. 4). Importantly, medicalization does not simply reflect growing knowledge or concern for well-being—it also reinforces the authority of medical institutions, legitimizes interventionist logics, and shifts attention away from structural determinants of health and inequality.

In the context of disparity discourse, this logic translates into the framing of racialized outcomes—such as educational underperformance, housing insecurity, or community trauma—as "conditions" to be managed through services and institutional attention. The focus shifts from collective disinvestment or racialized governance to individual deficits and targeted programming. This reframing legitimizes incrementalist responses and obscures the political and economic systems that reproduce inequity. Just as medicalization redirects attention from social environments to individual bodies, disparity discourse often redirects attention from spatial and administrative architectures to "service gaps" and behavioral risk factors—allowing the reproduction of inequality under the guise of progressive concern.

[34] While medicalization describes the expansion of medical categories into everyday life, biomedicalization marks a more complex and intensified phase of technoscientific transformation. Clarke et al. (2003) argue that biomedicalization involves a shift from treating illness to transforming health itself—through genomics, predictive diagnostics, pharmaceutical consumption, and lifestyle optimization. It reflects the commodification of health, the surveillance and customization of bodies, and the repositioning of patients as informed, optimizing consumers. As they note, biomedicalization includes the commodification of health, the transformation of bodies through technology, and the interplay of technoscience with health and wellness. While medicalization explained the expansion of medical domain into everyday life, biomedicalization expands this territory to include proactive modifications to bodies and identities, even (especially) in the absence of illness. As it pertains to flows of capital,

individual vulnerabilities, requiring treatment, compliance, or targeted care. In these frameworks, racial disparities are not the result of organized disinvestment, spatial exclusion, or state-sanctioned accumulation. They become performance gaps, behavior risks, or access issues to be addressed through administrative triage. Civic institutions, in turn, become sites of therapeutic management rather than democratic contestation.

This dynamic was particularly visible in the public response to the 2013 Race to Equity report. The report's stark findings created institutional urgency—a demand for action—but that urgency was largely met with symbolic interventions: equity toolkits, listening sessions, and the hiring of diversity staff. Much like in clinical settings where symptoms are managed without addressing root causes, these actions focused on procedural demonstration rather than structural repair. The result was a civic landscape in which racialized disparities were acknowledged and circulated, but seldom restructured. The 2023 follow-up report confirmed this: the symptoms remained, even as the language of treatment had evolved.[35]

The Race to Equity response exemplifies how institutional discourse can reframe structural harm as a problem of individual deficit—what scholars describe as the medicalization of social life**.** This framing rationalizes harm not as the result of disinvestment or exclusion, but as an

---

medicalization frames patients primarily as passive recipients of medical expertise, whereas biomedicalization recognizes patients as active agents or "consumers" who make decisions—sometimes driven by direct-to-consumer advertising, digital health platforms, or biotechnical imaginaries.

In the context of urban governance, biomedicalization finds resonance in the proliferation of dashboards, equity scorecards, behavioral interventions, and institutional "resilience strategies" that frame inequality as a condition to be optimized rather than structurally dismantled. Residents are reimagined not as rights-bearing citizens navigating unjust systems, but as data subjects or programmatic targets—asked to "participate," "engage," or "comply" in systems that often leave the root causes of harm untouched. The result is a civic logic of therapeutic governance, where interventions are designed to fine-tune individual or community outcomes without altering the infrastructures of exclusion.

[35] It is also a common article / trope that the local newspapers periodically pick up on. See Elbow (2020).

administrative condition requiring technical or behavioral remedies. The goal was to trace how institutions metabolize critique while maintaining their operational grammar—less a catalog of failures than a study of how resistance is absorbed without structural disruption. Each site offered a partial window; taken together, they compose a mosaic of how state-sanctioned harm is experienced, narrated, and institutionalized.

What these patterns reveal, when read collectively, is not only a set of discrete institutional failures, but a consistent logic that governs how harm is organized, managed, and deferred. The empirical findings, theoretical lenses, and analytic rhythm developed in this track now converge toward a final synthesis: a reframing of violence not as an episodic crisis, but as a distributed condition produced through policy, spatial arrangement, and bureaucratic design. It is to this synthesis—and its implications for how we understand and interrupt structural harm—that the final section now turns.[36]

---

[36] This track contributes to a cumulative analytic arc developed across the dissertation's three-part structure, building connections between historical foundations, institutional patterns, and the lived experience of structural harm.. Track I historicizes the present by detailing how zoning ordinances, racially restrictive covenants, redlining, and urban renewal policies embedded racialized exclusion into Madison's spatial and institutional infrastructure. For example, *Zoning, Segregation, and the Myth of Reform: 1970–2020s* and *The Geography of Disparity: Mapping Spatial Harm* document how administrative reforms have failed to dismantle long-standing inequities, instead reinscribing them under the guise of neutrality and professionalization. These sections lay the historical groundwork for understanding how contemporary policy is shaped by what might be called an infrastructural inheritance of exclusion.

Track III, *Managed Inequality*, extends the inquiry from structural history to institutional analysis, illustrating how harm is reproduced exponentially through the underlying forms and rhythms of local governance—rather than solely through isolated bad actors or faulty programs. For example, *Empirical Site I: TFOGS* outlines how Madison's diffuse civic architecture disperses responsibility and obstructs accountability, while *Section VI: Discourse and Analysis* synthesizes how procedural and symbolic governance reinforce the status quo even in the face of reformist intent. Where Track I demonstrates how racialized harm was built into the city's physical and regulatory terrain, Track III shows how governance logics continue to manage dissent, reframe critique, and limit the transformative potential of participation.

This current track situates itself between those poles—bridging inherited exclusion and institutional reproduction by analyzing how violence becomes routinized through spatial, economic, and administrative systems. In doing so, it connects the historical architecture of inequality to the procedural consolidation and employment of power illuminating how structural violence takes shape through patterned routines and normative assumptions embedded in

Synthesis and Conclusion

Violence in Madison is not episodic. It is durable, patterned, and administered through systems that convert scarcity, displacement, and exclusion into routine features of governance. The cases examined in this track—spanning housing, education, policing, and economic policy— reveal a civic infrastructure that perpetuates harm through its structural design, even while presenting itself as oriented toward equity or reform. This is not a claim about individual malice or broken programs, but about how state-sanctioned systems metabolize critique, suppress dissent, and translate equity into symbolic practice without structural change.

This analysis presents violence as a defining feature of governance, structured through the routine operations of spatial planning, economic policy, and bureaucratic administration. The harm experienced by marginalized communities in Madison is neither accidental nor unpredictable. It is the foreseeable product of policies that separate intention from impact, and participation from power. In this sense, violence emerges through both imposition and curation—managed via bureaucratic tools that embed racial and class hierarchies into the core mechanics of planning, funding, and institutional evaluation.

Yet this framing does not foreclose the possibility of transformation. It clarifies the stakes of it. If violence is embedded in the logic of governance itself, then its interruption demands more than policy revision. It requires a structural and conceptual reordering of how institutions recognize harm, assign responsibility, and allocate repair. That reordering cannot emerge from

---

institutional life, rather than emerging from isolated disruptions. The analytic rhythm developed here traces orchestration as a recurring pattern—surfacing through varied institutional forms, spatial arrangements, and systemic scales—rather than as a singular causal sequence.

administrative refinement alone. It must be anchored in a different understanding of justice—one rooted in the lived conditions of those most impacted by institutional failure.

This track contributes to that project by advancing an interpretive frame—one that foregrounds the material consequences of governance, the recursive nature of institutional discourse, and the sedimented history of racialized exclusion, without positioning itself as a definitive or prescriptive solution. When read alongside Track I's account of infrastructural injustice and Track III's examination of procedural governance, the work presented here affirms a core proposition of the dissertation as a whole: that addressing racial and economic disparities in Madison requires confronting not just outcomes, but the forms and rationalities that produce them.

Methodological and Conceptual Framing

Framing: From Disparities to State-Imposed Violence

Track II is structured around a central analytical premise: that racial and economic disparities in Madison must be understood not as residual effects of past injustice, but as ongoing expressions of state-imposed violence. This violence is not episodic or spectacular—it is structured, spatial, and often enacted through ordinary policy mechanisms. Track II advances a conceptualization of violence that foregrounds governance as a system of harm regulation, where disparities emerge not from breakdown, but from design. The project approaches this not as a single-issue investigation, but as a layered inquiry into how institutions authorize, normalize, and reproduce conditions of precarity—particularly for Black and Brown residents of Madison.

Rather than isolating violence to visible acts or specific policy failures, this work positions violence as a process: slow-moving, institutionalized, and routinized through planning practices,

bureaucratic language, and infrastructural decisions. By centering violence as an analytic lens, Track II not only synthesizes theoretical frameworks—drawing from Piketty, Polanyi, Foucault, Bourdieu, Wacquant, and developmental neuroscience—but also builds an interpretive foundation for a core concept: peripheralization. In this context, peripheralization is not simply a spatial condition, but a governing logic—one that organizes which communities are buffered, which are burdened, and how legitimacy, investment, and recognition are distributed across the urban landscape.

This theoretical framing requires a methodological stance that privileges conceptual development, discursive synthesis, and empirical embeddedness. The goal is not to produce generalized metrics of harm, but to render visible the systems that stabilize disparity beneath the language of equity. Track II functions, therefore, as both critique and construction—diagnosing the infrastructural character of violence while contributing a conceptual vocabulary through which its mechanisms can be named, debated, and dismantled.

The dual role—part participant-observer, part institutional interlocutor—requires methodological agility. At times, it demands a critical distance from decisions I helped shape; at others, it permits unique insight into how policies and procedures take form. This approach makes no claim to generalizability in the statistical sense. Instead, it seeks transferability: to offer interpretive tools and grounded theory that can assist others—scholars, practitioners, residents—in identifying, contesting, and reimagining the forms of violence embedded in urban governance elsewhere.

Positionality and Orientation

Track II is anchored in an embedded standpoint that complicates the conventional boundary between researcher and subject. As a long-time Madison resident, former municipal researcher, civic participant, and Executive Director of a community development organization, I have operated for over a decade at the nexus of policy analysis, administrative governance, and direct service. My access to data and insight is not mediated through surveys or interviews, but through continuous engagement: with planning commissions, city task forces, school district decisions, and neighborhood-level dislocation. I have chaired committees that set policy, responded to racialized zoning debates in real time, and advised youth navigating the systems this track centers in its analysis.

Rather than attempt to bracket this positionality in service of false neutrality, the research design embraces it as a methodological asset. This is not the stance of an objective observer looking in from afar, but of an institutional interlocutor—a scholar-practitioner whose embeddedness grants proximity to the discourses, decisions, and deferrals that structure urban inequality. In practice, this means that Track II draws from lived administrative encounters, direct participation in governance structures, field memos, testimony transcripts, policy drafts, and neighborhood-level initiatives. It is informed by what bureaucracies say and what they do; by what is documented and what is deferred.

This positionality also invites a reflexive stance—one that is acutely aware of the risks and responsibilities of operating within the very systems under critique. The analytic challenge is not only to observe state-imposed violence, but to recognize where and how I, as both a planner and

institutional actor, may be implicated in its reproduction. That tension is not resolved here, but it is named, and it is central to the research's ethical and methodological grounding.

The dual role—part participant-observer, part institutional interlocutor—requires methodological agility. At times, it demands a critical distance from decisions I helped shape; at others, it permits unique insight into how policies and procedures take form. This approach makes no claim to generalizability in the statistical sense. Instead, it seeks transferability: to offer interpretive tools and grounded theory that can assist others—scholars, practitioners, residents—in identifying, contesting, and reimagining the forms of violence embedded in urban governance elsewhere.

Sources and Materials

The analytic foundation of Track II draws from a hybrid archive: an interwoven set public documents, field-based observations, and longitudinal institutional engagement. These sources are not used to claim statistical representativeness. Instead, they offer structural insight into how governance routines and institutional discourse sustain racial and economic disparities in Madison. Violence, in this context, is approached as an administrative condition—circulated through public policies, formal decisions, and bureaucratic silence. This section outlines three categories of source material: (1) institutional and public reports, (2) embedded fieldwork and organizational practice, and (3) historically anchored policy and spatial documentation.

Institutional and Public Documents and Reports

Public documents in this track function as artifacts of governance discourse. The 2013 and 2023Race to Equity (R2E) reports, published by Kids Forward[37] serve as illustrative data points

[37] Previously the Wisconsin Council for Children and Families

within a broader civic ecosystem. The 2013 report documented longstanding disparities in educational access and outcomes, housing security, income, health and incarceration. Though it followed decades of similar findings—including the 2008 State of Black Madison report done by the Urban League (2008)—it catalyzed a shift in civic language and strategy. It was referenced in Common Council resolutions, mayoral addresses, planning initiatives, philanthropic campaigns, and nonprofit funding proposals. It coincided with a growing civic appetite for "equity language" and helped catalyze a discursive shift in which awareness of racialized disparities became a currency unto itself. Institutions, philanthropic actors, and municipal bodies began to speak the language of disparity with new fluency—often treating visibility as a form of intervention. Yet when the 2023 report revisited those indicators, it found that many conditions had either persisted or worsened.

Throughout this period, I worked in civic and organizational spaces where these reports were cited, operationalized, or challenged. I co-facilitated public forums, advised on funding strategies that cited R2E data, and reviewed institutional materials where equity goals were asserted without structural commitments. The report's prominence exemplifies a broader pattern: the institutionalization of disparity awareness without a corresponding shift in power or resource allocation.

Embedded Fieldwork

This research is also shaped by over a decade of sustained civic participation—through formal committee service, planning engagements, and less visible but equally instructive roles in the administrative life of the city. Thus, the analysis in Track II is grounded in lived and professional

experience across multiple sites of civic engagement. Over the past decade, I have held executive leadership roles that required sustained coordination with the City of Madison, Dane County, Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD), local philanthropy, and a range of grassroots and intermediary organizations. These roles included service on the Task Force on Government Structure (TFOGS), the City of Madison Redistricting Committee, and the MMSD Ad Hoc Committee on Educational Resource Officers. As Executive Director of Common Wealth Development, I have also worked across planning, housing, economic development, and youth programming domains.

Each of these settings produced documents, observations, and deliberative encounters that shaped the empirical and conceptual dimensions of this track. I reviewed transcripts from over 90 TFOGS meetings, compiled and analyzed public comment from the redistricting process, and facilitated youth engagement forums where institutional actors interacted directly with community members. In these spaces, I tracked recurring logics of deferral, boundary maintenance, and symbolic participation. These experiences also provided direct access to institutional friction—moments where procedural norms constrained policy alternatives or redirected community dissent into administratively acceptable formats.

Historical and Spatial Architectures

This project is further anchored by historical documents that trace how spatial and bureaucratic structures have evolved to govern harm. Materials from Track I—such as the 1923 zoning code, urban renewal maps, and housing policy reviews—were paired with contemporary city planning

documents, school district records, and budget allocations. Together, they reveal how past decisions continue to shape access to housing, education, transit, and public investment.

Many of these sources were annotated alongside institutional communications from MMSD, MPD, and city departments. By comparing language and rationale across these sectors, I identified patterns in how equity is framed, contested, or deferred. For example, the use of "neutral facilitation" in city planning meetings mirrored the language of "safety" and/or "order" in school board debates about police presence—each functioning to stabilize institutional legitimacy while constraining structural alternatives.

Viewed collectively, these sources help clarify how violence in Madison is enacted through the routine work of governance. They link contemporary disparities to policy structures that endure not because they are uncontested, but because they are embedded: in code, in capital flow, in professional practice. They are the architectural substrate of state-imposed violence. The examples cited in this track are not intended as a complete record, but as patterned illustrations of how harm becomes intelligible—how systems learn to recognize, manage, and normalize inequality through their own internal logic. The objective here is not to catalog institutional failure, but to expose how institutional forms metabolize critique and reproduce inequity under the guise of participation or progress.

Analytic Strategy & Approach

The analytic strategy of Track II is shaped by an iterative and interdisciplinary process—one that synthesizes theoretical frameworks with lived governance, discursive practice, and spatial

evidence. Rather than applying a predetermined coding scheme or formal content analysis, the project operates through triangulation: moving between concepts, observations, and documents to surface recurring patterns of dislocation, procedural inertia, and symbolic harm. The goal is not to test a hypothesis in the conventional sense, but to build an interpretive framework that clarifies how violence becomes intelligible, operational, and durable within urban systems.

Central to this framework is the dialogical relationship between theory and place. Theoretical constructs—drawn from Foucault, Bourdieu, Wacquant, Polanyi, Piketty, and developmental neuroscience—are not treated as static lenses, but as diagnostic tools, tested and adapted through engagement with Madison's policy landscape. Each theorist helps illuminate specific aspects of harm: how knowledge is produced and authorized (Foucault), how inequality becomes internalized and misrecognized (Bourdieu), how poverty is spatialized and punished (Wacquant), how capital consolidates and labor is disembedded (Piketty and Polanyi), and how stress manifests biologically in conditions of instability. Their utility is not in abstract alignment, but in their capacity to explain real institutional behaviors and effects in a specific urban context.

Throughout the analytic process, thematic synthesis plays a central role. Field observations, public documents, city reports, and institutional interactions are not evaluated in isolation but assembled into composite patterns that reflect the ways policy reproduces marginality. These themes—such as bureaucratic diffusion, performative equity, spatial sorting, or the commodification of inclusion—emerge through repeated engagement with materials across time, rather than through a single sweep of coding. Analytic rigor, in this context, is achieved not through replicability, but through depth, coherence, and reflexive accountability.

To support this synthesis, spatial and conceptual mapping were used not only to visualize disparities, but to examine how geographic boundaries and bureaucratic logics converge. For instance, the overlapping of school attendance zones, racialized housing stock, and transit access patterns reveals more than coincidence—it discloses the infrastructures of opportunity denial. Similarly, the structure and cadence of public meeting procedures, committee workflows, and "community engagement" protocols are read not only for what they discuss, but for what they defer, reframe, or render invisible.

This approach enables empirical anchoring without assuming that local evidence must always be quantified to be legitimate. The claim that symbolic violence sustains inequality is not only derived from Bourdieu, for example—it is observed in how zoning debates are narrated, in how youth concerns are redirected during advisory sessions, or in how "community feedback" is processed.

During the 2021 redistricting process, proposals that would have increased representation for renters and BIPOC communities—particularly on the west and south sides—were met with rhetorical and procedural resistance. Efforts to consolidate fragmented housing clusters were reframed by some officials and civic groups as threats to "community cohesion," while calls for greater renter representation were downplayed in favor of preserving historical district identities. In committee correspondence and public commentary, arguments that might have amplified racial equity were frequently recoded into concerns about process integrity, geographic tradition, or administrative neutrality.

These are not illustrative in a superficial sense; they are the terrain where theory is either affirmed or reworked in practice. What might appear to be procedural moments—comment logs, meeting minutes, or report summaries—function as mechanisms through which dissent is neutralized and structural critique is disarticulated. The analytic claim here is not just that institutions reproduce harm, but that they do so *discursively*, through categories and procedures that convert political demands into manageable data.

Importantly, this analytic posture resists fatalism. While many of the dynamics observed are recursive and deeply embedded, they are not framed as immutable. Instead, the strategy reveals how certain forms of harm have become normalized—not to reify them, but to identify their architecture and thereby create the conditions under which alternative designs might be imagined. Track II thus offers not only a vocabulary of critique, but a method of reading the city that foregrounds power, memory, and possibility—all essential for understanding how disparities endure, even when no one claims to support them.

Theory as Analytical Tool (…Not Dogma)

The theoretical frameworks deployed in Track II are used as diagnostic devices—tools for clarifying how structural violence takes form in policy, space, discourse, and practice. Each theorist contributes a particular lens that directs our attention to empirical realities in Madison. Theory, in this context, helps interpret what is already unfolding, often in plain sight but without a shared language for apprehension. These frameworks are not offered as self-contained systems; they are assembled for their utility in illuminating how violence is sustained across administrative routines, spatial decisions, and institutional logics.

Their value lies in their ability to expose contradiction: between language and action, inclusion and extraction, planning and harm.

Foucault's analytics of power, particularly his emphasis on how institutions shape what counts as knowledge and who is authorized to speak, clarifies how harm is reproduced through discourse itself. In Madison, this is apparent in planning documents and zoning reforms circulate the language of equity while preserving exclusionary outcomes. The term "affordability" is one example: ubiquitous in public meetings, development proposals, and city plans, yet rarely defined in ways that reflect the realities of low-income or BIPOC households. The concept often goes unexamined, used as a moral placeholder to signal intention while sustaining market logic. Units described as "affordable" may be out of reach for those most impacted by housing insecurity, and their location may reinforce segregation rather than integration. Similarly, "community engagement" is routinely presented as a participatory ideal, but in practice, often means information sessions or heavily managed feedback loops. These processes neutralize dissent without confrontation, containing its destabilizing potential through bureaucratic ritual.

Theoretic Sample 1: Foucault + Planning Reports + Discursive Containment

Across multiple City of Madison Comprehensive Plan Progress Updates (2020–2025), terms like "equity," "affordability," and "inclusion" appear sparingly and often without operational clarity. The 2023 update, for example, references "affordable housing development in all neighborhoods" but offers no metrics tied to income thresholds, racial equity, or redress for past harms. These omissions are not accidental—they reflect the institutionalization of equity discourse as an aspirational ideal rather than a redistributive mandate.

Foucault's concept of discursive power helps interpret this language as a regulatory practice. The reports do not simply describe institutional goals—they construct what can be said, what is left unsaid, and what types of solutions appear "feasible." Equity, under this regime, becomes a signifier of moral intent that often escapes substantive accountability. The discursive shift from specificity to generality is a governance technique in itself—one that absorbs critique and converts pressure into rhetorical alignment without structural disruption.

Bourdieu and his student Wacquant add depth to this understanding by focusing on the internalization of inequality through symbolic reproduction. Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field, and symbolic violence are especially useful in understanding how residents come to expect diminished returns from institutional participation. In advisory boards and committee meetings, young people and residents from marginalized neighborhoods often approach participation with caution, aware that their insights may be minimized or redirected. They absorb subtle cues about who is taken seriously and what knowledge is treated as legitimate. The result is not withdrawal, but a patterned adaptation—what Bourdieu might describe as a durable orientation shaped by structural position.

Theoretic Sample 2: Bourdieu + Redistricting + Symbolic Authority

During public comment in Madison's 2021–2022 redistricting process, residents from historically high-income neighborhoods framed changes to district boundaries as threats to "community identity" and "neighborhood integrity." These terms were not contested in

deliberation; instead, they were echoed by decision-makers in subsequent summaries, lending them institutional weight.

Bourdieu's theory of symbolic power provides a lens for understanding how these remarks, while framed as personal concerns, functioned as socially authorized knowledge. The legitimacy of these narratives rested on their perceived neutrality and coherence with professional planning language. In contrast, similar concerns voiced by renters and BIPOC residents—about dilution of representation or the erasure of historic communities—were coded as "emotional" or "out of scope." The analytic takeaway is not just who speaks, but whose speech resonates within the institutional field.

Wacquant deepens this by centering how space becomes a container of stigma and a target of control. In Madison, neighborhoods such as Allied Drive, Darbo-Worthington, Brentwood, Hammersley-Theresa, and Owl Creek are consistently marked as sites of disorder or deficiency—often framed as places of concentrated need. These areas are saturated with social services, yet receive fragmented investment and conditional access to programs. This stigmatization plays out in both city policy and civic discourse: school assignment boundaries isolate disadvantaged students; resource teams are understaffed and reactive; and place-based interventions focus more on monitoring than on redistribution. Punitive governance extends beyond policing. It manifests in housing compliance regimes that impose behavioral expectations, zoning enforcement used disproportionately in low-income areas, and planning processes that define "community stability" in ways that exclude renters or transient populations. These policies do not rely on incarceration to be carceral; they enforce behavioral norms,

regulate visibility, and determine access to civic legitimacy. Urban marginality, as Wacquant describes it, emerges not just from physical distance to power, but from an administrative proximity that limits voice while demanding performance. These neighborhoods are present in every engagement cycle, yet absent in decision-making authority.

Polanyi and Piketty help frame the economic architecture underpinning these spatial and symbolic dynamics. Polanyi's concept of fictitious commodities—land, labor, and money—underscores how planning tools and zoning policy operate not as neutral governance mechanisms, but as political devices that prioritize market efficiency over communal stability. This is particularly evident in Madison's resistance to decommodified housing strategies, despite widespread acknowledgment of affordability crises. Piketty's work on wealth consolidation brings the historical dimension into focus: capital, once secured, multiplies across generations through mechanisms like homeownership, tax advantages, and exclusionary planning. In Madison, these dynamics play out in the form of restrictive zoning that protects high-value districts, subsidies that advantage already-secure homeowners, and housing initiatives that fail to redress the legacies of redlining and displacement.

Together, these theorists help clarify how violence becomes structured into civic life—through discourse, space, economy, and institutional practice. Their frameworks are adapted to the specific temporal and geographic context of Madison, not to explain everything, but to sharpen the lens on a particular set of conditions. They reveal how harm persists even when equity is the stated goal, and they help decode the logics through which exclusion is legitimated, narrated, and rationalized. Theoretical coherence is not the aim here; empirical traction is. By placing these

frameworks in conversation with the observations, documents, and governance routines examined in this project, Track II surfaces a set of recurring patterns—symbolic participation without power, spatial visibility without representation, inclusion without redistribution—that define the operational grammar of state-imposed harm in Madison.

This theoretical orientation underscores one of the core propositions of the project: that racial and economic disparities in Madison are not accidents of history or unfortunate byproducts of well-meaning governance. They are the outcomes of systems that are functioning as designed, and theories like these help us parse how—not just that—they persist.

Methodological Rhythm: Theory to Data-Mapping

The theoretical frameworks employed in this project are not abstract overlays—they are deployed to help interpret and explain grounded patterns observed across Madison's governance systems. The following examples illustrate how key concepts from Foucault, Bourdieu, Wacquant, Polanyi, and Piketty map onto specific empirical dynamics within the city. These are not one-to-one correspondences, but diagnostic pairings that reveal the structural logics beneath policy language, administrative behavior, and spatial outcomes. Each pairing is chosen to show how theory sharpens—not substitutes for—local analysis.

- **Zoning Ordinances → Codification of Symbolic Violence (Bourdieu):** Madison's long-standing use of single-family zoning, large minimum lot sizes, and neighborhood-based design review processes reveals how exclusion can be encoded into technical language and legitimized through professional practice. These mechanisms often reproduce social hierarchies under the appearance of

neutrality, rewarding cultural capital that aligns with white, middle-class norms. Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence helps explain how zoning processes translate aesthetic or procedural preferences into durable patterns of exclusion—while disavowing any discriminatory intent.

- **School Boundaries, Siting and Bus Routes → Reproductive Spatial Sorting (Foucault, Bourdieu)**: The configuration of Madison's school attendance zones—especially when layered with transit access and housing stock—creates feedback loops of educational inequality. Students in historically redlined or low-income neighborhoods often face long commutes, fragmented feeder patterns, and high turnover among peers and staff. These patterns reinforce disciplinary norms and aspirational ceilings, shaping the lived experience of schooling through both surveillance (Foucauldian power) and internalized expectations (Bourdieusian habitus). The state does not need to overtly sort students; the built environment and logistical constraints do it daily.

- **Racial Disparities in Arrest Rates → Territorial Stigmatization and Penal State (Wacquant):** In Madison, Black residents consistently face disproportionate arrest rates across a range of low-level offenses—often in neighborhoods that have also been the focus of planning studies and community investment efforts. This dual targeting—of surveillance and supposed uplift—reflects what Wacquant identifies as the spatialized logic of the penal state. Neighborhoods become both service sites and control zones, subjected to

heightened policing even as they are rhetorically framed as priorities for inclusion. The territory is not just over-policed; it is marked, managed, and discursively constructed as deviant.

- **City Governance Structures (TFOGS, Ad Hoc ERO Committee, Redistricting) → Embedded Governance Inertia and Infrastructural Violence (Polanyi, Wacquant):** Through years of participation in and observation of city committees—including the Task Force on Government Structure (TFOGS), the Educational Resource Officer (ERO) Ad Hoc Committee, and the Redistricting Committee—it becomes clear that procedural structures often frustrate structural change. Calls for equity are absorbed into layered processes of consultation, referral, and deferral. Here, Polanyi's analysis of disembedded institutions[38] helps illuminate how governance loses responsiveness to social needs, while Wacquant underscores how even well-intentioned reforms are often routed through architectures that ultimately preserve the distribution of risk and authority. Violence here is not exceptional—it is procedural.

[38] Karl Polanyi's notion of disembedded institutions refers to the historical process by which economic systems, once grounded in social obligations and communal relations, become abstracted into self-regulating structures governed by market logic and insulated from democratic control. In *The Great Transformation*, Polanyi argues that the commodification of land, labor, and money uprooted social life from the institutions that once gave it coherence, allowing political economy to function independently of social need. In the Madison context, this concept helps illuminate how certain governance bodies—such as the Common Council, city commissions, or planning departments—routinely operate at a procedural remove from the communities they are intended to serve. Policy debates about zoning, transit, or educational equity often unfold within technical or bureaucratic vocabularies that obscure material consequences and narrow the scope of permissible intervention. Even when institutions recognize disparity, their operational logic tends to prioritize procedural compliance, legal defensibility, or administrative continuity over redistributive outcomes. The result is not apathy, but disembeddedness—a form of institutional drift in which democratic responsiveness is subordinated to internal logics of efficiency, fragmentation, and incrementalism. This does not mean governance actors are malicious or indifferent; rather, it highlights the extent to which the architecture of governance has evolved to sustain the language of reform without its substance.

- **Youth Narratives in Public Engagement Spaces → Internalized Symbolic Marginalization and Developmental Precarity (Bourdieu + Toxic Stress Research):** In public forums where youth are invited to share their experiences—whether through advisory boards, school board hearings, or participatory events—the language of inclusion often masks a lack of material influence. Young people speak to structural issues (housing instability, transit inequality, surveillance), but the institutional response is often managerial: referral to services, acknowledgment without structural commitment. Over time, the repetition of this pattern fosters disaffection and internalized futility. Bourdieu's account of misrecognized inequality[39], when paired with research on toxic stress and developmental disruption, helps explain how institutional performance of inclusion can deepen rather than mitigate marginality.

These mappings are not offered as totalizing interpretations, but as analytical anchors—ways of connecting theory to place in a manner that deepens understanding of how racial and economic disparities persist. They underscore the project's central claim: that the work of inequality is not

[39] Pierre Bourdieu's concept of misrecognized inequality refers to the process by which structural domination is obscured through symbolic forms—appearing as merit, taste, effort, or neutral procedure rather than the reproduction of existing power relations. In Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture, Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) describe symbolic violence, saying "We shall use the term symbolic violence to designate this 'gentle,' invisible violence which is never recognized as such, and is not even recognized as violence, that is exerted for the most part through the purely symbolic channels of communication and cognition..." In Madison, this dynamic is evident in educational and civic engagement contexts. Public meetings and youth advisory forums regularly invite participation from BIPOC students and residents, yet institutional norms around tone, timing, and formatting reward forms of expression that align with white, middle-class habitus. At the same time, educational success is often framed as a function of effort or discipline, even when structural barriers like housing instability, resource inequality, or geographic proximity remain intact. These dynamics reframe structural disadvantage as personal failure. The application of Bourdieu's framework clarifies how institutions can convert exclusion into legitimacy—masking domination through the appearance of fairness, and making inequality harder to contest precisely because it is not recognized as inequality.

confined to explicit exclusion or past injustice. It is actively maintained through the design of institutions, the cadence of administrative processes, and the circulation of equity language that so often gestures toward change without structurally enacting it.

Limitations and Commitments

The breadth of this project—its theoretical range, institutional embeddedness, and empirical layering—may, at first glance, resemble a "dizzying array"[40] of frameworks and sources. That reaction is understandable. But the apparent sprawl is not the result of conceptual drift; it reflects the multi-dimensional nature of the systems under analysis. Disparities in Madison are not produced in isolation. They are stabilized through bureaucratic routines, discursive framings, spatial decisions, and institutional histories. Understanding how they endure requires a methodology that can track harm across these registers—across what often appears, on the surface, as fragmented or benign policy domains. What may seem like proliferation is, in practice, a structured response to a layered reality.

That said, the project does not aspire to generalizability in the statistical sense. It makes no claim to large-n inference, randomized sampling, or universal replicability. Instead, it relies on depth, proximity, and continuity—drawing on a longitudinal relationship to Madison's governance systems, civic infrastructure, and spatial landscape. The knowledge presented here is shaped by years of embedded observation, participatory policy work, and theoretical reflection. It is situated, but not idiosyncratic. It is specific, but transferable. The goal is not to produce metrics that travel easily, but to build analytical frameworks that help others recognize similar patterns of infrastructural and discursive harm in their own cities.

[40] Responding to personal correspondence from May 15th, 2025, from a committee member, Revel Sims, who used the words to describe the variety of theory used in the dissertation.

This approach is aligned deliberately with the project's broader theoretical commitments: to critique rather than neutrality, positionality rather than detachment, and interpretive insight rather than positivist replication. The epistemological posture is not anti-empirical—it is anti-abstraction when abstraction severs policy analysis from lived consequence. In this view, rigor is measured not by distance from the field, but by clarity of analysis, accountability to place, and the capacity to name systems that have learned to mask themselves.

Track II, then, is not a theory paper in the conventional sense, nor is it a policy report. It is a bridging text—linking abstract frameworks with grounded realities, and using that synthesis to recast how we understand the endurance of inequality. Its limitations are inseparable from its value: the work is partial, reflexive, and embedded. But it is also methodically constructed, empirically grounded, and unapologetically committed to rethinking what counts as evidence, expertise, and explanation in the analysis of state-imposed violence.

Market Dislocation and Catalytic Violence: Piketty & Polyani in Conversation

This section draws upon the foundational economic theories of Karl Polanyi (1944; 2001) and Thomas Piketty (2014) to articulate the relationship between systemic inequality and the production of violence. While Polanyi and Piketty approach the nature and volatility of capitalism from distinct historical and disciplinary standpoints, their respective critiques of commodification and concentrated capital cohere around a shared concern: that disembedded economic systems produce not only social dislocation, but also structural harm. In the context of

this track, and in connection to the disparities observed in Madison, Wisconsin, I argue that this harm must be understood as a form of state-imposed violence—violence that is both catalytic and constitutive.

Piketty's work identifies how capital, when left unchecked by redistributive policies or institutional regulation, consolidates power and reproduces inequality across generations. This framework is especially useful for understanding the racialized disparities in income, education, and neighborhood opportunity in Madison—where wealth inequality is not only a product of uneven development but is reinforced by planning, zoning, and fiscal regimes that favor propertied interests. Polanyi, dismantles the notion of a self-regulating market, showing how the commodification of land, labor, and money—what he calls "fictitious commodities"—emerged not through natural evolution but through deliberate political construction. This disembedding of economic life from its social moorings, Polanyi argues, results in social instability, economic precarity, and the erosion of traditional forms of mutual aid and collective identity. He is especially attentive to how this commodification process forcibly dislocates people from customary institutions and places, leaving them vulnerable to the extractive logics of the market.

Bringing these thinkers into conversation underscores how economic dislocation operates as both driver and manifestation of violence. Piketty's analysis of wealth consolidation highlights how material inequality leads to civic exclusion and compromised political agency, particularly for those without property or capital. Polanyi deepens this account by identifying the structural arrangements—particularly the commodification of land and labor—that make exclusion seem normalized. Synergistically, their work traces how economic systems that appear neutral are, in fact, organized around logics that produce harm

These dynamics are evident in Madison's contemporary governance landscape. City documents and housing policy and impact reports from 2010 – 2025---ranging from *Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing* (2019, 2025) to planning division updates on the Comprehensive Plan—highlight how land use decisions continue to favor property owners, constrain affordable housing development---particularly low-income housing development, and sustain racialized patterns of exclusion. Neighborhoods historically impacted by redlining, such as South Madison, Darbo-Worthington, and parts of Allied Drive, remain disproportionately impacted by eviction filings, housing cost burden, and underinvestment in infrastructure. The continuity of these patterns across decades suggests more than neglect; it reflects a durable—and reciprocating--system of spatial stratification, incubated through zoning, fiscal incentives, and public-private redevelopment agendas.

Theoretic Sample 3: Polyani + Housing Patterns + Planning Rationality

In multiple redevelopment initiatives observed over the past decade—including projects in South Madison and on the East Washington corridor—residents voiced concerns about displacement, cultural erasure, and affordability thresholds that did not align with neighborhood income levels. While public engagement was held, final plans often relied on vague language about "diverse housing types" or "community improvement" without mechanisms to ensure long-term affordability or protect renters from secondary displacement.

Polanyi's critique of fictitious commodification helps make sense of these dynamics. Land and housing are treated less as components of community well-being and more as investment opportunities governed by speculative logic. Planning discourse reinforces this shift by abstracting space from social meaning. Violence, in this frame, emerges not as visible expulsion,

but as quiet structural erosion—where market-friendly frameworks supersede collective memory, cultural continuity, and neighborhood stability.

Framed through Polanyi and Piketty's insights, these conditions can be understood not as economic anomalies or temporary inefficiencies, but as patterned expressions of a political economy that displaces risk downward and shields capital from redistribution. The state plays a central role in this process—not simply through enforcement or policy omission, but through its everyday regulatory choices, investment strategies, and planning priorities. This section therefore establishes a foundational claim for the track: that violence takes institutional form in the economic arrangements that govern space, opportunity, and value. The following section extends this argument by exploring how these arrangements are rendered legible, moral, and inevitable through discourse, classification, and administrative logic.

Codifying Inequality: Foucauldian Analytics, Power, and the Violence of Norms

Unveiling the mechanisms that sustain state-imposed violence requires more than economic critique—it demands a theoretical lens that can interpret how power moves through language, institutions, and everyday life. In this section, I turn to the post-structural tradition, particularly the work of Michel Foucault, to explore how systemic violence is normalized and enacted through seemingly benign practices. Where Piketty and Polanyi identify the structural origins of inequality, Foucault shows how inequality is operationalized—how it is made intelligible, justifiable, and ultimately durable within systems of governance.

In Madison, the codification of disparity often occurs through ostensibly neutral processes: school zoning maps, land use planning, neighborhood association rules, public meeting norms. These mechanisms distribute voice, recognition, and consequence in uneven ways—amplifying some while erasing others. The racialized outcomes of these processes are not accidental but are produced and sustained by the ways knowledge, authority, and legitimacy are structured.

The 2025 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing and the original Race to Equity Report both demonstrate how Madison's disparities in health, education, housing, and economic mobility are not simply the residue of historical injustice—they are constantly regenerated through regulatory language and institutional design. Foucaudian frameworks helps us see how these systems function not through overt domination, but through the sedimentation of norms. They make injustice appear natural, expected, and difficult to trace. This perspective also sharpens the critique of liberal proceduralism offered in Track III. Where that track argues that participatory governance often masks structural inertia, this section shows how such masking occurs. It is not simply rhetorical; it is infrastructural. "Listening sessions" and "equity audits" can reproduce symbolic violence when they collect stories without redistributing power. They pacify critique while preserving institutional form.

Foucault bridges the economic critique of market-driven harm with a sociological critique of institutional meaning-making. He equips us to see how violence is not only what the state does with force, but also what it enables through form. This prepares the ground for the next analytical movement—into Bourdieu and Wacquant—where the focus will shift to how these institutional forces become internalized, embodied, and habituated across generations.

Habitus and Harm: Bourdesian Mediations, Symbolic Violence, and Structural Reproduction

Building upon the post-structural critique offered through Foucault's analytics of power, this section turns to Pierre Bourdieu to deepen the understanding of how violence operates not only through institutional form but through internalized norms, classifications, and social expectations. Bourdieu's contributions—particularly his theories of *habitus*, *field*, and *symbolic violence*—add texture to the analysis of inequality by revealing how power is absorbed, enacted, and reproduced at the level of lived experience.

Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* captures the internalized dispositions that shape how individuals perceive, interpret, and respond to the world. These dispositions are not chosen; they are cultivated through experience within structured environments. In Madison, for example, the experience of navigating inaccessible school sites, unaffordable housing markets, and spatialized stigma cultivates a habitus attuned to exclusion. These orientations are not psychological deficits—they are adaptive responses to structurally unequal fields.

Fields, in Bourdieu's framework, are arenas of struggle defined by specific logics of power, authority, and value. In the field of education, for instance, students from low-income or racialized backgrounds often confront institutional norms that do not recognize their forms of knowledge, capital, or cultural expression. This produces symbolic violence: the misrecognition of inequality as meritocracy, and the reproduction of social hierarchies under the guise of neutrality. As with Madison's land use and planning structures, the education system rewards conformity to dominant norms while marginalizing those who do not—or cannot—perform them.

This framework allows us to reconsider Madison's institutional landscape not just as a site of misaligned governance (as discussed in Track III), but as a terrain in which inequality is sedimented through routine interactions. Bourdieu's framework helps us understand how planning documents, school zoning policies, and community engagement protocols can reproduce exclusion, even in the absence of overt intention. They are expressions of symbolic violence: forms of harm enacted through language, norms, and rules.

The resonance between Bourdieu and the economic critiques of Polanyi and Piketty is clear. Where Polanyi highlights dislocation and Piketty reveals concentration, Bourdieu shows how these processes become embodied and normalized. His notion of the "violence of the market" aligns with both Polanyi's fictitious commodities and Piketty's fiscal elite. Markets do not only distribute goods; they produce status, belonging, and dispossession. They create and destroy the social coordinates through which individuals understand their place in the world.

The empirical context of Madison bears this out. As shown in the Race to Equity report and housing data from the Analysis of Impediments, neighborhoods with the highest poverty and racial segregation also experience the most educational instability and health disparities. These are not discrete failures; they are interconnected outcomes structured by fields that reward certain forms of capital—often white, affluent, and institutionally legible—while devaluing others. This is not only economic exclusion; it is symbolic erasure.

As a theoretical companion to Foucault, Bourdieu advances the analysis by revealing the micro-level reproduction of inequality. Foucault shows how violence is institutionalized; Bourdieu shows how it is internalized. Together, they map the full arc of state-imposed harm: from zoning

maps and public meetings to dispositions, aspirations, and the body itself. Where Foucault's power disciplines, Bourdieu's power shapes identity, aspiration, and self-worth.

This convergence sets the stage for the next theorist in the chain—Loïc Wacquant—who draws directly on Bourdieu while foregrounding the role of the penal state, urban marginality, and territorial stigmatization. Before moving to Wacquant, however, it is worth underscoring the analytical bridge: Bourdieu's work shows that violence is not simply inflicted—it is misrecognized. It is absorbed as normal, justified through institutional narratives, and re-performed by those whom it harms. This is what makes symbolic violence so difficult to contest. It feels like reality.

Understanding this dynamic is essential for interpreting Madison's racial and spatial disparities not as passive residues of inequality, but as active productions—coded in language, legitimated through policy, and habituated across generations.

Territorial Stigmatization and the Penal State: Loic Wacquant and the Architecture of Urban Harm

Having examined how structural inequalities are made durable through discourse (Foucault) and embodied in social practice (Bourdieu), we now turn to the work of Loïc Wacquant to complete this theoretical synthesis. Wacquant builds directly upon Bourdieu's framework, while adding a critical emphasis on spatial marginality, the penal state, and the stigmatization of place. His work offers a bridge between symbolic and structural violence—showing how racialized poverty is governed not only through policy neglect or misrecognition, but through an actively punitive spatial order.

Wacquant introduces the concept of territorial stigmatization to describe how entire neighborhoods—often those populated by low-income and BIPOC residents—are coded as deviant, dangerous, or pathological. These designations do not merely reflect economic disadvantage; they produce it. Stigmatized areas are denied public investment, burdened by over-policing, and subjected to planning decisions that prioritize external containment over internal flourishing.[41] In Madison, areas such as parts of Allied Drive, Darbo-Worthington, and South Park Street have long carried these labels, despite being richly complex neighborhoods with long-standing civic engagement and cultural vibrancy.

As with Bourdieu's notion of *symbolic violence*, territorial stigmatization operates by making inequality appear as a natural feature of place. It is an epistemic violence—a way of knowing that becomes a way of governing. What Wacquant adds is a sharp analysis of how this logic feeds into the growth of the penal state: a governance regime that substitutes policing and incarceration for investment and care. In this model, poverty is not ameliorated; it is criminalized. Wacquant argues that the rise of carceral policies is not simply a response to crime, but a political strategy for managing the fallout of neoliberal disinvestment.[2]

This resonates deeply with Madison's history. As Track I showed, land use and housing policies have long been deployed to contain BIPOC residents in fragmented, underserved districts. Track III documents how this is reinforced through governance structures that fragment responsibility

---

[41] Wacquant's analysis of territorial stigmatization (Wacquant, 2007) aligns with Bourdieu's idea of social space, highlighting how spatial organization and control contribute to the perpetuation of violence (Bourdieu, 1989). Foucault's concept of heterotopia (Foucault, 1984) further complements these perspectives, as it underscores the confinement and marginalization of certain groups in spaces that deviate from conventional societal norms.

and perform inclusion without structural change. Wacquant provides the third analytic strand: the penal and spatial consequences of these arrangements. Marginalized neighborhoods are not just ignored; they are punished. They are watched, regulated, and pathologized.

Wacquant's critique of the penal state draws upon both Foucault's *disciplinary power* and Bourdieu's *symbolic capital*, but centers them within a specific political economy: one defined by declining welfare systems and expanding punitive institutions. He shows how public housing, schooling, and policing intersect to produce a carceral continuum. In Madison, the legacy of school resource officers (Track III) and the uneven policing of youth in different zip codes are not accidents—they are expressions of this continuum. Public schools become sites of surveillance; neighborhoods become zones of containment.[42]

Wacquant also highlights structural violence—a concept he deploys to name the slow, grinding harm imposed by austerity, displacement, and neglect. While this term is valuable, it is not without complications.[43][44] As discussed in prior sections, naming these harms as "structural" risks obscuring the agency of those who design, fund, and authorize them. Madison's disparities

[42] This observation is supported by research in critical pedagogy and educational equity, which highlights how structural inequities are reproduced in public schools through disciplinary regimes and lowered expectations for students of color. Duncan-Andrade (2009) and Duncan-Andrade & Morrell (2008) argue that urban schools often function as sites of symbolic and institutional violence, where low-income students are subject to deficit-based narratives that mirror broader societal stigmas. Gregory, Skiba, and Noguera (2010) provide empirical evidence of how racialized discipline patterns in schools—particularly suspensions and expulsions—closely track racial achievement gaps, reinforcing Wacquant's argument that surveillance and punishment extend into educational spaces.

[43] Wacquant, Loïc. Punishing the Poor: The Neoliberal Government of Social Insecurity (Duke University Press, 2009).

[44] While the concept of structural violence is useful as a rhetorical and/or theoretical device, I complicate it somewhat, as I think it has become a misnomer—or has been used to dismiss the actual harm caused by individuals in positions of power and influence, framing their work as part of larger structures and not allowing for accountability.

are not only structural—they are administered. They are budgeted, zoned, and passed through subcommittees. To invoke Wacquant here is not to generalize, but to trace the specific forms this harm takes in a city that professes equity while reproducing exclusion.

Indeed, housing policy in Madison offers a striking example of Wacquant's insights. As the 2025 Analysis of Impediments shows, low-income residents—especially those in majority-BIPOC neighborhoods—face chronic housing instability, weak tenant protections, and exclusion from redevelopment plans. Land use decisions often treat these communities as obstacles to be "revitalized," rather than constituents to be resourced. This is the violence of urban planning when severed from equity: a technocratic logic that reproduces racialized displacement.[45]

Together, Foucault, Bourdieu, and Wacquant offer a comprehensive lens for interpreting the social and spatial architecture of violence in Madison. Foucault shows how power disciplines; Bourdieu shows how it naturalizes; Wacquant shows how it punishes. Their combined insights underscore the track's central proposition: that urban inequality is not a failure of systems, but a function of them. These inequalities are not accidental—they are administratively maintained, symbolically legitimated, and spatially enforced.

Toxic Stress and the Violence of Disruption

While the preceding sections have traced the macro-structural and discursive operations of violence, this section turns inward—toward the body, the brain, and the developmental

[45] It is important to note that Wacquant's focus on the state as a monolithic entity could be critiqued, as his work generally overlooks the complexities and variations in policymaking and implementation across different regions and levels. While this could be viewed as a limitation, it actually complements the challenges suggested in effective poverty mitigation strategies.

consequences of systemic harm. Drawing from research in developmental neuroscience and early childhood sociology, including work I co-authored on chronic stress and neurocognitive impairment, this section explores how inequality becomes biologically embedded. (Castañeda & Potter, 2014) Specifically, I connect toxic stress exposure to Madison's ongoing racial and economic disparities in educational and health outcomes.

Toxic stress, as defined in neuroscience and developmental psychology, refers to prolonged activation of the stress response system in the absence of protective relationships. Unlike positive or tolerable stress, toxic stress disrupts brain architecture—especially in the prefrontal cortex and hippocampus, areas essential for learning, memory, and executive functioning (Blanpied & Ehlers, 2004; Bianchi & Heidbreder, 2005; Arnsten, 2009; Shonkoff et al., 2012; DeBrito et al., 2013). Repeated exposure to housing instability, community violence, food insecurity, or inadequate healthcare systematically undermines children's neurodevelopmental trajectories (Andersen, 2003; Hanson et al., 2011; DeBrito et al., 2013; Hope & Spencer, 2017). In the Madison context, these stressors are not evenly distributed—they concentrate in the very neighborhoods also burdened by underinvestment, stigmatization, and spatial exclusion, as documented in the Race to Equity report and the 2025 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing.

In our 2014 Pacific Sociological Association paper, *Early and Chronic Life Stress and Lasting Impairments in Learning and Memory Processes*, my co-author and I demonstrated that early exposure to dislocation and unpredictability has measurable impacts on cognitive function (Castañeda & Potter, 2014). Building on this work, I argue for politicizing the medical, by showing that toxic stress should be considered not only a medical or educational issue but a form

of violence—a slow, corrosive degradation of potential that emerges from policy decisions. Madison's fragmented school attendance boundaries, combined with its long commute times for BIPOC and low-income students, exemplify this point. These conditions create chronic instability in students' daily routines, making it more likely that the stress response will remain elevated and learning capacities impaired.

The implications are profound: policies that seem neutral—such as zoning ordinances, transportation budgets, or school catchment assignments—can produce deeply unequal developmental conditions. These are not side effects; they are systemic outputs. As with Bourdieu's symbolic violence and Wacquant's territorial stigmatization, toxic stress is a mechanism by which inequality is made intimate, physiological, and durable.

Madison's own data supports this link. The Race to Equity report found that Black children in Dane County are significantly more likely than their white peers to live in poverty, experience homelessness, and lack access to consistent early childhood education. These experiences map directly onto the known causes of toxic stress. When we fail to address these environmental conditions, we are not just producing disparities—we are biologically scripting them into future lives.

This framework forces a reevaluation of how we define violence. It compels us to consider not just overt acts or visible harms, but the slow, systematic wearing down of human potential. Neuroscience shows us what Wacquant, Foucault, and Bourdieu theorized: that inequality lives

in bodies, in brains, in behaviors—and that its source is not random, but routinized through policy and practice.

Empirical Embedding – Madison as a Site of Dislocated Governance

In Madison, Wisconsin, inequality does not simply exist—it is managed. Governance structures, resource allocation patterns, and spatial decisions interlock to shape the lives of residents in ways that often reinforce precarity, particularly for BIPOC and low-income communities. Madison serves in this project as a layered empirical field—its institutional routines, spatial dynamics, and civic discourse offer a clear window into how violence becomes structured through governance. Across the preceding sections, this track has drawn from city planning documents, youth engagement forums, committee records, and neighborhood-level interventions to map the everyday patterns through which harm becomes durable. Embedded in this analysis is a cross-section of structurally interrelated practices that operationalize harm through routines of governance—logics that frame participation as access, defer equity to procedure, and obscure power within administrative neutrality.

In city planning and zoning documents, equity is stated as a priority, yet remains disconnected from enforcement, redress, accountability or structural investment. This rhetorical positioning is especially visible in the Race to Equity reports and in the city's 2025 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing, both of which clearly establish the persistence of racial and economic disparities across housing, education, employment, and health. Yet institutional response has tended toward symbolic action—frameworks and toolkits that promise responsiveness without altering underlying systems of distribution or authority.

At the neighborhood level, resident concerns are frequently absorbed into administrative workflows without material resolution. In deliberations on redistricting, renter and youth feedback—particularly from communities of color—was translated into neutral planning language that emphasized neighborhood continuity over representational justice. In youth advisory forums, discussions about school policing or community investment were often met with validation, but little follow-up. These are not procedural accidents, but recurring features of civic interaction that narrow the scope of acceptable dissent and obscure pathways to substantive reform.

From a methodological standpoint, this embedding of Madison is neither incidental nor passive. It reflects nearly two decades of work within, alongside, and sometimes against the very systems under examination. The analytic insights offered here are not external observations, but situated interpretations—built through recurring encounters with public processes, deliberative spaces, and the lived realities of residents navigating civic life. This perspective supports an abductive strategy of interpretation, one in which empirical experience, field observation, and document analysis are interwoven to generate claims about how governance shapes harm across both formal and informal domains.

Synthesis and Implications

Across this track, I have assembled a multi-scalar theory of violence—economic, sociological, developmental, and spatial—that repositions what we commonly consider “disparity” as evidence of harm. The overarching analysis in this track positions violence as a patterned feature of local governance—manifested through administrative routines, policy language, spatial practices, and institutional feedback loops. Across empirical domains and theoretical lenses, a recurring logic becomes visible: governance in Madison stabilizes inequality by managing its

appearance, narrowing its interpretation, and channeling its critique into non-disruptive formats. The harm observed is not incidental to public systems; it is sustained through the very mechanisms that claim to address it.

What emerges is an understanding of state-imposed violence that shifts focus from isolated interventions to systemic architectures. Planning reports speak the language of equity, yet rarely clarify what structural change entails. Public deliberations invite testimony, then transcribe dissent into sanitized categories. Institutional documents emphasize responsiveness, but redirect reform into processes of symbolic performance. These practices do not occur in isolation—they are interrelated enactments of a governance logic that disciplines possibility and contains disruption.

Each theoretical perspective—whether Foucault's discourse and institutional knowledge, Bourdieu's symbolic violence and habitus, Wacquant's penal governance and spatial marginality, or Polanyi and Piketty's economic displacement—has offered a lens for reading how violence becomes embedded across domains. Together, they reveal an institutional field in which harm is coded, legitimized, and redistributed through policy structures, discursive norms, and administrative design.

The implications are both conceptual and practical. Violence prevention efforts that rely on surface-level reforms risk reinforcing the very systems they intend to repair. Without interrogating how governance routines reproduce exclusion—and without building mechanisms for redistributive accountability—such efforts may serve to stabilize harm rather than interrupt it.

This track invites a different approach: one that reads governance not through the metrics of procedural completeness or stakeholder engagement, but through the uneven material outcomes it continues to generate.

As Track II concludes, it establishes a critical inflection point in the dissertation. The historical lineage traced in Track I provides the spatial and regulatory inheritance that undergirds Madison's civic architecture. Track III, in turn, picks up the inquiry by tracing how that architecture operates in practice—revealing how institutional design, administrative friction, and fragmented accountability mediate participation, representation, and equity. Positioned between them, this track identifies the connective tissue: how violence becomes routine not through explicit intent, but through governance practices that translate harm into management, dissent into data, and equity into aspiration.

Conclusion: Violence by Design

This underlying analysis of this track presents a sustained argument that violence in Madison is both experienced through singular events or explicit acts of harm, and also very much structured—codified into the built environment, sustained by bureaucratic logics, and made legible through policy. It is violence by design. This track has argued that violence, as experienced in Madison, is not a sudden rupture nor an aberration from governance—it is a stabilized outcome of administrative, spatial, and discursive routines. When housing displacement, education gaps, and public health inequities persist across generations, their repetition signals more than failure. These patterns are shaped, distributed, and sustained through

the instruments of local governance: policy language, institutional procedures, and planning frameworks that organize both resources and legitimacy.

The analysis presented does not treat violence as an isolated event. Instead, it traces how violence circulates through the fabric of civic life—how bureaucratic processes convert social need into technocratic demand, how equity claims are reformatted into process metrics, and how dissent is absorbed into formats that neutralize rather than transform. These dynamics are not rooted in malicious design, but they are durable precisely because they are embedded in routines that appear neutral, professional, or inevitable.

Drawing on the theoretical contributions of Foucault, Bourdieu, Wacquant, Polanyi, and Piketty, this track has assembled a conceptual architecture for understanding how harm becomes systemic. Their ideas are not presented as abstract theories, but as diagnostic frameworks, tested and applied against the everyday workings of Madison's governance. When planning documents sanitize disparities through vague affirmations, or when public processes convert structural concerns into procedural tasks, the result is not just inefficiency—it is the management of harm as a form of civic order.

What distinguishes this track is its attention to how violence is organized—through the allocation of risk, the deferral of accountability, and the routine filtration of community voice. Governance is not approached as a monolithic actor, but as a collection of logics, each shaping what is visible, actionable, and permissible within the system. The structures that perpetuate disparity do not always appear antagonistic; more often, they function through the language of progress, opportunity, and inclusion. It is in that framing that harm becomes durable—built into the codes, workflows, and expectations of democratic practice.

In concluding this track, I return to the central proposition: that racial and economic violence in Madison is structured through policy and place, through the repetition of institutional forms that produce exclusion while naming inclusion. These forms are not immutable. They are legible, traceable, and contingent. By documenting how they operate—through language, design, and administrative tempo—we open the possibility for reimagining the terms of civic life.

This track is constructed around analytic sites rather than fixed cases. It interprets violence through triangulated evidence: archival documents, policy texts, committee proceedings, and embedded fieldwork. Pattern recognition, abductive synthesis, and lived positionality guided the analytic strategy—not to establish generalizability, but to surface how institutional practices normalize harm while rendering it administratively acceptable. In identifying these mechanisms, this analysis seeks not only to name the violence, but to illuminate its architecture.

Interlude II: Committees, Chaos and Chords

Track II examined the shape of harm—not as a spectacle of violence, but as a system of exposure. It traced how deprivation is often administered through protocols of order: enrollment systems, waitlists, fragmented authorizations, and procedural delays. Violence here was not always visible. It was institutional. It lived in the churn of eligibility, the language of resource constraints, the dull repetition of "not yet." What we think of as dysfunction, the track suggested, may in fact be the normal operation of systems that were never designed to restore, only to route, manage, and contain.

But harm doesn't operate on its own. It is built, legitimized, and stabilized—often through systems that frame themselves as neutral, inclusive, or deliberative. What makes these systems so powerful is not just their authority, but their architecture: the way they diffuse responsibility, choreograph participation, and obscure authorship. Governance in this context is not only about what decisions are made, but how problems are defined, by whom, and with what institutional consequence. If the first track dealt with *how* cities do to people, and the second with some of the harms done to people, this next one asks how cities make those actions appear inevitable, procedural—even fair.

Track III begins in this space of design. It explores how the structure of local government—its committees, councils, charters, and public comment protocols—can serve both as vehicles for public input and instruments of managed stasis. These structures don't just delay change; they script its possibilities. Participation becomes stylized. Equity is reframed as process compliance. And accountability is scattered across boards, staff, and rotating leadership bodies, creating what feels like transparency while shielding institutions from disruption.

This is governance without a banister. There are rituals, rules, and agendas, but little that steadies the hand when the ground shifts. City residents are invited to testify, but not to define the terms. Plans are drafted with equity language, but executed with tools that were never designed for repair. And calls for transformation are routed through procedures that ensure proposals will be weighed, deferred, sent to committee—and often returned in diluted form.

Track III is not a rejection of governance. It is an inquiry into how form shapes possibility. It asks what it means to live in a city that talks like a democracy, but governs like a machine. One that performs inclusion while preserving distance. One that invites public voice, but only in ways that leave the structure intact.

The next track turns to governance—not as malfunction, but as a system of choices, constraints, and inherited form.

Track III: Managed Inequality

Abstract

This track critically examines the structural dynamics of Madison's local government and its relationship to persistent racial disparities, with particular attention to the organization and function of the City Council and related civic bodies. Building on prior analyses of historically racialized land use (Track I) and the theorization of state-imposed violence through administrative and spatial policy (Track II), this final installment investigates how governance structure itself may contribute to the endurance of inequity. Drawing on over a decade of participant observation, professional practice, and embedded civic engagement—including service on municipal commissions, task forces, and redistricting processes—the study analyzes how institutional fragmentation, procedural complexity, and symbolic modes of community participation shape the city's capacity to respond to racial inequities. Rather than offering prescriptive reform, the track presents findings that reflect the contradictions, limitations, and partial openings within Madison's governance model, offering insight into how democratic aspirations become entangled in bureaucratic form.

Key Words: Structural Racism, Local Government, Municipal Governance, Institutional Fragmentation, Racial Disparities, Civic Engagement, Bureaucratic Governance, Administrative Complexity, Procedural Politics, Symbolic Participation

Introduction

Persistent racial disparities in Madison are not merely the byproduct of failed policy implementation or insufficient political will—they are entangled with the structural design and

epistemic orientations of local governance itself. Building upon Track I's historical excavation of land use and housing policy and Track II's framing of these disparities as forms of state-imposed violence that restrict democratic participation, this third track turns to the architecture of municipal governance as a critical site of analysis. Track III builds on the previous analyses by turning toward the architecture of governance itself. The central analytic proposition is as follows: *How do governance structures shape participation, accountability, and racial equity? And to what extent does procedural complexity inhibit the very forms of responsiveness that Madison professes to uphold?* Across three empirical cases—the TFOGS Task Force, the Ad Hoc ERO Committee, and the 2021 Redistricting process—this section investigates how institutional form, symbolic inclusion, and administrative fragmentation function not as neutral design features, but as structuring forces that shape democratic possibility.

In exploring these questions, the track examines both formal institutional arrangements—such as the configuration of the Common Council, the scope and operation of Boards, Commissions, and Committees (BCCs), and administrative pathways—and the more tacit, discursive practices through which authority is legitimized and participation is managed. Rather than assuming municipal governance as a neutral or technocratic space, this study is grounded in lived, field-based engagement with the very structures under scrutiny. It offers a rare practitioner-scholar perspective rooted in direct participation, seeking to illuminate the ways in which racial disparities are not only maintained despite local governance, but in many ways are reproduced through it. Through this approach, the track presents findings that suggest racial disparities persist not in opposition to local governance—but are, in many respects, reproduced through it.

Methodological and Conceptual Framing

The analysis presented in Track III is grounded in over a decade of embedded civic engagement within the City of Madison's governmental infrastructure. My roles have included service on the Education Resource Officer (ERO) Ad Hoc Committee, the Task Force on Government Structure (TFOGS)—where I chaired the Subcommittee on Boards, Commissions, and Committees and co-chaired the Subcommittee on the Common Council—and as Chair of the City's Redistricting Committee following the 2020 Census. These experiences, alongside my ongoing professional work in community development and earlier field-based research conducted while serving in the Office of the Mayor (Castañeda, 2011–2013), comprise the primary source of empirical insight for this study.

Rather than approaching these roles as external to the research process, they are treated here as integral to the production of knowledge. This methodological orientation is informed by traditions of embedded ethnography and interpretive policy analysis, which view the researcher not as a detached observer, but as an active participant situated within the field of inquiry

Governance as Infrastructure

Track III approaches the structure of local governance as a site where racial inequality is actively reproduced—not just through decisions, but also through design. The analytic premise here is that the process of governance itself functions as infrastructure: it allocates power, regulates participation, channels resources, and organizes voice. This infrastructural lens allows us to move beyond questions of who is at the table or what decisions are made, and instead ask how the table itself is built—how representation, deliberation, and authority are organized and structurally constrained long before policy outcomes are ever debated.

This requires a methodological departure from conventional approaches to public administration or institutional evaluation, which often rely on quantitative assessments, benchmarking, or performance metrics. Those tools can be useful for auditing outcomes, but they are not always equipped to account for how exclusion is embedded in the very form of civic life. In cities like Madison, where progressive rhetoric and procedural transparency stand in for substantive redistribution, inequality is rarely administered through explicit policy. Instead, it emerges through what is routinized, delayed, diffused, the interstitial or what is declared “beyond scope.”

The analytic challenge, then, is to treat governance as an active terrain—a system of constraint, translation, and filtration. This means tracing how public input is converted into administrable formats, how reform efforts are institutionally buffered, and how systems ostensibly designed for inclusion can structurally favor status quo preservation. In this Track, that tracing is made visible through a series of curated traces—analytic samples—grounded examples that demonstrate how experience and observation were rendered into analyzable data. These samples allow readers to see how documents, interactions, and patterns of behavior were interpreted, and how alternative observers might draw familiar inferences even using different conceptual vocabularies. The methodological task is not only to measure decision-making by its declared intentions, but to interpret how institutional form produces patterned limitations: who can meaningfully participate, how claims are adjudicated, and where accountability is rendered symbolic.

This approach reframes governance as a producer of outcomes, instead of simply a responder to them. In Madison, the persistence of racialized disparities despite repeated waves of reform

cannot be fully understood without interrogating the city's governmental architecture. Track III engages this architecture on its own terms—asking what it does, what it makes possible, what it renders invisible, and what it prevents.

Researchers Role

The methodological foundation of this chapter is grounded in direct, sustained participation in Madison's systems of governance. Over the past decade, I have served in formal leadership roles across multiple city initiatives and committees, including as Chair of the Subcommittee on Boards, Commissions, and Committees for the Task Force on Government Structure (TFOGS), Chair of the Redistricting Committee, a member of the Ad Hoc Education Resource Officer (ERO) Committee**,** and co-chair of the Housing Strategy Committee.

These were not brief appointments or symbolic affiliations; they involved months—and in some cases years—of committee work, public testimony, internal negotiation, document review, and policymaking across multiple sites of institutional debate. These roles created conditions for embedded analysis. They allowed access to committee deliberations, background planning materials, informal consensus-building, and post-meeting debriefs that shaped what became formal policy recommendations. They also provided a vantage point for observing how the City of Madison frames its internal problems, responds to external pressure, and disciplines reform through layers of structure, language, and scope. That experience is not ancillary to the research—it is the empirical base from which the analysis proceeds. The following example from my work on the TFOGS Subcommittee on Boards, Commissions, and Committees illustrates how embedded experience translated into analytic insight. By tracing procedural fragmentation

through meeting observations, committee drafts, and community feedback, the walkthrough below demonstrates the research process in action.

Analytic Sample 1: Procedural Fragmentation in Madison's Boards, Commissions and Committees (BCC) System

Procedural fragmentation—defined here as the overlapping, inconsistent, and poorly coordinated mechanisms of public decision-making—emerged repeatedly in my work with the Task Force on Government Structure (TFOGS). In my role as Chair of the Subcommittee on Boards, Commissions, and Committees (BCCs), I directly participated in more than a dozen meetings, co-authored subcommittee reports, and helped facilitate community forums. Through this work, it became clear that Madison's BCC system does not only suffer from inefficiency—it is structured in ways that inhibit participation, frustrate accountability, and obfuscate power.

In the August 13, 2019 meeting of TFOGS, for example, I presented findings from the BCC Subcommittee, noting the inconsistent levels of staffing across committees, with some receiving only basic notetaking support and others staffed by senior personnel. This pattern was confirmed by senior city staff during the meeting (City of Madison, 2019b). These concerns were echoed across multiple engagements, including two citywide open houses. At the Warner Park open house on September 24, 2019, resident comments included: "They do not serve us! They serve an agenda created before we can participate" and "Not even close… if they did, we would not have racial and economic disparities that Madison has" (City of Madison, 2019e).

These qualitative data points—my field notes, resident feedback, and meeting documentation—formed the basis for the Subcommittee's conclusion: the BCC system offers a veneer of

democratic participation while masking an underlying fragmentation that restricts resident influence. The BCC Subcommittee's March 12, 2019 report emphasized this directly, stating that the system "may, in fact, serve as little more than a veneer of representation and participation" (City of Madison, 2019a, p. 2).

This was not just an abstract inference. On September 19, 2019, during a TFOGS meeting attended by representatives from the Mayor's Office and the City Attorney's Office, a member of the public pointed out that the Task Force had omitted the "Task Force on Municipal Golf" from its list of existing committees. No one present—despite representing the very offices charged with oversight—could explain why. This moment revealed the impossibility of even city leadership being able to confidently account for the structure they ostensibly manage (City of Madison, 2019d).

Procedural fragmentation also shaped outcomes. At the October 2, 2019 meeting, we discussed creating a "Lead Committee" model to reduce redundancies and clarify pathways for issue resolution. While a motion passed recommending an organizational chart and restructured committee flow, I voted against it, concerned that the proposed solution replicated the same opacity we sought to resolve (City of Madison, 2019c).

These decisions were not made in abstraction—they were informed by iterative community input, critical review of overlapping mandates, and months of deliberation documented in minutes, memos, and working drafts. A memo from the City Attorney to the Common Council Executive Committee also underscored this fragmentation, describing city staff confusion about

which committees held functional authority and emphasizing the need for a dedicated structure to support resident engagement (May, 2019).

What emerged across these instances was a systemic architecture that resists coherence. As both Fraser (1990) and Bourdieu (1991) argue in their respective frames—deliberative justice and symbolic power—what looks participatory may instead function as containment. The BCC system, with its arcane rules, uneven representation, and absence of performance metrics, facilitates symbolic democracy without procedural legibility. By tracing this through direct engagement, resident testimony, and institutional materials, I argue that Madison's BCC structure replicates exclusion under the guise of participation. This is the heart of procedural fragmentation in practice.

This analytic trace offers one example of how embedded observation, layered documentation, and resident feedback coalesced into a structured interpretive process. While the specific findings related to procedural fragmentation are important, the deeper analytic point is about how access, proximity, and sustained involvement enabled insights that would be difficult to derive from a distance. These insights were not drawn from isolated moments, but emerged over time through recursive engagement with institutional language, documents, and decision-making. What follows further elaborates how this positionality shaped the broader methodological stance of the research, specifically, my positionality in these spaces reflects a specific kind of methodological stance: neither detached observer nor passive participant, but institutional interlocutor. As a co-designer of reforms, facilitator of working groups, and interpreter of both administrative and community language, I was engaged in the very systems I sought to

understand. That embeddedness presented ethical and interpretive challenges. Maintaining critical distance while actively participating in governance required constant reflection, especially in moments where personal relationships, organizational loyalties, or procedural constraints shaped what could be said or pursued. The tension between witnessing and influencing, between critique and collaboration, was persistent and not always cleanly resolved.

Nonetheless, the proximity enabled by this position made it possible to see how institutional behavior is patterned—not just in what it decides, but in how it organizes deliberation, frames legitimacy, and manages conflict. These roles created sustained exposure to how governance speaks—how it talks to itself, narrates its limitations, and performs transparency. That includes formal speech acts (e.g., staff memos, agenda language, recorded minutes), but also informal cues: who prepares agendas, who decides when "public input" is closed, who interprets parliamentary procedure, and how staff and elected officials communicate off the record. The analysis that follows is rooted in this layered access, and the ability to read governance not only through its decisions, but through its discursive and procedural behavior over time.

Data: Sources and Artifacts

The empirical base of this chapter is built from a wide range of governance records, deliberative documents, and embedded field observations. These materials are not treated as neutral outputs, but as artifacts that reveal how institutions frame problems, organize authority, and construct the boundaries of permissible reform. Across all sites—TFOGS, the Redistricting Committee, and the Ad Hoc ERO Committee—materials were reviewed not only for content, but for what they disclose about procedural logic, representational constraint, and institutional reflexes.

Key sources include:

- Meeting transcripts and working drafts from the Task Force on Government Structure (TFOGS), including records of both the full committee and the BCC Subcommittee (TFOGS 2018; TFOGS 2019a; TFOGS 2019b; TFOGS 2019c; TFOGS 2019d; City of Madison, 2020)
- Reports, maps, and deliberation records from the City of Madison's Redistricting Committee, including internal correspondence and revised district proposals (City of Madison, 2021; City of Madison Common Council, 2022).
- Public meeting minutes, staff memos, and testimony from the Ad Hoc Education Resource Officer Committee, along with formal policy recommendations (MMSD, 2018).
- City Legistar records across multiple bodies, including public comment transcripts, referral patterns, and commission-to-council workflows, exemplified here and used later in the track (City of Madison Common Council Executive Committee, 2019).
- Personal field notes and reflective memos generated during and after meetings, capturing off-agenda dialogue, procedural dynamics, and interpretive observations from within the process, exemplified here and used later in the track[46].

These materials were analyzed by abduction using an interpretive strategy grounded in discursive and institutional analysis. Attention was paid to how problems were named, how legitimacy was

[46] Sample of the topics of the conversations are listed in the works cited section as "Anonymous" interviews.

established or deferred, and how equity claims were translated into formats compatible with bureaucratic procedures. Recurring themes included deliberative framing (how issues were scoped and bounded), procedural design (who held authority to advance or pause action), and discursive recursion (how the language of reform was repeated without structural change). Silences were also central—what was not discussed, who was not consulted, and which questions were marked as outside jurisdiction.

The analysis relied on structured memoing, cross-document annotation, and longitudinal comparison. This approach allowed for synthesis across multiple temporal phases and committee contexts, while staying grounded in the lived rhythms of institutional life. The focus was less on frequency than on pattern recognition: how governance responds to pressure, absorbs critique, and stabilizes itself through the management of reform.

Analytic Strategy: Interpretation of Institutional Form

The analysis in Track III is grounded in an interpretive strategy that treats governance as both discursive and diffuse—something that speaks, organizes, and constrains simultaneously. The goal was not to evaluate the success or failure of individual committees, but to trace patterns in how bodies of governance process critique, contain reform, and operationalize inclusion. This was done through a process of thematic synthesis and discursive analysis, using memos, transcripts, and public records to identify recurring tendencies across institutional contexts.

Particular attention was given to three governance patterns: procedural deferral (the practice of acknowledging inequity while postponing action through referrals, subcommittees, or “further study”), structural fragmentation (the diffusion of authority across bodies and roles such that no

single entity bears responsibility for outcomes), and rhetorical inclusion (the use of participatory language that rarely shifts decision-making power). These patterns were not treated as isolated findings, but as symptoms of institutional design—revealing how reform is staged, contained, or deflected in ways that preserve administrative coherence without redistributive consequence.

Institutions were not read for what they claimed, but for how they managed boundaries: who was invited to speak, what language was acceptable, when urgency was suspended, and how critique was metabolized into process. In this reading, transparency does not guarantee accountability, and inclusion does not imply structural influence. What mattered was how institutional form shaped political possibility—what could be said, what could be acted upon, what would ultimately be deferred, and finally, whose voices were heard when city officials spoke.

Theoretical frameworks were not layered on top of these findings, but were instead brought into dialogue with Madison's governance structures. Iris Marion Young's (2011) work on structural injustice and the politics of responsibility helped make sense of how distributed systems obscure culpability. James Scott's (1998) writing on legibility and simplification offered a lens for understanding how institutions convert complex demands into administrable units. Foucault (1978, 1991) and Bourdieu (1990) were used to examine how power becomes routinized in discourse and institutional habitus. Sampson's (2012) work provided insight into how civic structures mediate trust and efficacy over time. These theorists were not used to generalize beyond Madison, but to contextualize the city's particular design features within a broader vocabulary of state power and procedural containment. These interpretations did not emerge abstractly—they were generated through memoing practices that tracked institutional language,

policy maneuvering, and discursive shifts across time. Patterns observed in field notes, committee documents, and public testimony were used to bring theoretical concepts into sharper relief—particularly around how legitimacy is produced, how participation is structured, and how reform narratives are cyclically absorbed

The analytic validity of this work does not rest on statistical inference or replicability. It rests on pattern recognition within governance discourse—on the ability to document how systems behave under pressure, how reform is routed through form, and how institutions maintain continuity through the language of change. The interpretive lens allows the work to speak to a wider set of governance challenges while remaining anchored in the specific institutional culture of Madison.

Theory as My Lens

Theory in Track III operates as my lens—a way of seeing and interpreting the structural behavior of civic institutions I have worked within, challenged, and observed over time. It is not used to prove a predetermined thesis or to flatten complex realities into conceptual categories. Rather, theory sharpens perception. It allows institutional patterns to come into focus that might otherwise pass as neutral, procedural, or inevitable. These frameworks help decode how governance stabilizes inequality—not through singular decisions, but through its form, its habits, and its internal language.

Iris Marion Young's work on structural injustice and political responsibility provides a crucial foundation.[47]In Madison, where power is dispersed across commissions, councils, and staff, that

[47] In Responsibility for Justice (2011), Young shows how injustice emerges from the aggregated effects of normalized behavior within systems—not necessarily from individual malice or illegal acts.

insight is essential. Young's work helps articulate how harm persists when no one actor is directly to blame, but many are structurally involved. Her work also resists fatalism: it insists on responsibility not through guilt, but through ethical obligation to act once one sees how they are situated within a system that causes harm.

James C. Scott's (1998) concept of legibility offers a way of understanding how institutions translate complex social demands into simplified, administrable formats. In the context of Madison's governance structure, this includes how community input is sorted into comment periods, how reform is routed through referral systems, and how public urgency is slowed by both intentional and procedural bureaucratic pacing. Scott's lens is especially useful for interpreting how governance formats can obscure or neutralize demands for transformation.

Edward Soja's (2010) work on spatial justice and territorial representation contributes language and perspective for seeing how political space is structured unequally—not just geographically, but administratively. In Madison, district-based representation, commission membership structures, and the geography of participation all shape how power flows and stalls. Soja's emphasis on spatial configuration as a mode of justice helps explain why who represents what, and how spatial boundaries are drawn, matters deeply for democratic equity. His writing supports this project's attention to redistricting, civic access, and procedural marginalization—not as secondary issues, but as frontlines of institutional design.

Foucault and Bourdieu help expose how power operates through procedural form and institutional culture. Foucault's concepts of governmentality and discourse help interpret how

technocratic language absorbs critique and frames governance as management rather than politics. Bourdieu's work on symbolic power and institutional habitus explains how systems maintain legitimacy by naturalizing hierarchy, rewarding cultural capital, and privileging forms of speech, presence, and participation that align with dominant norms. Their combined insights guide how I read the behavior of commissions, councils, and staff not just in terms of output, but as sites of cultural reproduction.

Together, these frameworks have shaped how I have come to read Madison's governance system—a discursive structure requiring active interpretation. I do not present this reading as final or deterministic. The point is not that structure always defeats reform, but that it shapes its terms—its pace, format, and reach.[48] Theory, for me, is a way to name those dynamics. It helps clarify what form does to function, and what reform must confront if it hopes to become transformation.

[48] In Madison, reform efforts rarely fail because of overt opposition. More often, they are reshaped by the procedural and administrative structures that determine how reform is allowed to move. Pace is shaped by referral systems, layered committee reviews, and calendar-driven delays. For example, the work of the Task Force on Government Structure (TFOGS) unfolded over multiple years, three separate compositional iterations of the Common Council, and required separate action by the Common Council, internal staff working groups, and city voters—producing long gaps between recommendation and implementation.

Format is determined by how proposals are required to fit into existing policy templates, legal language, or staff capacity. In the Ad Hoc ERO Committee, for instance, even significant concerns about the presence of police in schools were ultimately processed through language of program evaluation, oversight protocols, or contractual clarity—not through a broader reconsideration of carceral logic in educational spaces.

Reach is perhaps most decisive constraint. Governance reforms in Madison often must pass through multiple layers of buy-in: BCC recommendations, staff interpretations, legal review, and council referral. Each layer introduces opportunities for dilution, redirection, or soft abandonment. Even when a reform effort reaches implementation, it is often scoped narrowly—applied to a pilot program, limited to a single department, or sunsetted for future review. The structure does not block change outright; rather, it defines what kind of change is administratively survivable. In this sense, structure doesn't defeat reform—but it conditions what reform can be.

Methodological Limitations

This chapter does not offer generalizable causal claims. It does not rely on randomized sampling, formal hypothesis testing, or quantitative performance metrics. The findings are not meant to be predictive across cities or transferable in statistical terms. Instead, the strength of the analysis lies in perspective, proximity, duration, and pattern recognition—in what can be seen from sustained participation, institutional fluency, and grounded interpretation of governance behavior over time. The patterns recognized are based on perspective, that is my place in the structure shapes how I see the patterns described. Were I to use different literature I might arrive at similar conclusions but allocate causes in different ways A city bureaucrat will recognize the forces shaping the patterns but could reasonably arrive at different claims even if using the same literature.

The evidence presented is shaped by longitudinal access to city systems, firsthand engagement with governance reform, and deliberate reflection on the ways institutional design organizes power, authority, and influence. These experiences provided exposure not only to official policy outcomes, but to the administrative choreography that produces them: procedural choices, rhetorical patterns, scope constraints, and institutional self-description. The method here does not claim detachment. It claims embedded clarity—a way of seeing from within that opens up insight often missed in more formally abstracted approaches.

There are trade-offs. My perspective, while deep, is limited. The time I could dedicate to research related tasks was limited. The approach I selected limited me to what I was given or could obtain. The absence of randomized or external data review protocols means that certain forms of methodological defensibility—especially those valued in traditional public

administration research—are not prioritized here. But this is not a casual omission. It reflects a deliberate commitment to interpretive methodology and institutional critique. Where statistical inference steps back from context to seek general rules, this project steps in—to examine how structure and discourse interact in real governance settings, and how reform is metabolized in place. Further, a student working full-time on a project like this will emphasize different aspects based on their particular reading of the literature, I did not select organizational analysis, literature on leadership and management, or more comprehensive and self-critical approaches to the literature I did select. To these points I argue that science is social, and I look forward to being in conversation with scholars whose work takes up similar problematics from different perspectives.

This approach aligns with traditions in ethnography generally, participant-observation in particular, as found in critical urban studies, interpretive policy analysis, and theories of democratic constraint. It draws from scholars who argue that understanding urban inequality requires attention not only to what policy says, but to how institutions behave: how they absorb pressure, translate demands, and protect continuity through form. The commitment here is not to objectivity, but to accountable interpretation—to offering an empirically grounded, theoretically informed reading of how Madison's governance systems help stabilize inequality, even as they claim to dismantle it.

Conceptual Framework

This Track is situated within a critical tradition of urban inquiry that interrogates how governance structures shape the possibilities—and limits—of equity and democratic participation. Rather than treating municipal government as a neutral instrument of policy

delivery, the analysis draws from interdisciplinary frameworks that foreground the structural, spatial, and discursive dimensions of statecraft. In line with the broader dissertation project, this approach reflects a convergence of urban sociology, critical planning theory, and state theory, grounded in the premise that racial disparities are not simply outcomes of isolated policy failures, but symptoms of historically sedimented and institutionally embedded forms of exclusion.

Table one summarizes the various theories discussed in how they apply in the Madison context.

Concept	Definition	Operationalization in Madison Context
Governmentality (Foucault)	The rationalities and practices through which governance shapes behavior and subjectivity.	Administrative procedures that normalize inequitable participation as "just how things work."
Symbolic Violence (Bourdieu)	The imposition of systems of meaning that mask power relations and make them appear legitimate.	Committee structures that rely on "neutral expertise" to exclude lived experience.
Fragmented Proceduralism	A system of disjointed processes that hinder cohesive governance and public accountability.	Nearly 100 BCCs with overlapping, unclear jurisdictions and uneven influence.
Representational Inequity	Disparities in political voice and civic presence due to structural exclusion.	Part-time Council structure and underrepresentation of low-income communities in BCCs.
Spatial Justice (Soja)	The fair and equitable distribution of resources, representation, and voice across geographic space.	Centralized meeting locations, lack of access for transit-dependent or displaced populations.
Structural Injustice (Young)	Injustice resulting from institutional processes that constrain agency and reproduce inequality, even without overt intent.	The city’s inability to translate equity frameworks into material governance reform.

Table 1. Table of concepts for application

In the body of the work I show examples of how I took the application to the Madison context and developed and transformed my observations into data and findings. Those findings inform my central argument, which is that the governance processes I observed and participated in produce procedural fragmentation, discursive democracy, and representational inequity.

Governance as Structuring Power

At the heart of this inquiry is a conceptualization of governance not as an inert machinery, but as a structuring force that produces social reality through its organizational form and procedural logics. As Foucault (1991) articulates in his notion of governmentality, modern governance operates not exclusively through laws or edicts, but through rationalities and techniques that shape conduct, delineate legitimacy, and inscribe normative order onto populations. This insight reframes the City of Madison's governance apparatus—from the Common Council to its nearly 100 boards, commissions, and committees—not simply as administrative scaffolding, but as a field in which power circulates, is contested, and is naturalized.

This perspective aligns with Bourdieu's (1991) theorization of the state as a meta-field—a social space that produces and legitimates classificatory schemes (e.g., who counts as a stakeholder, whose knowledge is valid) while distributing symbolic and material capital. In the context of Track III, these dynamics are observable in the stratification of influence across alders, committees, and constituencies, as well as in the uneven burdens of procedural navigation imposed on racially and economically marginalized residents. These dynamics—of stratified authority and procedural burden—are examined throughout this Track via analytic samples drawn from the TFOGS process, the ERO Committee, and Redistricting.

Institutional Form and the Production of Inequity

As explored in Track I, the racialized geographies of Madison's housing and land use policies reflect not just historical injustice but the institutional inertia of systems designed to reproduce exclusion. Track II extended this analysis by framing these patterns as forms of state-imposed violence—not through overt repression, but through structural disinvestment and bureaucratic denial of democratic access.

Track III builds on this trajectory by interrogating the form of governance itself. Echoing Loïc Wacquant's (2008) critique of the "centaur state"—which combines paternalistic social policy with punitive oversight—this track asks how municipal governance structures simultaneously promote racial equity discourses while sustaining institutional arrangements that frustrate those very aims.

The fragmentation of Madison's governance (e.g., part-time council, overburdened BCC system, reliance on unpaid civic labor) reflects what Sampson (2012) describes as differentiated institutional capacity, wherein the spatial and administrative organization of the state results in uneven responsiveness across neighborhoods and constituencies. Institutional incoherence, in this sense, is not incidental—it is a mechanism through which disparities are sustained.

Discursive Governance and Performative Inclusion

In addition to its formal architecture, this track also examines how discourse operates as a modality of governance—a theme developed in both Foucault's work and more recent urban scholarship. The language of equity, engagement, and public input frequently circulates in

Madison’s civic landscape, yet the procedural and structural conditions of governance render these commitments symbolic at best, and exclusionary at worst.

This pattern aligns with Fraser’s (1990) critique of "weak publics," where participatory spaces offer the appearance of influence without the infrastructure for actual decision-making power. Similarly, Soja’s (2010) work on spatial justice underscores how physical and discursive arrangements jointly constrain access to democratic processes. In Madison, the reliance on procedural expertise, time-intensive committee structures, and spatially centralized governance meetings constitutes a form of epistemic closure that privileges professionalized, resourced participants while marginalizing those navigating housing precarity, employment instability, or linguistic barriers.

This conclusion draws from analytic samples across all three empirical sites, where meeting notes, community testimony, and policy documents collectively revealed how governance structures consistently advantaged those with institutional fluency, discretionary time, and geographic proximity. These conditions—traced through memoed reflections on committee dynamics, public engagement formats, and patterns of attendance—made visible a form of exclusion embedded in routine administrative design.

Politics of Structural Injustice

This study also draws from Iris Marion Young’s (2000; 2011) theorization of structural injustice and the differentiated responsibilities of democratic actors. For Young, injustice is not simply the result of individual malice or isolated failures, but emerges from the cumulative operations of

systems that constrain action, restrict participation, and distribute power unevenly. Local government, in this frame, is not just a technical tool for policy delivery, but a normative and spatial field that organizes access to deliberation, authority, and resources.

Young's concept of the "five faces of oppression"—exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence—offers a multidimensional lens through which to assess Madison's governance structures. While these forms may not be present in overt or malicious forms within city processes, they are replicated through institutional designs that appear neutral: inaccessible meeting structures, over-reliance on volunteer labor, or a hyper-professionalized administrative discourse that invalidates lived experience. Her emphasis on democratic inclusion—not just as the presence of voices, but as the transformation of institutional structures to accommodate difference—resonates deeply with this project's findings across multiple sites of local governance. As Young (2000) argues, democratic inclusion is not simply a mater of allowing diverse voices to speak, but of structuring participation so that marginalized perspectives can shape collective decisions in ways that reflect their lived experience and material stakes. Madison's governance processes frequently claim inclusion, yet often fall short in realizing the structural conditions necessary for it to be meaningful or effective.

Embedded Practice and Situated Knowledge

Finally, this track draws upon a methodological orientation informed by scholars such as Dvora Yanow (2000) and Ananya Roy (2009)[49], who emphasize the value of situated knowledge in

[49] The methodological grounding of this research is informed by the interpretive and situated epistemologies advanced by Yanow (2000) and Roy (2009), both of whom challenge positivist assumptions that policy analysis and urban theory must remain distanced or "objective" to be valid. Yanow advocates for interpretive policy analysis that prioritizes meaning-making within policy communities and emphasizes the researcher's embeddedness as an asset rather than a liability. Her framework legitimizes the use of practitioner knowledge, affective positioning, and

policy research. Rather than observing government from a distance, this project is shaped by direct participation in governance structures, with the researcher occupying roles that are both analytic and administrative. This positionality enables a closer reading of how institutional structures operate internally—not only in terms of formal policy, but in the affective and relational terrain through which power is exercised and contested.

Procedural Fragmentation, Discursive Democracy, Representational Inequity

The analytic framework guiding this track rests on a triad of interrelated concepts—procedural fragmentation, discursive democracy, and representational inequity—which together describe the systemic conditions under which racial disparities persist in ostensibly participatory local governments. While each concept originates in distinct strands of political and urban theory, they converge in practice to summarize how administrative design, participatory norms, and political representation are organized in ways that constrain substantive inclusion.

Procedural fragmentation refers to more than a proliferation of bureaucratic processes; it designates a condition of institutional incoherence in which overlapping authorities, unclear mandates, and routinized inefficiencies obscure accountability and frustrate meaningful participation. In Madison, this is evident in the sheer number of boards, commissions, and committees (BCCs)—many of which have unclear jurisdictions, duplicative functions, and

---

insider experience as analytic tools—crucial given this dissertation's reliance on direct involvement with planning processes and governance systems. Roy (2009), meanwhile, argues for decentering dominant, Global North-centric paradigms of urban theory, calling for recognition of "new geographies of theory" rooted in context-specific, often marginalized, spaces. In this project, Roy's intervention is extended to a Midwestern city often excluded from canonical urban discourse, yet reflective of broader systems of managed inequality. Together, these scholars validate a methodological stance that blends participation and critique, recognizing the epistemic value of local governance as both a site of inquiry and a source of insight.

inconsistent practices for public input. As Sampson (2012) observes, when institutional capacity is distributed unevenly across neighborhoods or sectors, the result is not only diminished efficacy but structurally differentiated access to governance. James C. Scott's (1998) theory of legibility is also instructive here: while procedural standardization is often presented as a democratic ideal, it can in fact simplify and rationalize civic life in ways that render marginalized knowledge illegible to the state. Similarly, Wacquant (2008) highlights how neoliberal regimes of governance generate institutional complexity and fragmentation as a strategy of statecraft—one that masks power asymmetries behind an appearance of technical neutrality. In this view, Madison's civic infrastructure reflects a form of organized disorganization, in which procedural abundance obfuscates rather than facilitates democratic responsiveness.

The notion of discursive democracy, as developed by Jürgen Habermas (1996) and revised by Nancy Fraser, offers a second critical register. While deliberative models emphasize the centrality of communicative rationality to democratic legitimacy, Fraser (1990) warns against the creation of "weak publics"—forums where marginalized actors may speak, but without institutional mechanisms for uptake, redistribution, or structural response.[50] In Madison, public hearings, community listening sessions, and stakeholder advisory groups frequently serve as sites

[50] Jürgen Habermas's discourse theory of democracy holds that legitimacy in democratic systems depends on deliberation rooted in communicative rationality, where participants engage as equals and arguments are judged by reason rather than authority. This model, articulated most fully in *Between Facts and Norms*, frames inclusive public dialogue as a cornerstone of democratic governance. Nancy Fraser's pivotal intervention in *Rethinking the Public Sphere* expands this framework by highlighting how structural inequalities limit who can shape dominant discourse. She introduces the concept of "weak publics"—arenas where marginalized voices are heard, but without meaningful access to mechanisms that convert discourse into institutional change. Together, these perspectives provide a critical framework for evaluating Madison's participatory landscape: while city processes such as hearings, listening sessions, and advisory committees invite input, they remain constrained by procedural norms that absorb dissent without enabling structural redress, redistribution or accountability. It was not uncommon for Alders to actively ignore (e.g. reading emails, texting, getting up to chat with one another/city staff, going to the bathroom, etc.) while people who have traveled to the City County Building, often after waiting hours to speak for three minutes, provide public comment.

of expressive participation, yet rarely alter the trajectory of administrative decision-making. The result is a discursive saturation without material consequence: a politics of consultation that performs inclusion while displacing demands for transformation.[51] These dynamics reveal the limitations of speech within systems that are not designed to respond structurally. As Fraser argues, "participation" cannot be reduced to voicing concerns; it must also involve access to "counterpublic" infrastructures that enable translation into action.

Finally, the concept of representational inequity draws from Iris Marion Young's (2000) critique of liberal-democratic models that treat representation as a neutral function of electoral arithmetic. Young contends that such models fail to account for the political salience of social group

---

[51] Jürgen Habermas's discourse theory of democracy frames legitimacy as grounded in deliberation among equals within rational-critical public spheres. Michel Foucault, in contrast, interrogates how those very conditions for discourse are produced through power. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969), he explains that "in any given culture and at any given moment, there is always only a limited number of possible statements," a formulation that reveals how discourse is circumscribed by historically situated systems of thought. *The Birth of the Clinic* (1973) extends this insight by showing how medical knowledge emerged through the alignment of "the visible and the articulable," illustrating the fusion of perception and language in structuring institutional understanding and authority.

Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1977) deepens this framework through his study of surveillance and institutional discipline. The panopticon, as a model of power, renders authority "visible and unverifiable," cultivating compliance through spatial design and internalized oversight. This process generates what he calls "docile bodies"—individuals shaped by administrative systems into predictable, governable forms. These concepts apply directly to local governance in Madison, where planning protocols, zoning procedures, and public meetings shape civic conduct by producing normative expectations rather than enforcing formal restrictions. In *The History of Sexuality, Volume I* (1990a), Foucault challenges conventional views of repression, writing that "what sustains our eagerness to speak of sex in terms of repression is this conviction" that silence implies constraint. He argues that power operates not through silence alone but through the very act of compelling speech under predefined rules, where discourse generates norms and structures conduct.

Together, these texts illuminate how institutional discourse in Madison functions as a technique of power. Public engagement processes invite participation, yet the discursive boundaries already delimit what kinds of claims can be recognized, acted upon, or sustained. Speech becomes intelligible through institutional grammars, and participation is filtered through epistemic frames aligned with administrative logics. Foucault's analysis enables a reading of these dynamics not as failures of democratic intent, but as effects of governance through discourse—where policy, language, and space form a mutually reinforcing apparatus.

difference, and thus obscure how systemic inequalities shape who gets to represent, and who is represented. In Madison, the City Council's part-time structure, coupled with the volunteer labor underpinning most BCCs, imposes de facto eligibility requirements that privilege those with institutional knowledge, economic security, and cultural capital. These structural features contribute to what political theorists have called a gap between descriptive representation—the demographic mirroring of constituencies—and substantive representation, or the actual advocacy of group interests (Pitkin 1967; Mansbridge 1999). While efforts have been made to increase the demographic diversity of civic bodies, the institutional form of governance continues to mediate which voices are amplified and which are constrained. Thus, representational inequity is not simply a question of "who is in the room," but of how the room is structured—and who can afford to be there.

Local Government as a Racialized Field

While often presented as a neutral infrastructure for democratic deliberation and public service delivery, local government is in practice a structured field—a space of competing positions, logics, and resources that is shaped by and constitutive of broader social hierarchies. Drawing from Pierre Bourdieu's (1991) theory of the state as a meta-field, this track conceptualizes Madison's municipal government not simply as a set of institutional functions, but as a social space in which symbolic and material power is unevenly distributed, legitimated, and reproduced. Within this field, civic authority is not allocated strictly by formal rules or electoral processes, but also through the accumulation of cultural capital (e.g., fluency in bureaucratic language), social capital (e.g., networks across institutions), and symbolic capital (e.g., recognition as a legitimate civic actor).

In Madison, the performance of public service is deeply entangled with particular registers of credibility, decorum, and institutional knowledge—traits more readily cultivated by those with stable access to educational, economic, and professional resources. These dynamics reflect the broader mechanisms of symbolic violence that Bourdieu identifies: processes through which social hierarchies are rendered natural or deserved, often without overt coercion. The result is a governance culture that valorizes procedural expertise while marginalizing dissent, emotion, or experiential forms of knowledge—forms often more common among those most impacted by policy decisions.

This field is also racialized, not necessarily through explicit exclusion, but through the patterned effects of institutional design and discursive normativity. As Loïc Wacquant (2008) has shown in his analysis of urban marginality, state institutions in advanced liberal democracies often operate through what he calls a "centaur state": combining bureaucratic inclusion with selective neglect and coercion. In such contexts, race operates not only as a marker of identity but as a structural axis along which access, surveillance, and authority are differentiated. In Madison, a city that presents itself as progressive and equity-oriented, the formal openness of civic institutions often obscures their functional inaccessibility to Black and brown residents—many of whom encounter local government primarily through the domains of housing enforcement, policing, or social service administration, rather than deliberative governance.

Iris Marion Young's (2000) work on the politics of difference further illuminates the limits of participatory structures that presume the neutrality of form. According to Young, institutions that claim to be open to all are often structured in ways that implicitly reward dominant cultural

norms and modes of participation. For example, public comment periods that privilege linear, unemotional speech or evening meetings that assume scheduling flexibility may appear inclusive but functionally exclude those whose lives are shaped by shift work, caregiving responsibilities, or systemic precarity. The racialization of the field is thus not only a matter of representation, but of form: whose time, voice, and body align with the unspoken expectations of governance?

By conceptualizing local government as a racialized field, this track frames Madison's civic institutions as terrains of both constraint and potential. Power in this context does not flow from a singular source but is distributed through a network of practices, codes, and norms that differentially position actors within the governance structure. Recognizing this dynamic is essential for understanding why well-intentioned equity policies often falter—not because they lack ambition, but because they are implemented within a field whose very structure reproduces the exclusions they seek to redress.

Madison in Context: Civic Infrastructure and Historical Design

Understanding the structure and function of Madison's municipal government requires situating it within a longer arc of institutional development, racialized urban policy, and local political culture. Though often held up as a beacon of progressive governance, Madison's civic infrastructure reflects a deeply layered legacy—one shaped by uneven growth, annexation politics, administrative sprawl, and a structural resistance to institutional adaptation. The city's self-image as a forward-thinking, participatory democracy frequently masks the operational realities of a fragmented and inequitable system, one that evolved less through comprehensive design than through the accretion of overlapping mandates, committees, and procedural norms.

This tension—between Madison's rhetorical commitments to equity and the structural limitations of its governance apparatus—has long been observable in the city's approach to neighborhood development and public service delivery. During my field-based research with Mayor Paul Soglin's office (2011–2013), conducted as part of a larger research initiative funded through MIT, I undertook a multi-year evaluation of the city's Neighborhood Resource Teams (NRTs)—interdepartmental groups charged with place-based intervention in select geographic areas. While the NRTs were often cited as a promising model for cross-sectoral governance, my analysis revealed significant limitations. The structure of each NRT varied widely, with little centralized oversight, uneven departmental support, and no clear mechanism of accountability to any legislative or executive body. Their effectiveness largely depended on the initiative of individual staff members, rather than on coordinated institutional capacity.

Further, the criteria by which NRT geographies were selected lacked transparency and empirical rigor. Though officials would loosely reference indicators such as police calls or building code violations, these rationales were inconsistently applied and poorly aligned with available data. In practice, the NRT areas often corresponded less to patterns of measurable need and more to concentrations of low-income renters and BIPOC residents—areas characterized by housing transience, limited access to public transit, and minimal institutional investment. An illustrative case occurred during the creation of the Theresa Terrace Neighborhood Center, where NRT involvement included a law enforcement-led home raid targeting one of the most active community residents. While intended as a response to perceived criminal activity, the action disrupted grassroots mobilization and eroded local trust, even as formal outreach for the center continued. By the time the facility was built, many of the original residents had relocated—

exposing a fundamental mismatch between the pace of institutional timelines and the lived realities of transient communities.

This disjuncture between long-term redevelopment plans and short-term community stability reflects deeper systemic constraints. Madison's political structure—a part-time Common Council with high turnover and limited procedural bandwidth—undermines sustained oversight or continuity in policy implementation. The same factors that impede strategic alignment across departments also restrict the Council's ability to intervene meaningfully in planning, zoning, and transit decisions. These governance challenges are compounded by spatial dynamics. Like many U.S. cities, Madison has developed a "donut" of density: concentrated growth in the downtown core and peripheral areas, with lower-density residential zones in between. Yet its planning regimes, school attendance zones, and transit infrastructure have failed to evolve accordingly. For instance, only three public elementary schools—Lincoln, Mendota, and Leopold—are located in or adjacent to predominantly BIPOC, low-income neighborhoods. As a result, children from these communities face extended commutes to schools across the city, often navigating outdated attendance boundaries that reflect past political compromises rather than current demographic or transit patterns. The burden of time—compounded by economic precarity and renter instability—becomes a structuring condition of educational access. Similarly, the redistricting process revealed how aldermanic districts often fail to cohere with communities of interest, contributing to representational dilution. While the post-2020 redistricting cycle created three districts with majority BIPOC populations, the broader pattern persists: no single district holds sustained political power through a consolidated BIPOC constituency.

In sum, Madison's governance structure reflects a complex layering of spatial, political, and procedural forces that constrain its capacity to address the racial disparities it publicly acknowledges. The city's self-concept as a progressive, data-driven municipality is not without merit—but its civic infrastructure, as designed and practiced, has repeatedly struggled to deliver on these ideals. It is within this context that the case studies that follow—focused on government structure, policing and public education, and redistricting—must be understood: not as anomalies, but as expressions of a durable political form.

Empirical Site I: TFOGS and Structural Impediments

The structural limitations of Madison's local government were brought into especially sharp focus during the work of the Task Force on Government Structure (TFOGS), which convened in the late 2010s to evaluate the city's civic architecture and its alignment with democratic principles. I served as one of the only members to participate for the duration of the task force's tenure, eventually chairing the Subcommittee on Boards, Commissions, and Committees (BCCs) and serving on the Subcommittee on the Common Council, and the Executive Subcommittee. These roles provided not only proximity to internal deliberations, but also sustained engagement with the institutional design questions that lie at the heart of this track: How do governance structures shape participation, accountability, and racial equity? And to what extent does procedural complexity inhibit the very forms of responsiveness that Madison professes to uphold? This case makes visible how governance structure—in this instance, a fragmented and inconsistent system of boards, commissions, and committees—shapes participation and dilutes both equity and accountability. It offers a grounded example of how procedural complexity can act as a barrier to the very democratic responsiveness it claims to facilitate.

The findings of the TFOGS process were striking. Madison's reliance on an expansive BCC system—nearly 100 distinct bodies at the time of review—was widely perceived as a testament to grassroots democracy. Yet closer examination revealed a paradox of procedural abundance: rather than enhancing public input, the sheer volume and fragmentation of these bodies diluted accountability, reproduced barriers to access, and entrenched status quo power dynamics. Drawing on James C. Scott's (1998) concept of legibility, the BCC system appeared rational and participatory on its surface, but in practice generated a field of governance that was unreadable to all but the most institutionally fluent. Meetings were poorly coordinated, roles were inconsistently defined, and participation required not just time, but the cultural capital to navigate administrative norms.

These dynamics were further exacerbated by patterns of racial, socioeconomic, and geographic underrepresentation. Although Madison has made symbolic strides toward more inclusive representation, data collected by the task force and supported by anecdotal testimony revealed that the composition of BCCs disproportionately reflected homeowners, white residents, and those with professional or academic experience in governance-adjacent sectors. As part of the BCC Subcommittee's work, I reviewed city records, subcommittee meeting transcripts, community survey summaries, and open house testimony—including materials from the Warner Park Community Center meeting held on September 24, 2019. That event featured extensive resident commentary on the inaccessibility of BCCs, the ambiguity of their roles, and the difficulty of applying to serve. Notes compiled from that meeting include statements such as "I don't even know what they do," "They serve an agenda created before we can participate," and "Not even close" in response to whether BCCs represented the public. These comments mirrored

patterns that emerged across formal staff memos and internal conversations during subcommittee meetings—particularly a June 14, 2019 session in which senior city staff described widespread confusion among employees about the purpose, scope, and staffing of BCCs (May, 2019).

My analysis of these materials combined thematic review with interpretive memoing—paying particular attention to the repetition of procedural barriers (e.g., appointment ambiguity, unclear authority, lack of support for public members) and how they were articulated differently by staff and community members. What stood out was the structural convergence: from internal staff to external residents, the message was clear—Madison's BCC system required not just reform, but rethinking. These data points were not coded in a formal software package but were consistently revisited across working drafts, subcommittee reports, and in reflections shared with fellow committee members. It was through this layered engagement that the analytic conclusion emerged: that procedural form was not a neutral container for democratic input, but a mechanism that actively shaped and constrained it. As Bourdieu (1991) might suggest, the BCC system functioned as a field in which symbolic capital—especially fluency in procedural language and institutional legitimacy—structured who could participate effectively. Participation, in this context, was less about formal inclusion and more about practical and performative legitimacy.

Efforts to reform these dynamics included discussion of structural mechanisms to coordinate public engagement, such as a centralized office for resident participation. Whereas the preceding sections described mechanisms of fragmentation—appointment ambiguity, procedural opacity, and representational burden—what follows reflects one proposed response. One such idea, conceptualized in part by then–Alder Rebecca Kemble, was the proposed Office of Resident

Engagement and Neighborhood Support (ORENS). However, this proposal did not reflect a unified recommendation from the Task Force as a whole, and was ultimately recognized by many members as beyond the formal scope of the group's mandate. What the subcommittees did observe—across departments, divisions, and individual alders—was a pronounced inconsistency in how "community engagement" was understood, staffed, and operationalized. Each entity approached outreach through its own lens, resulting in duplicated efforts, uneven outcomes, and an absence of coherent standards or evaluative frameworks. In this sense, the proposal to centralize or coordinate engagement was less about building a new administrative division than it was a recognition of governance incoherence—a fragmented procedural landscape that left both staff and residents disoriented.

The internal work of the TFOGS subcommittees revealed additional layers of dysfunction. The Subcommittee on Boards, Commissions, and Committees identified key issues such as unclear appointment processes, lack of orientation or training, inconsistent definitions of roles and responsibilities, and significant variation in meeting procedures. For example, in reviewing subcommittee notes and reflecting on my own participation, I found that some BCCs followed strict procedural scripts with staff-generated agendas and legal counsel present, while others lacked quorum procedures, agenda-setting guidelines, or even a clear definition of member responsibilities. The absence of onboarding was especially evident during our review of appointment protocols: several alders admitted they did not know how many committees existed, nor how appointees were selected. At the September 25, 2019 TFOGS meeting, for instance, committee members discussed the fact that even the Mayor's Office and City Attorney staff could not confirm the total number of standing committees—highlighting the opacity of the

governance structure itself. These inconsistencies were not abstract observations; they surfaced repeatedly during TFOGS discussions and were corroborated by city staff and committee participants in both formal and informal conversations.

Furthermore, while many BCC members were motivated by a sense of civic duty, the structure itself placed outsized burdens on volunteers, many of whom had limited capacity to engage consistently. For low-income residents, renters, and individuals with inflexible work schedules or caregiving responsibilities, sustained participation was virtually impossible. As a result, the BCC system skewed toward individuals with economic privilege, professional flexibility, and prior knowledge of city processes—thereby reinforcing the representational inequities already noted.

The Subcommittee on the Common Council, meanwhile, engaged in a critical analysis of the Council's structure, compensation, staffing, and institutional capacity. One of the clearest findings was that the part-time nature of the Council significantly constrained members' ability to research, draft, and advocate for substantive policy. The assumption that alders could perform the duties of legislative oversight, constituent services, and committee participation on a part-time basis was not only outdated, but structurally exclusionary. The practical result was a body disproportionately composed of individuals with flexible or high-income employment, retirees, or those with limited caregiving responsibilities. The subcommittee recommended increasing Council pay, reducing the number of alders to improve efficiency, and expanding staff support to enable more robust legislative engagement. Yet these proposals were met with considerable resistance, often framed as threats to citizen governance or as moves toward bureaucratization—

revealing an entrenched attachment to the symbolic value of “citizen-legislators,” even as the functional demands of governance had long surpassed this model.[52]

These structural barriers to participation do not exist in isolation. Rather, they are compounded by broader conditions—housing insecurity, wage precarity, caregiving burdens—that disproportionately affect BIPOC and working-class residents. While procedural fragmentation and the design of governance structures inhibit participation in formal terms, they also reflect and intensify exclusions already produced by Madison’s stratified housing market and labor dynamics. In this sense, governance is not the root cause, but a powerful amplifier: a system whose very architecture renders existing inequalities administratively legible yet politically inert. Participation is constrained not simply by institutional access, but by a convergence of social conditions that make sustained engagement functionally impossible for many residents.

Taken together, the findings of the two subcommittees offered a clear—if politically sensitive—diagnosis: that the city’s governance model, while rhetorically inclusive, was procedurally fragmented, structurally outdated, and operationally inaccessible. These insights laid bare the tension between Madison’s democratic self-concept and the material constraints of its institutional form. They also underscore a central theme of this track: that governance is not only about policy, but about architecture—and that equity requires not just intention, but design.

“Inclusion involves a process of structuring interaction so that everyone can bring their perspectives to bear on the collective decisions that affect their lives” (Young 2000, 52). Madison’s governance processes frequently claim inclusion, yet often fall short in realizing the structural conditions necessary for it to be meaningful or effective. of “part-time” vs. “full-time”.

Empirical Site II: Policing, Democracy, and the Ad Hoc Committee on Educational Resource Officers

The structure of Madison's local government is perhaps nowhere more visible—and contested—than in its administration of public safety and the role of policing in schools. From 2017 to 2018, I served as a member of the Education Resource Officer (ERO) Ad Hoc Committee, a body charged with evaluating the Madison Police Department's presence in the public school system and offering recommendations to the Common Council regarding the future of that relationship. This committee emerged not from internal city planning, but from sustained pressure by youth organizers, community advocates, and civil rights organizations who had long criticized the disproportionate impact of school-based policing on Black students and students with disabilities. The committee's work, while framed in procedural terms as a neutral evaluation, quickly became a flashpoint for broader tensions surrounding democratic inclusion, institutional legitimacy, and the racialized nature of civic deliberation in Madison. The ERO Committee case illustrates how cross-institutional fragmentation between the City and School District complicates democratic action. It reflects the analytic concern that symbolic inclusion, without structural reform, preserves the very conditions that reforms seek to undo.

What unfolded within the ERO Committee was emblematic of a deeper contradiction in the city's governance culture: while public engagement was formally embraced, the administrative structures through which participation occurred remained fragmented, opaque, and at times actively resistant to the redistribution of decision-making power. Community members offered hours of testimony, submitted public comments, and in some cases participated in committee meetings directly. Yet much of this input—particularly from BIPOC youth and grassroots organizations—was filtered through procedural channels that privileged data aggregation,

departmental reports, and narrowly defined policy frameworks. The implications of this procedural narrowing—including examples of evidentiary evasion and narrative control—are illustrated in the analytic sample below. The effect was to displace dissent into a discursive space that demanded civility, standardization, and administrative legibility—what Nancy Fraser (1990) would term a "weak public," where marginalized voices are permitted expression but not influence. The following analytic trace outlines how these structural barriers—particularly in the areas of data access, agency coordination, and institutional response—shaped both the committee's internal process and its broader implications.

These conclusions did not emerge from abstract theorizing. They were built from direct observation over more than a year of committee participation: in meetings where school staff avoided clear answers about ERO roles; in public testimony sessions where youth voices were praised but procedurally sidelined; and in repeated instances where committee members had to follow up—sometimes weeks later—just to obtain basic documentation. I began to track patterns: when data was withheld, when MPD preemptively framed public narratives, and when district representatives deferred questions to absent administrators. My own notes and reflections, jotted down in real time, eventually formed the scaffolding for this analysis. What follows is one analytic sample that distills these dynamics and traces their structural significance.

Analytic Sample 2: Performative Governance and Interagency Disjuncture

The ERO Committee, formed to evaluate the role of Educational Resource Officers in Madison high schools, became an unintentional case study in governance fragmentation. Charged by the School Board but reliant on data from both the school district and the City's police department,

the committee was structurally positioned to reveal the limits of democratic procedure when institutional actors are not aligned.

Throughout the committee's work, members encountered routine delays, incomplete data, and limited cooperation from school district staff—despite the fact that the committee itself had been established by the Board of Education. Requests for reports on ERO deployments, reasons for officer interventions, and site-specific incident patterns were often met with partial responses or evaded altogether. At one point, the committee was unable to confirm whether school principals were accurately reporting when EROs were used to manage routine disciplinary matters (MMSD, 2017). This evidentiary opacity made comprehensive analysis nearly impossible and left many of the committee's findings rooted in testimonial fragments and inference rather than confirmed administrative data.

Even more revealing was the relationship—or lack thereof—between the School District and the City of Madison. The committee quickly discovered that while the MPD technically reported to the city, the school district was contractually responsible for managing the officers' presence in schools. This led to a bureaucratic impasse: the Board had legal authority to cancel the contract but no operational control over how the officers were deployed. At the same time, MPD publicly resisted committee suggestions before the committee had even finalized its recommendations—most notably in a public post by then–Chief Mike Koval, who rejected a non-binding idea floated during deliberations (Koval, 2018). This preemptive pushback mirrored similar dynamics observed in the redistricting process, where institutional actors acted to preserve narrative and operational control even before formal proposals were introduced.

What emerged from this work was a striking pattern of symbolic reform: a committee formed under the language of participatory democracy, tasked with investigating a highly racialized policy issue, but ultimately constrained by interagency silos and a lack of structural coordination. Even committee members who had deep ties to local governance struggled to navigate the cross-system dysfunction. The school district could not compel cooperation from its own administrators; the City would not accept alternative deployment strategies; and the data required to substantiate claims of harm or disproportionality was either unavailable or obfuscated. This absence of accessible information—paired with the evasive posture of key institutions—functioned as a form of structural silence: shaping not only what could be known, but what could be asked, and by whom.

As several committee members noted, the presence of police in schools was less a standalone issue than a manifestation of deeper failures—in housing, transit, employment, mental health, and other systems that left schools as the last institutional site forced to absorb social breakdown. But because those systems fell outside the committee's jurisdiction, its recommendations were necessarily limited. The central insight here was not about the efficacy of EROs themselves, but about how institutional design disciplines the very questions reformers are allowed to ask. Governance, in this case, did not merely fail to resolve inequity; it actively reproduced it by misaligning authority, fragmenting responsibility, and elevating symbolic inclusion over structural change.

These dynamics were exacerbated by the siloed nature of institutional authority. The Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD), while a partner in the ERO program, did not operate under the jurisdiction of city government, limiting the committee's ability to implement or enforce any proposed changes. Meanwhile, representatives from the Madison Police Department and city administrative staff brought to the table divergent assumptions about the purpose and function of school-based officers—often framing the debate in terms of safety and order rather than equity or restorative justice. This fragmentation of administrative accountability meant that even when the committee reached consensus or issued formal recommendations, there was little clarity about how those recommendations would be operationalized, by whom, or with what consequences. As demonstrated earlier, even basic data requests were often delayed or deflected—reinforcing how structural ambiguity limited follow-through."

Although the ERO Committee's report ultimately found that the continued presence of police in schools was neither necessary nor advisable, it also emphasized that an abrupt termination of the ERO contract—absent broader structural reforms—could paradoxically increase police presence in schools. The committee identified the role of EROs as symptomatic of other institutional failures: inadequate mental health resources, unclear discipline protocols, inconsistent school-level leadership, and the absence of coordinated intervention strategies. Without addressing these root causes, the withdrawal of EROs risked placing greater burdens on reactive policing. This was not a theoretical concern. Following the civic unrest after the murder of George Floyd and during the COVID-19 lockdown—when schools had already transitioned to remote learning—the MMSD School Board, led in part by then-member and former police officer Gloria Reyes, voted to end the contract with MPD. Reyes had previously stated, during her campaign, "I don't

need a report for me to know that we need police in our schools." Yet the decision to cancel the ERO program disregarded many of the committee's core recommendations, particularly the call for a planned, nuanced, and equity-centered process of withdrawal.

Subsequent developments have borne out the committee's concerns. Observations from my work facilitating the Madison Youth Advisory Board—who met regularly[53] with MPD leadership, including former Chief Shon Barnes—the absence of formal EROs has led to a notable increase in police presence at schools, as administrators rely on emergency calls to manage situations that might previously have been handled internally. In effect, the removal of EROs without systemic investment in alternative supports has resulted not in the demilitarization of school spaces, but in a more unpredictable, less accountable mode of policing. This outcome reflects a larger pattern: in the absence of coordinated governance and structural reform, symbolic acts of removal can reproduce the very dynamics they intend to dismantle.

The trajectory of the ERO Committee also underscores a deeper institutional challenge: the inability of deliberative civic bodies to shape structural outcomes when administrative power is diffused and political will is reactive. Despite extensive public engagement and robust internal debate, the committee's recommendations were ultimately rendered moot by a top-down policy reversal that privileged symbolic resolution over sustained structural change. The broader lesson is not simply about the role of policing in schools, but about the fragility of participatory governance in contexts where fragmentation, urgency, and political optics supersede planning, coordination, and care. Just as the presence of EROs reflected a systemic failure to invest in

[53] At least once a month, sometimes more, over a 40 month period

student well-being, the process of their removal laid bare the limitations of governance forms that invite input but do not institutionalize the means to act on it.

While the TFOGS process exposed internal contradictions within Madison's formal civic infrastructure, the ERO Committee revealed how these structural logics unfold across institutional boundaries—especially where education, policing, and youth governance converge.

Transitional Reflections: Governance Without Closure

The analyses of the TFOGS process and the ERO Committee expose a recurring pattern in Madison's civic landscape: governance structures that are procedurally open but substantively constrained. In both cases, formal mechanisms of engagement—public testimony, advisory committees, deliberative reports—were mobilized in response to deeply felt community concerns. Yet in neither case did these mechanisms produce structural change commensurate with their inputs. The procedural performances of democracy—agenda setting, listening sessions, and committee deliberations—did not translate into durable institutional transformation. These findings begin to answer the central question driving this inquiry: What is it about Madison's governance structure that inhibits durable changes in governance that produce equity outcomes?

This disjuncture is not unique to Madison, but it takes on particular salience in a city that prides itself on equity-forward policy discourse and participatory design. Across these empirical cases, we observe what might be called a crisis of implementation—one that emerges not from a lack of ideas or advocacy, but from an underlying architecture ill-equipped to synthesize, absorb, or act

upon the very participation it solicits. Madison's governance form becomes not only a site of contestation, but a recursive field in which calls for equity are absorbed, redirected, and often defused.

Moreover, the intersection of these cases underscores the interconnectedness of the systems at stake. The BCC system's fragmentation mirrors the fractured accountability that undermined the ERO process. Yet these cases are not identical in focus or implication. The TFOGS process revealed the internal disarray and outdated architecture of Madison's civic infrastructure itself—how the city is organized, and how that structure reproduces procedural fragmentation and representational inequity. The ERO Committee, by contrast, exposed the consequences of this governance design as it plays out across systems—how institutions like the school district and police department converge in ways that amplify the failures of public deliberation, especially in contexts involving youth, racialized governance, and community safety. Both cases illustrate institutional limits on participatory democracy, but they operate at different registers: TFOGS at the level of form, and ERO at the level of function and interagency interaction / orchestration.

What emerges is a systemic condition: a governance ecosystem that enacts procedural democracy while foreclosing its transformative potential. As this track has shown, the question is not simply whether government listens, but whether it is structured to act meaningfully on what it hears. The central research questions posed at the outset—How has the current structure of local government, particularly the city council, failed to effectively mitigate or reduce racial disparities in Madison? What aspects of this structure contribute to the perpetuation of these disparities?—reverberate through both empirical sites explored so far.

As we turn to the final empirical case—the redistricting process that followed the 2020 Census—we do so with a clearer understanding of the political logics that structure Madison's local governance. Redistricting is often framed as a technical exercise in representation. But in cities like Madison, it is a window into the spatial inscription of power: who gets to be seen, heard, and counted, and how those calculations shape the possibilities for democratic life. It is perhaps the most literal—and spatial—expression of the themes explored throughout this track. It is to this terrain that we now turn.

Emprical Site III: Redistricting and Representational Burden

Redistricting is often framed as a technical necessity—a task of mathematical precision and population parity required to meet federal mandates for fair representation. Yet beneath its procedural veneer, redistricting is one of the most consequential exercises of political power in local government. It is where geography becomes governance: where communities are recognized or fragmented, where power is consolidated or dispersed, and where the possibility of democratic participation is quite literally drawn into or out of existence.

As Chair of the City of Madison's Redistricting Committee following the 2020 Census, I approached the role with a commitment to neutrality, transparency, pragmatism and equitable facilitation. My aim was not to steer the outcome, but to ensure that all members of the committee—regardless of political bent or institutional role—had equal access to shape the process. But what emerged from this work was a deeper insight into the limits of redistricting as a tool for democratic transformation.

Early in the process, the committee encountered a flashpoint that reveals the complex entanglement of symbolism, power, and spatial governance in Madison: the question of the "student district," District 8. While there is no official statute designating an aldermanic seat for a University of Wisconsin–Madison student, the 8th District has, by longstanding convention, been understood to serve that purpose. During our first mapping pass, committee staff recommended a modest redrawing of the 8th District's boundaries—one that would have slightly reduced the student concentration in that district, while expanding student representation in two adjacent districts (the 4th and 5th). This approach not only preserved student influence, but would have enhanced their presence across the downtown core and created greater flexibility to support BIPOC representation in peripheral areas. Yet the proposal was swiftly reframed in public discourse as an attack on student voice. Led by the then–8th District alder, and amplified by local political figures including a former mayor and a state representative, the redistricting committee was accused of trying to "crack" the student district and undermining student power. None of these individuals engaged directly with the committee's rationale, nor did they offer alternative proposals that accounted for the racial and geographic constraints we faced elsewhere in the city. The paragraph above illustrates the symbolic stakes of redistricting—but it was through the documents, public feedback, and institutional discourse surrounding this moment that a clearer pattern emerged. The following analytic trace outlines how those materials were reviewed and interpreted.

Analytic Sample 3: Spatial Representation and the Politics of Preservation

Redistricting in Madison offered a revealing window into how spatial governance becomes a mechanism for preserving political advantage under the guise of procedural fairness. As Chair of the Redistricting Committee in 2021, I was tasked with overseeing a process constrained by population shifts, public expectation, and institutional mandates around equity. In theory, the

process was designed to rebalance representation. In practice, it surfaced the extent to which spatial boundaries operate as instruments of political self-preservation, even when those boundaries contradict patterns of demographic growth and historical exclusion.

Throughout the redistricting process, certain alders resisted changes that would have shifted their districts' boundaries in ways that better aligned with population data and racial representation. The rationale was couched in equity terms: preserving "student voice" or "community cohesion." Yet public letters, such as those from UW Chancellor Rebecca Blank, largely ignored how the proposed revisions would have actually increased BIPOC representation in multiple districts (City of Madison, 2021a; 2021b). The City Attorney's memo, issued on September 22, 2021, clarified that such changes were routine and legally inconsequential to seated alders (Haas, 2021), but the public narrative continued to center personal political stakes as structural risks.

My review of resident correspondence and conceptual maps, including the 2021 demographic overlays, demonstrated how early redistricting concepts would have redistributed influence in ways that corrected long-standing racial inequities. These concepts were ultimately weakened in response to political pressure, even though many of the objections—such as those around "cracking" the student district—were not supported by the data (City of Madison, 2021c). This revealed a tension at the heart of spatial governance: when geographic representation becomes a proxy for political identity, structural equity can be subordinated to narrative control.

What emerged in this process was not outright denial of equity goals, but their symbolic substitution. Many of the public arguments against the changes came from individuals and

institutions who elsewhere claimed to champion inclusion. But when faced with proposals that might disrupt existing political configurations—even to the benefit of underrepresented communities—those claims proved malleable. This is where geography becomes governance: when demographic shifts are rendered politically invisible through selective framing, and when institutional commitments to equity are operationalized through the preservation of existing power. The redistricting process laid bare how representational equity is constrained not only by rules, but by who gets to define what counts as equitable.

These patterns—surfaced through committee correspondence, public commentary, and demographic analysis—did more than illustrate political tension. They revealed the underlying dynamics through which spatial equity is negotiated, reframed, and often deferred. The broader implications of this process, and its symbolic and structural dimensions, are explored further below.

Redistricting, in this context, is not only a matter of drawing lines, but of managing symbols. As Lefebvre (1991) argues, space is never neutral—it is produced through social struggle, economic interest, and political inscription. In Madison, the 8th District controversy became a battleground over identity, legitimacy, and electoral heritage, even as it constrained the committee's ability to reconfigure other districts in ways that could have increased representation for historically marginalized communities. Soja's (2010) notion of spatial justice is also instructive here: the fight over one boundary constrained justice elsewhere. Attempts to enhance equity in districts on the west, far east and south sides—home to many of Madison's low-income and BIPOC residents—were limited by early political efforts to codify the 8th District in its existing form.

The dynamics became even more pronounced during deliberations over the west-side districts—specifically Districts 1, 10, 14, and 20. These districts bordered several racially diverse housing clusters, including areas with high concentrations of renters and recent arrivals. Many of these residents had long been fragmented across multiple districts, diluting their ability to elect representatives aligned with their interests or cultural experiences. The committee identified a rare opportunity to realign district boundaries to better reflect the spatial concentration of these communities, potentially increasing the representation of BIPOC and low-income voters across multiple districts. Yet this effort was met with subtle and overt resistance—particularly from the sitting alder of District 20, who had previously advocated for maintaining the 8th District's historical boundaries. This individual, who I knew through shared professional and affinity networks, expressed concern that the proposed maps would separate neighborhood associations that had played a key role in their electoral success.

What became apparent in this exchange—and in similar ones that followed—was that even progressive-minded representatives could resist structural inclusion when it threatened their personal political calculus. The imperative to protect one's district, donor base, or relational capital on influential city committees often overrode broader commitments to racial equity. Moreover, several BIPOC civic leaders who had previously spoken out or whose daily roles suggested a professional imperative or interest on the importance of representational justice joined in opposing these changes, revealing the tensions between short-term institutional alliances and long-term structural change. As with other sections of this track, the redistricting

process illuminated how systems of influence and dependency within local governance can complicate even well-intentioned equity efforts.

These debates unfolded against a backdrop of broader material instability that is rarely addressed in formal redistricting processes. Madison's high renter population, especially among BIPOC residents, results in frequent mobility and residential turnover—conditions that make "communities of interest" both conceptually and spatially unstable. The census itself likely undercounted many residents living in transitional housing or in informal or overcrowded arrangements, skewing data that was foundational to the redistricting process. As a result, the very populations that equity-minded redistricting aims to uplift are often those most structurally occluded from recognition. What appears on a map as contiguity may in practice represent fractured social geographies, shaped by transit deserts, policing boundaries, and school attendance zones that divide rather than connect.

In the end, the redistricting committee made modest but meaningful strides toward representational balance. All four west-side districts noted above increased their proportion of BIPOC residents as a result of redistricting—an outcome that reflected sustained committee negotiation and a principled commitment to equity within constraint. But the process also underscored a central theme of this track: that the mechanics of governance, no matter how inclusive in intent, are embedded within fields of power that resist redistribution. Redistricting is not simply a cartographic act—it is a reflection of the political will to acknowledge and recalibrate structural advantage. In Madison, that will remains contested.

Discourse & Analysis: Structural Design as Statecraft

The three empirical cases presented in this track—TFOGS, the ERO Committee, and the Redistricting Process—demonstrate not only the procedural limitations of local governance in Madison, but also the deeper institutional logics that sustain exclusion even in the face of reformist intent. Each case, in its own way, makes visible the structural architecture through which power is distributed, symbolic violence enacted, and democratic participation rendered procedurally exhaustive but substantively inconsequential. Taken together, these cases reveal a core dynamic at the heart of Madison's local government: that structural design itself acts as a form of statecraft—organizing access, shaping voice, and mediating legitimacy. Each empirical site illustrates a distinct yet overlapping dimension of this design: the TFOGS process exposes procedural fragmentation, the ERO Committee embodies the limits of discursive democracy, and the redistricting process lays bare persistent struggles over representational equity.

Returning to the theoretical frameworks introduced earlier, it becomes clear that the city's civic infrastructure operates within what Iris Marion Young (2000) describes as a regime of structural injustice—one in which harms are produced through the routine functioning of institutions, even in the absence of overt intent. The procedural norms of Madison's governance—the part-time council, overburdened BCC system, and fragmented administrative authority—may appear technocratic or neutral. But they perform a symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1991) by rendering exclusion unremarkable, embedding inequity into process, and exhausting participation as a mode of engagement.

This track has demonstrated that Madison exemplifies what might be termed liberal proceduralism: a governance mode where the form of inclusion substitutes for its substance.

Equity statements proliferate. Listening sessions abound. Task forces are convened. Yet the underlying design remains largely intact, shielding core systems of power from redistribution. These institutional forms did not just limit action—they also structured omission. Across all three sites, what was left unsaid was as telling as what was voiced. Silences—whether in the form of unconsulted communities, unasked questions, or constrained data flows—were not accidental, but embedded in the procedural logics of governance. These patterns align with Nancy Fraser's (1990) critique of "weak publics" and James Scott's (1998) account of administrative legibility—concepts that point to how formal participation can obscure, rather than resolve, structural asymmetries.

More pointedly, these findings suggest that local government—often imagined as the most accessible layer of democratic life—functions as a site where difference is managed rather than engaged. Discursive inclusion without structural change can become a mechanism of deferral, wherein racialized disparities are acknowledged, studied, and even lamented—but rarely redressed. This is not to indict individual actors or intentions, but to illuminate how institutional form itself shapes what kinds of solutions can be imagined, who is authorized to propose them, and how those proposals circulate through the field of governance.

If governance is a form of statecraft, then reform must be more than procedural adjustment. It must be architectural. The empirical sections of this track demonstrate that Madison's current structure—while rich in participatory gestures—is poorly equipped to produce sustained, equitable outcomes. This is not due to a lack of civic will, but to a misalignment between institutional design and the material realities of exclusion. Governance structures that demand

excessive unpaid labor, that valorize technocratic fluency over lived experience, and that distribute authority without accountability are unlikely to deliver the forms of justice they invoke.

The challenge, then, is not simply to improve representation, streamline process, or expand access—though each of these is necessary. Rather, it is to reimagine what governance might look like if it were truly designed for equity: not just symbolically inclusive, but structurally transformative. That reimagining, however, begins with recognition. And recognition, as this track has shown, requires not only listening—but changing the terms under which people are heard. Together, the sites presented affirm the central proposition that local governance in Madison—through its forms, processes, and procedural logics—actively shapes who can participate, how equity is operationalized, and what kinds of justice remain imaginable.

From the vantage point of executive leadership—such as the Mayor's Office, the District Superintendent, the Council or School Board leadership—Young's formulation of inclusion as structural redesign, rather than procedural access, presents a compelling challenge. Rather than convening new advisory bodies or issuing equity statements, a structural approach might require redesigning how agendas are set, how time and labor are compensated, the general duration (i.e. the use of sunset clauses in BCC charters) or how responsibility is distributed across agencies or systems. More than simple administrative reforms, these represent normative choices that define who democracy is built to serve.

Conclusion: Toward Structural Reimagination

Leon Krier once remarked, “Archaeology that does not dare to reconstruct is merely a form of necrophilia.”[54] It is a provocation that holds particular relevance for the state of municipal governance today. To study the systems, procedures, and bureaucratic architectures of local government without daring to imagine their reconstruction is to relegate civic inquiry to autopsy—descriptive, perhaps illuminating, but ultimately static.

The central proposition of this track has been straightforward but significant: that the persistence of racial disparities in Madison is not merely the consequence of failed policies or insufficient will, but is materially and procedurally embedded in the design of local government itself. Through an integrated analysis of governance structures (TFOGS), cross-sectoral dysfunction (ERO Committee), and spatial representation (Redistricting), this study has illustrated how exclusion is reproduced through institutional routines that are often framed as participatory, neutral, or democratic.

Each empirical site has demonstrated a different facet of how this exclusion functions. The TFOGS process revealed a fragmented civic architecture that diffuses responsibility and exhausts participation. The ERO Committee highlighted how democratic processes can be performative when interagency boundaries dilute authority and limit implementation. And the redistricting process underscored how spatial governance and demographic instability compound representational inequity—even in the midst of institutional commitments to equity.

Taken together, these cases support a broader claim: that form matters. The way a government is organized—how it invites participation, how it processes input, how it allocates authority—

[54] Krier, Léon. Architecture: Choice or Fate. Andreas Papadakis Publisher, 1998

conditions the kinds of justice it can produce. In Madison we find a civic infrastructure that too often enacts symbolic gestures rather than structural transformation. This is not a failure of civic intent, but a failure of civic architecture.

Yet within this critique lies a generative opportunity. If local governance is a product of design, it is also a site of design. The challenge is not just to make existing structures more efficient or more inclusive within current constraints, but to ask: What would it mean to build a municipal structure *for* equity, rather than around it? This question is not rhetorical. It demands a rethinking of representation, participation, and authority from the ground up.

This track does not propose a single solution. It points to the need for ongoing, reflexive, community-rooted dialogue that centers structural change—not just symbolic inclusion—as its goal. The findings suggest that future work must consider how governance structures might be realigned with the racial, spatial, and institutional realities they aim to serve. That process must be as much about listening as it is about learning to hear differently—about making government not just more open, but more capable of meaningful response.

Structural injustice is not inevitable. But addressing it requires more than procedural reform. It requires the courage to imagine, and build, something else entirely.

Coda

In November 2024, more than 70% of Madison voters approved a $507 million referendum to rebuild or renovate ten public schools. Public officials framed the outcome as a reflection of the city’s enduring commitment to its students and a community consensus around investment in education. The rhetoric was celebratory, and the numbers appeared decisive.

Less examined was the deeper consequence of the decision: eight of the ten schools were slated to be rebuilds, reconstructed on the same footprints they currently occupy. This choice went forward despite long-standing awareness of a spatial mismatch between where Madison's low-income and BIPOC families live and where school facilities are located. In neighborhoods like Allied Drive, the disconnect between residential density and proximity to schools has been flagged for decades—yet when given the opportunity to fundamentally reconsider school siting, the district and city deferred to the status quo.

The implications of this decision stretch beyond logistics. When a half-billion-dollar investment is decoupled from any meaningful spatial analysis or cross-agency coordination, it reveals how deeply institutional inertia shapes capital planning. There was no serious engagement with questions of demographic change, no integration with city planning forecasts, and no discussion of how school location intersects with transit access, housing instability, or youth disconnection. Instead, infrastructure decisions were framed as technical matters, bracketed from the very social conditions they claim to address.

This is a pattern that recurs across Madison's policy landscape: declarations of equity made in isolation from the systems that structure exclusion. In this case, the referendum was widely supported—including by those who are critical of the outcome—not because residents are disengaged, but because they are routinely forced to choose between reinvestment and inaction. The vote reflects hope; the implementation reflects constraint. What might have been an opportunity to reimagine how public institutions meet people where they are became, instead, another episode in a longer story of fragmented governance and spatial indifference.

Reframing the Question: Neither *If* nor *Why* Disparities Persist, But How?

The referendum is just one example among many that reveals a broader pattern: Madison's racial and economic disparities are not the residue of historical missteps, nor are they anomalies in an otherwise equitable civic order. They are products of systems that continue to function according to inherited priorities and reinforced narratives. Disparities are patterned, maintained, and legitimated through both material structures and discursive practices—through what is funded and built, but also through what is said, who is heard, and how problems are framed, and who is appointed to do the framing.

This project operates from the premise that power is not only exercised through coercive or overt mechanisms, but also circulates through language, procedures, and categories of understanding. Drawing on Foucault's conception of discursive power, it examines how institutional actors define what counts as progress, who is seen as a legitimate participant, and which kinds of harm are rendered visible or ignorable. In Madison, as elsewhere, governance is as much a matter of narrative as it is of infrastructure. Equity is often invoked rhetorically while being deferred administratively. Technical decisions—about land use, school siting, resource allocation—are insulated from political challenge by being framed as neutral, professional, or inevitable.

Each of the three tracks in this dissertation takes up this dynamic from a different angle. Track I shows how historical land use and housing policies encoded exclusion into Madison's spatial form, not just through bricks and boundaries, but through planning discourse that conflated order with whiteness and disinvestment with objectivity. Track II deepens the argument by framing racial disparities as state-imposed violence—an administrative and epistemic form of harm

structured through norms, routines, and institutional habits. Track III examines how Madison's current governance structure reinforces these conditions, both through fragmented authority and through participatory practices that often limit rather than expand meaningful input.

Taken together, the project asks not just what happened, but what continues to happen, and why. It reframes persistent disparity as a discursive and administrative outcome—reproduced in part because the systems that generate it are shielded by layers of technical language, procedural inertia, and institutional self-reference. When governance is discussed primarily in terms of efficiency, when spatial decisions are reduced to feasibility studies, and when equity is framed as an aspirational "lens" rather than a structural imperative, the city reinforces its patterns of exclusion while claiming to overcome them. In this way, discursive power becomes a central mechanism through which inequality is maintained—not through explicit denial, but through the framing of possibility itself.

This orientation demands that we pay attention not only to what to is built or funded, but also to how institutional actors talk about harm, responsibility, and reform. It asks us to treat planning documents, council agendas, media coverage, and public testimony not as peripheral to governance but as constitutive of it. These narratives do not simply reflect policy—they shape it. They define what is urgent, what is viable, who is accountable and how. In Madison, the repetition of progressive rhetoric amidst structural continuity is not a contradiction—it is a technique of governance.

By foregrounding the discursive nature of power, the project opens up a different kind of analytic and political space. It invites us to interrogate how institutions name problems while disavowing their role in creating them, how public consensus can obscure structural abandonment, and how the language of inclusion can be mobilized to defend exclusionary systems. These are not semantic concerns—they are central to understanding how racial and spatial disparities endure in a city that consistently describes itself as forward-thinking and just.

Synthesis

Across its three Tracks, this project builds a multi-layered account of how racial and economic disparities in Madison are shaped, sustained, and interpreted through the everyday workings of land use, institutional systems, and civic governance. The dissertation foregrounds the ways in which inequality is produced not solely through explicit exclusion, but through the coordination of spatial decisions, administrative routines, and discursive strategies that organize access to housing, voice, and opportunity.

Track I lays the historical foundation by tracing how Madison's built environment became a durable expression of exclusionary logics. It reexamines instruments such as redlining maps, racial covenants, and zoning overlays, treating them less as the origins of segregation and more as formalizations of preexisting racialized assumptions within local real estate, planning, and political networks. Drawing from Glotzer and others, the analysis attends to how land value, property protection, and aesthetic ideals served as proxies for racial and class exclusion. In Madison, these ideas were operationalized through land speculation, platting, public investment, and neighborhood advocacy. The track demonstrates how spatial decisions—whether about

school boundaries or upzoning exemptions—were shaped by institutions and actors that understood governance as a mechanism for managing population, preserving homogeneity, and protecting capital.

Track II takes up the concept of harm through the theoretical framework of state-imposed violence. It reframes racial disparity as an institutional condition produced by cumulative decisions, routines, and omissions rather than discrete acts. Drawing from critical theory and developmental science, the track examines how policy systems—especially in housing, education, and health—structure experiences of instability, toxic stress, and exclusion. The analytic strategy focuses less on isolated cases and more on how normative tools such as eligibility criteria, zoning maps, and planning discourse become instruments of slow, patterned harm. While it does not quantify individual outcomes, the track traces how deprivation is institutionalized through layers of administrative practice, reinforcing long-term disadvantage across communities already shaped by spatial segregation.

Track III turns inward to examine the internal architecture of Madison's governance systems. It draws from direct participation and extensive observation of Boards, Commissions, Committees, and Council deliberations, analyzing how local structures absorb reformist energy while limiting redistributive change. The track argues that fragmentation—across jurisdictions, procedures, and decision-making bodies—operates less as a design flaw than as a recurring feature of civic administration. This dispersion of authority buffers existing arrangements from challenge and obscures where accountability resides. Participatory forms such as public comment, committee recommendations, or strategic planning often signal responsiveness without altering the

institutional logics that sustain inequity. The track situates these observations within a larger reflection on civic design, discretionary power, and the politics of structural inertia.

In concert, the three Tracks offer a framework for understanding how inequality is stabilized across time and system. Rather than locate disparity in intention or implementation failure, the project traces how exclusion is structured through institutional routines, spatial practices, and legitimizing narratives. The work does not claim to be comprehensive, but it does show how harm and hierarchy are rendered durable—through what is planned, permitted, and preserved. Each Track contributes a different lens, yet together they reveal how deeply embedded racial and economic disparities are in Madison's governance landscape. This cumulative analysis does not point to a single cause or fix. Instead, it invites critical reflection on how power is encoded into space, how governance absorbs dissent, and how the procedural language of equity can mask persistent inequality.

Theoretical Integration

This project is grounded in the premise that persistent racial and spatial disparities must be understood not as governance failures, but as governed outcomes—the products of systems that are functioning according to their underlying logics. To make this case, the dissertation engages and synthesizes insights from critical political economy, post-structural theory, and urban planning scholarship. The result is an interdisciplinary framework for understanding how exclusion is encoded into urban form, reinforced through institutional behavior, and legitimated by the discursive practices of governance.

Michel Foucault's work on power, governmentality, and discourse provides a central conceptual foundation. Rather than viewing power as something held or wielded, this project draws from Foucault's account of power as relational and productive—circulating through norms, procedures, and epistemologies that shape what is visible, sayable, and actionable. Planning documents, school siting decisions, public engagement processes, and administrative routines are not just bureaucratic artifacts; they are vehicles through which racialized governance is enacted and reproduced.

From Pierre Bourdieu, the project takes the idea that symbolic power—the capacity to define the world and have that definition taken as legitimate—is central to how exclusion operates. Urban inequality is not sustained solely by material deprivation, but by the institutionalized classification of people and places as deserving of investment or neglect. Bourdieu's concept of habitus also resonates here: the bureaucratic actors who sustain Madison's spatial status quo are not acting out of explicit intent to harm, but through deeply internalized assumptions about order, efficiency, and civic good.

Loïc Wacquant's theories of territorial stigmatization and carceral management further sharpen the analysis. His work illuminates how space becomes a target of both narrative and policy control—how entire neighborhoods are rendered suspect or undeserving through cycles of disinvestment, surveillance, and bureaucratic indifference. In Madison, these dynamics can be seen in how certain areas are persistently excluded from major capital projects, or framed as "service-saturated" when they are in fact structurally isolated.

The political-economic dimensions of this project are shaped by Karl Polanyi and Thomas Piketty. From Polanyi, the work draws the concept of “fictitious commodities”—land, labor, and money treated as market abstractions divorced from social context—and the consequences of disembedding economic life from communal relations. Madison’s approach to land use planning and development reflects this disembedding, privileging speculative growth and administrative regularity over social cohesion. From Piketty, the analysis gains empirical traction around the long-term consequences of wealth concentration, especially as they relate to intergenerational inequality and spatial sorting. Together, these thinkers make clear that racial disparities in education, housing, and civic life are not anomalies—they are predictable outcomes of economic systems that consolidate advantage and of governments that structure access accordingly.

In integrating these theoretical perspectives, the dissertation contributes to critical planning theory and urban governance by reorienting the explanatory frame. It rejects the idea that Madison’s disparities persist because of insufficient effort or flawed implementation. Instead, it shows that disparities endure because the systems that produce them remain structurally intact, discursively justified, and administratively normalized. The project offers a model for how planners and urban scholars might move beyond the language of reform and toward a deeper interrogation of the forms and functions of governance itself.

Finally, by situating Madison—a self-consciously progressive city—as its primary case, the project challenges the tendency to exceptionalize injustice. Madison is not unique in its disparities; it is representative of what this dissertation names the All-American City: a place that performs inclusion rhetorically while enacting exclusion spatially. The patterns documented

here—fragmented governance, racialized land regimes, procedural equity without structural change—are not local accidents. They are national patterns playing out through local decisions. This project positions Madison not as an outlier, but as a revealing site through which to understand how American cities narrate equity while undermining it in practice.

Positionality & Method: Reflections

This dissertation emerges from long-term engagement with Madison's governance, civic life, and institutional systems. The research was shaped through direct participation in local planning and policy-making processes, and through continuous observation of how equity, power, and institutional reasoning play out across different settings. Rather than treating the city as a distant object of study, the work developed through repeated interaction—with public officials, administrators, neighborhood organizations, and community members—across formal meetings, informal conversations, and administrative processes.

The research design privileges sustained exposure over isolated data capture. Over the course of more than a decade—particularly concentrated in the last seven years—I attended over 200 public meetings, chaired and co-chaired several major city and school district committees, and worked professionally within a nonprofit organization dedicated to community development and violence prevention. These roles enabled access to agendas, background materials, and internal deliberations, while also demanding reflexivity about my own position within the structures being studied.

Triangulation was central to the analytic process. Public documents, archival records, and field observations were reviewed alongside field notes, paraphrased dialogue, and institutional

communications. Patterns were identified through iterative review rather than formal software coding. Key claims—particularly in Tracks II and III—were built from layered exposure to how policy logics were articulated, contested, and rearticulated over time. Committee reports, hearing transcripts, and meeting deliberations were analyzed not as static texts, but as records of institutional thought and procedural strategy. When recurring concepts surfaced—such as "neighborhood character," "fiscal responsibility," or "equity impact"—their meanings were traced across institutional settings to examine how they organized decision-making and deferred transformation.

The ethical orientation of the project reflects the practical realities of conducting research in a city where civic life is tightly networked. Many of the individuals whose insights shaped this work remain in public roles. Formal interview protocols were not employed in most cases; instead, insights were drawn from relational dialogue, often developed over time through cumulative contact and shared public work. The research was granted IRB exemption under 45 CFR 46 104 (d)(3) and (d)(4), based on the use of publicly available materials and the exclusion of identifiable individual data from protected conversations.

Documentation decisions were shaped by context. When public records or meeting minutes could be cited directly, they were. When conversations were informal or sensitive, they were anonymized or paraphrased. Institutional trust—particularly among those whose work overlaps with mine—required discretion and judgment. These decisions prioritized clarity of analysis without compromising the relationships or ethical boundaries that sustained the research over time.

Rather than approaching methods through procedural formalism, this dissertation reflects methodological responsiveness. Manual memoing, comparative case review, and longitudinal tracking of language and policy were selected because they matched the realities of the material and the researcher's positionality. The analytic structure evolved from embedded continuity—from showing up, listening across contexts, and tracing how civic actors, institutional logics, and procedural tools interact to shape outcomes. Throughout the process, I maintained structured notes and cross-referenced field observations with documentary material, using triangulation to support interpretation and thematic development.

Each Track in the dissertation reflects this practice. Track I draws heavily from archival zoning materials, planning records, and long-term observation of land use decisions. Track II incorporates theoretical synthesis with insights gained through sustained engagement in youth development and public health spaces. Track III builds from firsthand experience in the design and facilitation of local governance processes, including redistricting, police oversight, and committee reform. Across all three, the research emphasizes analytic consistency and transparency in how claims are developed, supported, and situated within institutional life.

The work is shaped by dual perspectives: as someone with insider familiarity and as someone attempting to understand, with clarity and care, the systems that make disparity durable. This position required attentiveness to language, routine, and omission; to the backstage dimensions of civic decision-making as well as to its public performance. It provided opportunities to

observe how deliberative spaces operate, how bureaucracies manage disruption, and how institutional logic translates normative commitments into procedural outcomes.

This project is built from continuity—of presence, of engagement, and of observation across time. The insights presented here reflect an effort to make meaning from that continuity: to trace how systems stabilize themselves, how reform is narrated, and how equity remains aspirational within structures designed to preserve equilibrium. Methodologically, the dissertation attends to complexity not through abstraction, but through grounded analysis of how governance unfolds—discursively, procedurally, and materially—in a city that often sees itself as a model, even while struggling to change..

Implications for Planning: Pedagogy and Praxis

This dissertation challenges scholars of urban planning and government not only to reform their tools, but to rethink their purposes. What is often framed as a problem of misalignment—between policy goals and outcomes, between planning documents and public need—is better understood as a problem of design. Land use policy, institutional architecture, and participatory practice have not failed to solve exclusion. In many cases, they have reproduced it precisely because they remain tethered to procedural habits and professional norms that treat racial and economic stratification as inevitable side effects, rather than conditions requiring direct confrontation.

The findings of this project suggest that urban planning must reinforce its decades old self understanding as a field of structural intervention. Land use decisions are not just technical acts—they are acts of social ordering. The zoning map, the public investment strategy, the

transportation plan: each inscribes a set of assumptions about who belongs where, what futures are viable, and which populations are politically intelligible. If planning is to be a tool for justice, it must grapple with these inscriptions directly. That requires moving beyond inclusionary rhetoric and toward practices that center repair.

Government as a discipline, understand and advances governance, which from my perspective, must be reexamined—not as an administrative machine to be fine-tuned, but as a cultural and political system that reflects and reinforces specific distributions of power. This project shows that democratic participation, when narrowly defined and structurally constrained, can become a proxy for legitimacy rather than a mechanism for change. Representative bodies and equity plans are insufficient when the underlying structures continue to defer transformative action. Fragmented authority, procedural silos, and bureaucratic rituals that prioritize order over equity must be recognized not as neutral conditions, but as barriers to democratic responsiveness.

In Madison, these dynamics are visible in how schools are sited, how development is incentivized, and how interdepartmental coordination is either pursued or abandoned. The referendum discussed earlier—supported by an overwhelming majority of voters—offered a rare opportunity to realign infrastructure with demographic reality. Yet the decision to rebuild schools in their original locations was not an aberration; it was a continuation of Madison's governing logic: well-intentioned, administratively bounded, and procedurally insulated from structural critique. It is a pattern that recurs in housing, transportation, youth services, and economic development, and one that planning professionals must begin to treat as central, not peripheral, to their domain.

The field of planning must also reckon with the limits of procedural inclusion. The appearance of engagement—the meeting, the open house, the advisory board—is too often substituted for actual redistribution of power. This project does not argue against participation; it argues against its domestication. Participatory tools must be reoriented toward deliberative conflict, co-creation, and structural responsiveness. Otherwise, they risk reinforcing what Iris Marion Young warned against: a model of democratic practice that legitimizes exclusion through the illusion of voice.

More broadly, this dissertation underscores that institutional courage—the willingness to interrogate one's own frameworks, assumptions, and traditions—is not an optional ethic for planners and public officials. It is a prerequisite for transformation. Without this, planning remains a language of coordination, not correction. Governance remains a matter of procedure, not justice. And equity remains a performative goal rather than a measurable outcome.

What is needed now, generally, is a generational shift in how cities define success. Not in terms of growth or public image, but in terms of how deeply they are willing to rewire the systems that have long rendered some communities visible only through deficit, and others as the default. This will not be accomplished through toolkits or checklists. It will require a sustained reckoning with the built and bureaucratic legacies of exclusion—and a commitment to building institutions capable not just of planning a different future, but of deserving it. The specific applied research we need will distinguish the relative importance of simple stability for participation as opposed to reconfiguring aspects of governance. I have argued that economic class matters as well, filtered as it is through education and experiences enabling effective participation. However, we

need investigations that tease out, where and how class matters in order to selecting subsystems to change that will show us “success” following from the rewiring of governance that is required. Morales (2009) shows us how the most marginalized can learn to participate effectively in systems entirely foreign to their experience.

Outro: Madison, Wisconsin—The All-American City

The November 2024 referendum remains emblematic. It was widely praised as a civic milestone—proof that Madison remains committed to its children, to its schools, and to a shared public future. The campaign language emphasized opportunity, equity, and modernization. And in many ways, the vote itself affirmed those ideals. Residents across the city expressed a willingness to invest in the next generation, even as the costs were made plain.

But embedded in that moment was a deeper and more difficult truth. With $507 million authorized to renovate or rebuild ten schools, the decision to replace eight of them in the exact locations they already occupied was not simply a logistical or architectural matter. It was a spatial declaration: one that reproduced the same distribution of educational infrastructure that decades of demographic and planning research have shown to be misaligned with Madison’s current population. The city, through the district, made an infrastructural commitment that did not account for how students move, where families live, or what decades of spatial exclusion have structured into daily life. The opportunity to reimagine—not just reinvest—was passed over.

What makes this decision so telling is not its intent, but its familiarity. The outcome is characteristic of a governance culture that moves through consensus but often avoids disruption.

Where structural problems are interpreted through managerial frames, and where the most ambitious undertakings—like rebuilding the city's educational landscape—still happen within the confines of pre-existing maps. It is in these moments that the limits of procedural equity become most visible. Not in what is said, but in what is built.

The schools will stand for generations, not just as places of learning, but as monuments to a particular mode of governance—one that prefers continuity to reconfiguration, legibility to redistribution. That choice, made at the scale of site plans, area plans, and capital budgets, will shape how children navigate their city, how communities access resources, and how racial and economic disparities sediment into place. The permanence of such decisions is what gives them power. Their consequence is not just in the missed opportunity of 2024, but in the landscape of 2044 and beyond.

These patterns are not unique to Madison. Across the United States, cities with reputations for progressivism struggle to confront the spatial and institutional legacies of exclusion. They respond to visible disparity with rhetorical commitment, but often fail to address the procedural and epistemic frameworks that define how change is imagined, funded, and governed. The result is a recurring pattern: symbolic gestures toward justice layered atop structures built to preserve stability, predictability, and elite consensus.

There is a tendency in academic writing—particularly in work that engages policy and planning—to end with a solution, a model, or a call to action. As educational historian David Labaree cautions, the pressure to conclude with a clear directive often obscures the complexity

that has been painstakingly uncovered.[55] This project resists that impulse. Not because action is unimportant, but because the forms of action most readily available to institutions are often the ones least capable of addressing the problems they name. The deeper challenge lies in how cities come to see the problems in the first place, and in what systems of thought, design, and governance they rely on to respond.

To ask what is possible, then, is not to ask what is politically viable or procedurally convenient—it is to ask what structures shape the horizon of possibility itself. This dissertation has shown that Madison's institutions are neither static nor malevolent, but they are governed by a logic of reproduction: a logic that protects what has been built, routinizes public input, and reframes systemic harm as a planning challenge. Undoing this logic—should that even be the goal—is not a matter of better tools or more inclusive processes. It is a matter of confronting the assumptions baked into the very idea of what planning is for, and who it is meant to serve.

This project does not conclude with a roadmap, but with a recognition: that the systems through which cities imagine and build their futures are themselves products of power, history, and belief. They are not inert backdrops awaiting progressive reform, or the next philanthropic campaign or RFP cycle, nor can they be intercepted or addressed by a cottage industry of equity consultants claiming to change outcomes by changing the askers of the same questions. They are dynamic terrains of contestation, shaped as much by what they silence as by what they articulate. To take justice seriously in the urban context requires more than adding equity to the agenda. It requires a commitment to interrogating the scaffolding of governance itself—and to remaining

[55] Labaree reflects on the academic compulsion to end with actionable recommendations, noting that such gestures can undermine the very complexity and ambivalence that the research has worked to surface.

attentive to the ways even our most well-meaning decisions carry forward the logics of exclusion they claim to transcend.

Appendix A: Analytic Anchors and Evidentiary Map for Track II

This appendix outlines the key source materials, institutional engagements, and analytic processes that inform Track II, "Violence Primer: Theoretical Intersections of State-Imposed Violence, Economic and Educational Disparities." It is designed to increase transparency around how data were used, interpreted, and transformed into the analytic and normative claims presented in the track.

I. Key Institutional and Public Sources

Source Document/Material	Role in Analysis	Location Referenced
Race to Equity Report (2013, 2023)	Discursive artifact; illustrates symbolic urgency and containment	Sources and Materials
Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing (2025 Draft)	Supports claim of racialized dislocation and regulatory failure	Theory Sections; Empirical Examples
City of Madison Comprehensive Plan Progress Updates (2020–2025)	Institutional discourse; analyzed for rhetorical strategy and omission	Theoretical Application Sample 1
State of Black Madison (Urban League, 2008)	Historical context for continuity of disparity framing	Sources and Materials
Public Comment Transcripts (Redistricting 2021–2022)	Comparative discourse analysis using Bourdieu's symbolic power	Theoretical Application Sample 2
Meeting Notes: Youth Advisory Forums (2019–2022)	Observational input; illustrates discursive containment	Foucault & Wacquant sections
City Planning/Zoning Documents (2017–2023)	Institutional framing of equity/affordability without redistribution	Theory & Empirical Embedding
Committee Transcripts: ERO, TFOGS, Redistricting	Primary sites of observation and pattern tracing	Empirical Examples; Appendix A

II. Participant Observations and Embedded Practice

Setting/Role	Type of Engagement	Contribution to Analysis
Executive Director, Common Wealth Development (2017–present)	Institutional navigation, policy engagement	Tracing administrative friction; analyzing governance logics
TFOGS Task Force Member (2018–2020)	Deliberation, document review	Patterns of structural diffusion and procedural containment
MMSD ERO Committee Member (2017–2018)	Committee participation, testimonial synthesis	Discourse filtering; interagency opacity
Youth Advisory Board Facilitator (2018–present)	Participatory research; youth-police engagement	Observed redirection of critique; discursive reframing

---

III. Analytic Methods and Thematic Processes

Technique	Application Example	Theorist(s) Engaged
Abductive Pattern Recognition	Memoing on repeated logics of redirection in public comments	Foucault, Bourdieu
Interpretive Cross-Referencing	Linking "neutral facilitation" discourse in planning to "community safety" rhetoric in school board debates	Foucault, Wacquant
Symbolic Framing Analysis	Evaluating how planning language legitimizes inequality	Bourdieu, Polanyi
Discursive Saturation Mapping	Noting equity term frequency across planning documents	Foucault
Material-Harm Translation	Mapping zoning discourse to youth-policing logics in BIPOC neighborhoods	Wacquant, Piketty

---

IV. Theoretical Application Samples (Cross-Walk Summary)

Sample Title	Theory Used	Empirical Material	Location in Text
Application Sample 1: Foucault + Equity Language	Foucault	2021 Plan Update + Race to Equity Reports	Theory Section
Application Sample 2: Bourdieu + Redistricting Comments	Bourdieu	2021 Public Comment + Redistricting Summary	Theory Section
Application Sample 3: Polanyi + Redevelopment Dynamics	Polanyi	South Madison Redevelopment Plans	Market Dislocation Section

---

Note on Methodological Posture

This analytic map is not exhaustive; it reflects a research strategy rooted in embedded engagement, iterative memoing, and conceptual synthesis. The methodology does not claim statistical generalizability but instead uses grounded interpretation to surface governance patterns that distribute harm, obscure accountability, and encode racial and spatial hierarchies into civic form.

Appendix B: Economic Disparities and Local Governance Materials Supporting Track II Analysis

This appendix supplements the section "Market Dislocation and Catalytic Violence: Piketty & Polanyi in Conversation" by identifying and contextualizing the key empirical sources used to ground theoretical claims in local evidence. These materials illustrate how wealth concentration and commodification—core concepts from Piketty and Polanyi—are actively mediated by Madison's land use, housing, and fiscal policies.

I. 2019 and 2025 Draft Analyses of Impediments to Fair Housing (City of Madison Community Development Division)

- Use in Track II: Cited as documentation of contemporary racial disparities in housing access, cost burden, and exclusion from redevelopment processes.
- Relevance to Theory: Supports Polanyi’s argument that housing has been transformed into a "fictitious commodity," detached from social needs and regulated according to market logics. Serves as longitudinal snapshot of a particular set of housing-specific data. Reflects Piketty’s thesis that asset ownership consolidates across generations, particularly when unregulated by redistributive policy.
- Analytic Note: Specific references were made to documented disparities in homeownership rates, disproportionate eviction rates among Black and Latinx renters, and geographic patterns of subsidy allocation (pg 51 – 60)

II. 2018 City of Madison Comprehensive Plan & Planning Division Presentations (2018–2023)

- Use in Track II: Analyzed as part of the city's official land use and zoning vision. Provides language and maps that reflect ongoing planning priorities, areas designated for "revitalization," and redevelopment incentives.

Relevance to Theory: Reinforces Polanyi's concern with state-enabled marketization of land and labor. The plan positions development as a market-guided enterprise, with equity framed in procedural rather than redistributive terms.

- Analytic Note: Engagement protocols discussed in these materials reflect how equity language is ritualized, with limited impact on housing production or affordability benchmarks. See for instance the 2023 Planning Division presentation summarizing the Comprehensive Plan Progress Report, which highlights "inclusive engagement" and "equity-informed decision-making" as major achievements, while offering little evidence of how these terms translated into measurable gains for low-income or BIPOC residents. Additionally, the 2018 Comprehensive Plan outlines a series of "priority redevelopment areas" and public involvement strategies, yet these engagement efforts are overwhelmingly procedural (surveys, open houses) and occur after key planning frameworks have been drafted—minimizing the capacity for marginalized residents to influence upstream policy decisions. This ritualization aligns with Polanyi's critique that procedural inclusion often masks the deeper market logics guiding state interventions.

III. 2008 State of Black Madison (Urban League of Greater Madison), 2013 & 2023 Race to Equity Reports (Kids Forward)

- Use in Track II: Used to document the durability of racialized disparities in education, income, child poverty, and health outcomes.
- Relevance to Theory: Serves as a longitudinal snapshot that validates Piketty's framework of intergenerational inequality and Polanyi's concern with social dislocation following market-driven restructuring.

- Analytic Note: These reports were analyzed in conjunction with institutional responses (mayoral addresses, planning justifications, nonprofit campaigns) to illustrate the gap between disparity recognition and structural transformation.

IV. Local/City Data on Evictions (2015–2022)

- Use in Track II: Referenced to show how eviction rates correlate with historically redlined areas and persist despite increased public discourse about equity.
- Relevance to Theory: Eviction trends exemplify how commodified housing regimes generate instability and displace marginalized populations, reinforcing Polanyi's critiques.
- Analytic Note: Data (Eviction Defense Program 2022 Mid-Year Update, City of Madison Community Development Division)) from South Madison, Darbo-Worthington, and Allied Drive were used to contextualize site-specific housing precarity. Professional experience in the LMI housing development and management industry was leveraged as supporting / corroborating data and analysis.

V. Housing Initiatives and Patterns of Redevelopment in Madison (2010–2023)

- Use in Track II: Examined as evidence of how city-backed public-private developments often replicate patterns of exclusion by subsidizing "affordable" units priced above realistic thresholds for many BIPOC households.
- Relevance to Theory: Highlights Piketty's point that wealth reproduction is maintained even through ostensibly progressive instruments, and Polanyi's argument that the state plays a key role in enabling market logic.

- Analytic Note: These documents describe the range of financial and regulatory mechanisms used to structure affordability—such as tax credit thresholds, TIF allocations, land use restrictions, and inclusionary zoning waivers—as well as the roles of city staff, developers, and nonprofit intermediaries in shaping housing outcomes. These documents were analyzed alongside zoning incentives and information derived were analyzed alongside zoning incentives and information from professional experience and publicly available minutes, testimony and recordings of the 2024 Housing Strategy Committee for the City of Madison, all of which corroborated the fiscal challenges and legal/legislative devices that impede or prevent housing developments with affordability requirements. Professional experience as a low-income housing developer, and as the Executive Director of a community development organization was leveraged as supporting / corroborating data and analysis.

Conclusion: The sources above serve as curated entry points into the logics of economic exclusion, market enclosure, and capital protection that sustain racialized harm in Madison. They reinforce the theoretical claims made in Track II and ground the broader assertion that structural violence is materially encoded in the economic design of the city.

Appendix C: Analytic Tracing and Methodological Anchors for Track III

This appendix supplements the analysis presented in Track III by detailing the methodological approach used to convert direct participation, document review, and observation into analyzable data. It outlines the analytic logic and evidentiary basis for the interpretive claims made across the three empirical sites: TFOGS, the ERO Committee, and Redistricting.

I. Core Analytic Framework

The analytic work in Track III was organized around three interrelated phenomena observed across governance systems:

1. Procedural Fragmentation – The institutional diffusion of responsibility that complicates accountability and undermines coordination.
2. Discursive Democracy – The symbolic use of public input mechanisms that substitute participation for power.
3. Representational Inequity – The spatial and structural conditions under which inclusion is framed but not functionally realized.

These patterns were identified through a combination of:

- Embedded committee participation (over 5 years across multiple city processes in separate government systems);
- Document analysis (minutes, memos, correspondence);
- Discursive coding of committee interactions and public commentary.

II. Memoing and Document Review

Data was analyzed abductively through structured memo writing and reflective coding. Memo content drew from real-time notes taken during meetings, post-meeting reflections, and annotations of relevant materials.

Example Materials Reviewed:

- TFOGS committee minutes (2018–2020);
- City Attorney memos and correspondence (e.g., 6/17/2019, 9/22/2021);
- Resident testimony compiled from public open houses and surveys;
- MPD and MMSD correspondence and reports regarding ERO deployment;
- Redistricting public comment datasets and proposed district maps (2021);
- Cross-agency presentations (e.g., staff memos for BCC oversight);
- Internal drafts and committee versions of TFOGS and ERO reports.

III. Sample Meetings and Field Engagements

Process	Example Dates	Engagement Type
TFOGS	6/14/19 (staff forum), 8/13/19 (BCC report), 10/2/19 (Final vote)	Chair and participant in subcommittee and full task force deliberations
ERO Committee	12/6/17, ongoing through 2018	Committee member, participant-observer
Redistricting	9/22/21 (City Attorney memo), 10/7/20 (Committee of the Whole)	Chair of Redistricting Committee

These meetings were recorded, transcribed, or summarized in field notes. Each served as the basis for thematic memoing organized by:

- Decision-making constraints
- Participation structures
- Framing language
- Operational ambiguities

IV. Analytic Samples and Interpretation

Three "analytic samples" appear in the body of Track III, corresponding to each empirical site. These samples illustrate the translation of institutional experience into interpretive findings, offering transparency into how theoretical frameworks (Young, Fraser, Foucault, Scott, Soja, Bourdieu) were used to make sense of local dynamics.

Each sample links specific moments—such as the redistricting controversy over District 8, the silence surrounding ERO deployment data, or the untrackable BCC membership count—to broader patterns of symbolic equity and procedural deferral.

Empirical Site I: Task Force on Government Structure (TFOGS)

Engagement Overview:

- Chair, Subcommittee on Boards, Commissions, and Committees
- Co-Chair, Subcommittee on the Common Council
- Member, Executive Subcommittee

- Participant in all public hearings, subcommittee sessions, and staff interviews from 2018–2020

Analytic Process:

- Memos were written after key meetings, reflecting on procedural dynamics, staff testimony, and alder interactions.
- Cross-document annotation between city memos, public comments, internal drafts, and subcommittee reports.
- Longitudinal tracking of BCC meeting formats, appointment processes, and racial/occupational composition based on staff feedback and minutes.

Analytic Anchor: Procedural Fragmentation

- Highlighted how excessive and uncoordinated BCC structures created redundancies, diffused responsibility, and inhibited equity efforts.
- Community liaisons' outreach data and meeting minutes from Warner Park and Southside forums revealed consistent public confusion over purpose and access to committees.

Empirical Site II: Ad Hoc ERO Committee

Engagement Overview:

- Full committee member (2017–2018)
- Participated in public hearings, data review sessions, and interagency dialogue

- Maintained correspondence with committee members, Board of Education, and local police leadership

Analytic Process:

- Documentation and bullet-pointed field notes logged after each meeting and subcommittee review
- Synthesis of gaps in administrative response across email threads and public records requests
- Tracked data inconsistencies from MMSD and MPD across request cycles

Analytic Anchor: Discursive Democracy

- Demonstrated how community engagement, especially from BIPOC youth, was filtered through technocratic language that diluted its impact
- Analytic sample showed how institutional disjuncture between city and district undermined even consensus-driven recommendations

Empirical Site III: Redistricting Committee

Engagement Overview:

- Chair of the 2021 City of Madison Redistricting Committee
- Directed all deliberative meetings and reviewed submitted concepts and public feedback
- Reviewed all public correspondence and demographic overlays from 2011 and 2021 cycles

Analytic Process:

- Memoed after contentious meetings, including pushback on District 8 redraw
- Traced divergences between staff recommendations and political responses
- Mapped racial composition overlays onto redistricting scenarios to analyze impact

Analytic Anchor: Representational Inequity

- Showed how narratives of protection (e.g., student voice) were mobilized to resist reforms that would expand BIPOC representation
- Public comments and institutional correspondence (e.g., Chancellor Blank, District 20 Alder) used to trace the symbolic management of boundary lines

V. Conclusion

This appendix is provided to reinforce the methodological transparency of Track III. It affirms that the analysis was neither anecdotal nor impressionistic, but grounded in a systematic engagement with Madison's governance processes over time. The "analytic samples" serve not as isolated vignettes, but as grounded demonstrations of how structure shapes possibility—and how possibility is constrained by the very institutions meant to enable it.

Works Cited

Aaronson, D., Hartley, D., & Mazumder, B. (2021). The effects of the 1930s HOLC ‘redlining’ maps. *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy, 13*(4), 355–392. https://doi.org/10.1257/pol.20190414

Andersen, S. L. (2003). Trajectories of brain development: Point of vulnerability or window of opportunity? *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews, 27*(1), 3–18.

Anonymous. (2018, July 18). *Interview with director of strategic planning, local nonprofit housing agency* [Personal communication].

Anonymous. (2018, October 4–5). *Interviews with former Madison alders* [Personal communication].

Anonymous. (2019, April 9). *Interview with senior staff member, Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau* [Personal communication].

Anonymous. (2019, June 14). *Testimony from city staff on BCC experiences* [Focus group transcript].

Anonymous. (2021, July 30). *Email correspondence with senior city official regarding TFOGS edits* [Personal communication].

Anonymous. (2021, October 6). *Interview with Madison alder* [Personal communication].

Anonymous. (2023, April 21). *Interview with executive director of local youth development organization* [Personal communication].

Appel, H., Mason, A., & Watts, M. (Eds.). (2015). Subterranean estates: Life worlds of oil and gas. Cornell University Press.

Arnsten, A. F. (2009). Stress signalling pathways that impair prefrontal cortex structure and function. *Nature Reviews Neuroscience, 10*, 410–422.

Arnstein, S. R. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, *35*(4), 216–224. https://doi.org/10.1080/01944366908977225

Bartel, A. P., Ichniowski, C., & Shaw, K. L. (2007). International differences in the adoption and impact of new information technologies and new HR practices: The valve-making industry in the U.S. and U.K. *NBER Working Paper* No. 13651. National Bureau of Economic Research.

Bianchi, M., Hagan, J. J., & Heidbreder, C. A. (2005). Neuronal plasticity, stress and depression: Involvement of the cytoskeletal microtubular system? *Current Drug Targets: CNS & Neurological Disorders, 4*(5), 597–611.

Blanpied, T. A., & Ehlers, M. D. (2004). Microanatomy of dendritic spines: Emerging principles of synaptic pathology in psychiatric and neurological disease. *Biological Psychiatry, 55*(12), 1121–1127.

Bogue, M. B. (1985). *Around the shores of Lake Michigan: A guide to historic sites*. University of Wisconsin Press.

Boudon, R. (1974). *Education, opportunity, and social inequality: Changing prospects in Western society*. Wiley.

Bourdieu, P. (1989). Social space and symbolic power. *Sociological Theory, 7*(1), 14–25. https://doi.org/10.2307/202060 jstor.org+10

Bourdieu, P. (1990). *The logic of practice*. Stanford University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and symbolic power*. Harvard University Press.

Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J.-C. (1990). *Reproduction in education, society and culture* (2nd ed.). Sage.

Briggs, X. de S. (Ed.). (2005). *The geography of opportunity: Race and housing choice in metropolitan America*. Brookings Institution Press.

Briggs, X. de S., Popkin, S. J., & Goering, J. M. (2010). *Moving to opportunity: The story of an American experiment to fight ghetto poverty*. Oxford University Press.

Buchanan v. Warley, 245 U.S. 60 (1917).

Campney, B. M. S. (2015). *This is not Dixie: Racist violence in Kansas, 1861–1927*. University of Illinois Press.

Castaneda, J. (2013). Internal evaluation of the Neighborhood Resource Teams (NRTs), 2011–2013. Unpublished field research conducted with the Office of the Mayor, City of Madison.

Castaneda, J. (2013). *Veterans transition: Analyzing the potential for vocational voucher programs as targeted workforce development & trauma mitigation strategies* (Master's thesis, Massachusetts Institute of Technology). Massachusetts Institute of Technology. https://dspace.mit.edu/handle/1721.1/84423

Castaneda, J. & Potter, W. (2014). Early and chronic life stress and lasting impairments in learning and memory processes. *PSA Annual Conference Paper*.

City of Madison Community Development Division. (2019). Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice. https://www.cityofmadison.com/dpced/community-development/documents/Impediments_to_Fair_Housing_Choice.pdf

City of Madison Community Development Division. (2022). Eviction defense program: 2022 mid-year update [Presentation]. City of Madison.

City of Madison Community Development Division (2025) *Draft Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice*.

City of Madison Department of Planning, Community & Economic Development. (2020). *Comprehensive Plan Progress Update 2020* [PDF]. https://www.cityofmadison.com/dpced/planning/documents/CompPlan2020_Progress_Update.pdf cityofmadison.com+9cityofmadison.com+9cityofmadison.com+9

City of Madison Department of Planning, Community & Economic Development. (2021). *Comprehensive Plan Progress Update 2021* [PDF]. https://www.cityofmadison.com/dpced/planning/comprehensive-plan/3894/

City of Madison Department of Planning, Community & Economic Development. (2022). *Comprehensive Plan Progress Update 2022* [PDF]. https://www.cityofmadison.com/dpced/planning/documents/Progress%20Update%202022_final.pdf

City of Madison Department of Planning, Community & Economic Development. (2023). *Comprehensive Plan Progress Update 2023* [PDF]. https://www.cityofmadison.com/dpced/planning/comprehensive-plan/3894/

City of Madison Department of Planning, Community & Economic Development. (2025). *Comprehensive Plan Progress Update 2025* [PDF]. https://www.cityofmadison.com/dpced/planning/comprehensive-plan/3894/

City of Madison. (2009a). *Madison General Ordinances, Chapter 28: Zoning Code* (rev. 2024). https://cpla.fpm.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/20/2017/06/CoM-zoning-code-2013.pdf?utm

City of Madison. (2009b). *Zoning Code Analysis*. https://www.buildinginnovations.org/wp-content/uploads/96fe1d36-51e0-43da-9fb4-59ffcfe73cc2.pdf?utm

City of Madison. (2013–2025). *Plan Commission agendas, minutes, and legislative files*. Legistar Legislative Information Center. https://madison.legistar.com

City of Madison Planning Division. (1992). *Darbo-Worthington neighborhood plan*. https://www.cityofmadison.com/planning/

City of Madison Planning Division. (2000). *Allied Drive strategic plan*. https://www.cityofmadison.com/planning/City of Madison. (2008). *Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Plan*. Department of Planning and Community and Economic Development. https://www.cityofmadison.com/dpced/planning/documents/Tenney.pdf

City of Madison Planning Division. (2018). *Imagine Madison: Comprehensive plan*. https://www.cityofmadison.com/dpced/planning/imaginemadison/3016/

City of Madison Planning Division. (2019). Equitable development in Madison: An assessment of factors contributing to displacement and gentrification. City of Madison. https://madison.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=7570677&GUID=66766E61-E1CE-4AE7-AE4B-AD8792FCDB2E

City of Madison Planning Division. (2020). *Oscar Mayer special area plan*. https://www.cityofmadison.com/planning/

City of Madison Planning Division. (2022). *South Madison plan*. https://www.cityofmadison.com/planning/

City of Madison. (2019a, March 12). *Report of the Boards, Commissions, and Committees Subcommittee to the Task Force on Government Structure.* https://madison.legistar.com/

City of Madison. (2019b, August 13). *Minutes of the Task Force on Structure of City Government (TFOGS).* https://madison.legistar.com/

City of Madison. (2019c, October 2). *Draft minutes of the Task Force on Structure of City Government.* https://madison.legistar.com/d

City of Madison. (2019d, September 19). *Task Force on the Structure of City Government – Meeting minutes.* Legistar File 50732. https://madison.legistar.com/

City of Madison. (2019e, September 24). *Resident feedback collected at Warner Park Community Center open house.* [Unpublished internal document].

City of Madison. (2020). *Task Force on Government Structure (TFOGS) Final Report*. City of Madison. https://www.cityofmadison.com/mayor/government/task-force-on-government-structureCity of Madison Plan Commission. (2021, January 25). Meeting minutes. Retrieved from https://madison.legistar.com/MeetingDetail.aspx?ID=829440&GUID=8AD4B7D6-5D8B-4AA9-BC35-BB2AB7EBC5D0

City of Madison. (2021). *Redistricting Committee Meeting Materials and Reports*. City of Madison Legistar. https://madison.legistar.com/

City of Madison. (2021c). *2021-09-15 Combined Concepts – Race or Ethnicity.*

City of Madison. (2021a). *Public comments received September 25–27, 2021: Including letter from Chancellor Rebecca Blank*

City of Madison. (2021b). *Public comments received September 28–30, 2021: Including letter from District 20 Alder*.

City of Madison Common Council. (2022, March 29). Meeting minutes and video recording. Retrieved from https://madison.legistar.com/MeetingDetail.aspx?ID=915514&GUID=9E90A693-C7F6-4A2D-A6F2-3F122119F9DA

City of Madison. (2025). *Draft Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice*. City of Madison, Department of Civil Rights.

Clarke, A. E., Shim, J. K., Mamo, L., Fosket, J. R., & Fishman, J. R. (2003). Biomedicalization: Technoscientific transformations of health, illness, and U.S. biomedicine. *American Sociological Review, 68*(2), 161–194.

Common Council Executive Committee. (2019, June 18). *Public meeting* [Meeting minutes]. City of Madison Legistar. https://madison.legistar.com/

Conrad, P. (2007). *The medicalization of society: On the transformation of human conditions into treatable disorders*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

Dane County Register of Deeds. (n.d.). Neighborhood covenants: University Heights Block 16 Ely & Henderson Replat [Plat record]. Tapestry EON online records. Dane County Register of Deeds.

De Brito, S. A., Viding, E., Sebastian, C. L., et al. (2013). Reduced orbitofrontal and temporal grey matter in a community sample of maltreated children. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 54*(1), 105–112.

Duncan-Andrade, J. M. R. (2009). Note to educators: Hope required when growing roses in concrete. *Harvard Educational Review, 79*, 181–194.

Duncan-Andrade, J. M. R., & Morrell, E. (2008). *The art of critical pedagogy: Possibilities for moving from theory to practice in urban schools*. Peter Lang.

East Side History Madison. (2009, March 9). A streetcar named (your business here). *East Side History Blog*. https://eastsidehistory.wordpress.com/2009/03/09/a-streetcar-named-your-business-here/

Elbow, S. (2020, March 4). None of this has changed: Madison's racial disparities have gotten worse, despite decades of reports, task forces and funded programs. *The Capital Times*. https://captimes.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/none-of-this-has-changed-madisons-

racial-disparities-have-gotten-worse-despite-decades-of-reports/article_35effb49-8e4f-5e67-8dd6-9765f380f6ca.html

Foucault, M. (1969). *The archaeology of knowledge*. Pantheon Books.

Foucault, M. (1973). *The birth of the clinic: An archaeology of medical perception*. Pantheon Books.

Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. Vintage Books.

Foucault, M. (1978). The history of sexuality, Volume I: An introduction (R. Hurley, Trans.). Pantheon Books.

Foucault, M. (1984, October). Of other spaces: Utopias and heterotopias. *Architecture/Mouvement/Continuité*.

Foucault, M. (1990a). *The history of sexuality, volume 1: An introduction*. Vintage Books.

Foucault, M. (1991). *Governmentality*. In G. Burchell, C. Gordon, & P. Miller (Eds.), *The Foucault effect: Studies in governmentality*. University of Chicago Press.

Fraser, N. (1990). Rethinking the public sphere: A contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy. *Social Text, 25/26*. https://doi.org/10.2307/466240

Freund, D. M. P. (2010). *Colored property: State policy and white racial politics in suburban America*. University of Chicago Press.

Garfield, A. (2023a, January 27). Madison looks to change 'family' definition in zoning code. The Capital Times. https://captimes.com/news/government/madison-looks-to-change-family-definition-in-zoning-code/article_3331c851-f1e1-5ac1-a3b1-19b3c79392e0.html

Garfield, A. (2023b, March 15). Why new housing rules stir so much trouble in Madison. The Capital Times. https://captimes.com/news/government/why-new-housing-rules-stir-so-much-trouble-in-madison/article_6ba4aff9-984d-56ff-mad8f-a72eabbe34ac.html

Glotzer, P. A. (2020). *How the suburbs were segregated: Developers and the business of exclusionary housing, 1890–1960*. Columbia University Press.

Goldberg, D. T. (1995). *Racist culture: Philosophy and the politics of meaning*. Blackwell Publishing.

Gonda, J. (2015). *Unjust deeds: The restrictive covenant cases and the making of the civil rights movement*. University of North Carolina Press.

Gordon, C. (2008). *Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the Fate of the American City*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

Gotham, K. F. (2014). *Race, real estate, and uneven development: The Kansas City experience, 1900-2010*. State University of New York Press.

Gregory, A., Skiba, R. J., & Noguera, P. A. (2010). The achievement gap and the discipline gap: Two sides of the same coin? *Educational Researcher, 39*(1), 59–68. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X09357621

Haas, M. (2021, September 22). *Redistricting process issues—Alders will represent the new boundaries of their current district.* Office of the City Attorney, City of Madison

Habermas, J. (1996). *Between facts and norms: Contributions to a discourse theory of law and democracy* (W. Rehg, Trans.). MIT Press. (Original work published 1992)

Hanson, J. L., Chandra, A., Wolfe, B. L., et al. (2011). Association between income and the hippocampus. *PLOS ONE, 6*(5), e18712.

Hertz, T. (2006). *Understanding mobility in America*. Center for American Progress. http://americanprogress.org/issues/economy/report/2006/04/26/950/understanding-mobility-in-america/

Hiorns, C. (2023, March 14). Madison must critically examine inherent discrimination in single-family zoning: By creating additional barriers for renters, single-family zoning perpetuates racist housing conditions. The Badger Herald. https://badgerherald.com/opinion/column/2023/03/14/madison-must-critically-examine-inherent-discrimination-in-single-family-zoning/

Hirsch, A. R. (1983). *Making the second ghetto: Race and housing in Chicago, 1940–1960*. Cambridge University Press.

Hirsch, A. R. (1998). *Making the second ghetto: Race and housing in Chicago, 1940–1960*. University of Chicago Press.

Hope, E. C., & Spencer, M. B. (2017). Civic engagement as an adaptive coping response to conditions of inequality: An application of Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST). *The Urban Review, 49*(5), 718–742. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-017-0413-6

Jackson, K. T. (1985). *Crabgrass frontier: The suburbanization of America*. Oxford University Press.

Jacobs, J. (1961). *The death and life of great American cities*. Random House.

Kay, J. (2011, September 26)**.** *The map is not the territory: An essay on the state of economics*. Institute for New Economic Thinking. http://ineteconomics.org/blog/inet/john-kay-map-not-territory-essay-state-economics

Kemble, R. (2019, January 29). *Proposal for an Office of Resident Engagement and Neighborhood Support* [Presentation]. Task Force on Government Structure, City of Madison.

Kids Forward. (2023a). *Race to equity 10-year report: Dane County*. https://kidsforward.org/race-to-equity/

Kids Forward. (2023b). Race to equity 10-year report: Dane County, education. https://kidsforward.org/assets/Race-to-Equity-10-Year_Education.pdf

Korzybski, A. (1933). *Science and sanity: An introduction to non-Aristotelian systems and general semantics*. International Non-Aristotelian Library Publishing Company.

Koval, M. (2018, July 19). *Police Officers in Madison Schools* MPD Chief's Blog.

Krier, Léon. *Architecture: Choice or Fate.* Andreas Papadakis Publisher, 1998

Kühn (2015) Peripheralization: Theoretical Concepts Explaining Socio-Spatial Inequalities, European Planning Studies, 23:2, 367-378, DOI: 10.1080/09654313.2013.862518

Merton, R. K. (1968). Manifest and latent functions. In Social theory and social structure (pp. 73–138). Free Press. (Original work published 1949)

Labaree, David F. (2010). Someone has to fail: The zero-sum game of public schooling. Harvard University Press.

Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The production of space*. Blackwell Publishing.

Lipsky, M. (1980). *Street-level bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the individual in public services*. Russell Sage Foundation.

Logan, J. R., & Molotch, H. L. (2007). *Urban fortunes: The political economy of place*. University of California Press. (Original work published 1987)

Lothes, S. (2023, September 1). Uncovering Madison's railroad past. *Madison Trust for Historic Preservation*. https://www.madisonpreservation.org/blog/2023/8/31/uncovering-madisons-railroad-past

Madison Housing Authority. (1940s–1970s). *Planning reports and administrative documents*. Wisconsin Historical Society Archives. [Accessed via Urban Planning collections, Madison, WI.]

Madison Metropolitan School District. (2018). *Ad Hoc Committee on Educational Resource Officers Final Report*. City of Madison. https://www.cityofmadison.com/roster/educational-resource-officer-ero-ad-hoc-committee

Madison Metropolitan School District. (2017, December 6). *Minutes of the Ad Hoc ERO Committee meeting*.

Madison Railways Company. (1920). Map of Madison and vicinity. *Wisconsin Historical Society*. https://content.wisconsinhistory.org/digital/collection/maps/id/37

Mansbridge, J. (1999). Should blacks represent blacks and women represent women? A contingent 'yes'. *The Journal of Politics, 61*(3), 628–657. https://doi.org/10.2307/2647821

Marchiel, R. (2021). *After redlining: The urban reinvestment movement in the era of financial deregulation*. University of Chicago Press.

Massey, D. S., & Denton, N. A. (1993). *American apartheid: Segregation and the making of the underclass*. Harvard University Press.

May, M. (2019, June 17). *Update on the Task Force on the Structure of City Government.* Memorandum to the Common Council Executive Committee.

Mills, C. W. (1997). *The racial contract*. Cornell University Press.

Molina, N. (2006). *Fit to be citizens?: Public health and race in Los Angeles, 1879-1939.* University of California Press.

Morales, A. (2009). A Social Currency Approach to Improving the Health Related Quality of Life for Migrant Workers. *Journal of Southern Rural Sociology. 24*(1), 92-112.

Nelson, R. K., Winling, L., Marciano, R., Connolly, N. D. B., Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, B., Brown, A. A., ... & The American Panorama Team. (2020). *Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America* [Digital mapping project]. University of Richmond, Digital Scholarship Lab. https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/

Nolen, J. (1911). *Madison: A model city*.

Nolen, J. (1919). *New ideals in the planning of cities, towns, and villages*. Routledge.

Piketty, T. (2014). *Capital in the twenty-first century*. Harvard University Press.

Pitkin, H. F. (1967). *The concept of representation*. University of California Press.

Polanyi, K. (2001). *The great transformation: The political and economic origins of our time* (2nd ed.). Beacon Press. (Original work published 1944)

Pritchett, W. E. (2008). *Brownsville, Brooklyn: Blacks, Jews, and the changing face of the ghetto*. University of Chicago Press.

Race to Equity. (2013). *Race to equity: A baseline report on the state of racial disparities in Dane County*. Wisconsin Council on Children and Families. https://racetoequity.net/race-to-equity-report/

Race to Equity. (2023). *Race to equity: 10-year report on educational disparities in Dane County*. Kids Forward. https://kidsforward.org/assets/Race-to-Equity-10-Year_Education.pdf

Redevelopment Authority of the City of Madison. (1962). *Greenbush Redevelopment Project: Final report*. Madison, WI: City of Madison. Wisconsin Historical Society Archives (PAM 1962-7 M)

Roberts, S. (2009). *A kind of genius: Herb Sturz and society's toughest problems*. PublicAffairs.

Robinson, M. (2018). Racial inequality in the land of plenty: Black life in Madison, Wisconsin – Educational and housing disenfranchisement, political struggle and community resiliency (Dissertation). ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. https://search.proquest.com/docview/2042579774

Roy, A. (2009). The 21st-century metropolis: New geographies of theory. *Regional Studies, 43*(6), 819–830. https://doi.org/10.1080/00343400701809665

Sampson, R. J. (2012). *Great American city: Chicago and the enduring neighborhood effect*. University of Chicago Press.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin (1885). Sanborn Map Company, Aug. [Map] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn09603_001

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin (1892). Sanborn Map Company, Aug. [Map] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn09603_002/.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin (1898). Sanborn Map Company, Aug. [Map] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn09603_003/

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin (1902). Sanborn Map Company, Aug. [Map] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn09603_004/.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin (1908). Sanborn Map Company, Aug. [Map] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn09603_005/.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin (1908). Sanborn Map Company, Aug. [Map] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn09603_006/.

Sassen, S. (2001). *The global city: New York, London, Tokyo* (2nd ed.). Princeton University Press.

Satter, B. (2009). *Family properties: How the struggle over race and real estate transformed Chicago and urban America*. Metropolitan Books.

Scott, J. C. (1990). *Domination and the arts of resistance: Hidden transcripts*. Yale University Press.

Scott, J. C. (1998). *Seeing like a state: How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed*. Yale University Press.

Sennett, R. (2006). *The culture of the new capitalism*. Yale University Press.

Shah, N. (2001). *Contagious divides: Epidemics and race in San Francisco's Chinatown*. University of California Press.

Shelley v. Kraemer, 334 U.S. 1 (1948).

Shonkoff, J. P., Garner, A. S., Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health, Committee on Early Childhood, Adoption, and Dependent Care, & Section on Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics. (2012). The lifelong effects of early childhood adversity and toxic stress. *Pediatrics, 129*(1), e232–e246. https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2011-2663

Silver, C. (1997). *The racial origins of zoning in American cities*. In J. M. Thomas & M. Ritzdorf (Eds.), *Urban planning and the African American community: In the shadows* (pp. 23–39). Sage Publications.

Soja, E. W. (2010). *Seeking spatial justice*. University of Minnesota Press.

Souza Briggs, X. de. (2005). *The geography of opportunity: Race and housing choice in metropolitan America*. Brookings Institution Press.

Stack, C. B. (1974). *All our kin: Strategies for survival in a Black community*. Harper & Row.

Stiglitz, J. E. (2012). *The price of inequality: How today's divided society endangers our future* (2nd ed.). W. W. Norton & Company.

Stinchcombe, A. L. (1982). Theoretical methods in social history. Academic Press.

Tarr, J. (2011, May 12). New zoning code seeks to help shape the face of development in Madison: Honing the zoning. Isthmus. https://isthmus.com/news/news/new-zoning-code-seeks-to-help-shape-the-face-of-development-in-madison/

Task Force on Government Structure Executive Committee. (2018, October 18). *Testimony by former Mayor Sue Bauman* [Meeting minutes]. City of Madison Legistar. https://madison.legistar.com/

Task Force on Government Structure Subcommittee on Boards, Commissions, and Committees. (2019a, March 8). *Subcommittee report on board, commission, and committee structure* [Internal report]. City of Madison.

Task Force on Government Structure Subcommittee on Boards, Commissions, and Committees. (2019b, March 12). *Final report to the Task Force on Government Structure*. City of Madison Legistar. https://madison.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3902157

Task Force on Government Structure. (2019c, August 28). *Community listening session at The Atrium, South Park Street* [Public meeting]. City of Madison Legistar. https://madison.legistar.com/

Task Force on Government Structure. (2019d, October 16). *Deliberations on Common Council structure* [Meeting minutes]. City of Madison Legistar. https://madison.legistar.com/

Taylor, D. E. (2014). *Toxic communities: Environmental racism, industrial pollution, and residential mobility*. New York University Press. https://doi.org/10.18574/nyu/9781479805150

Teaford, J. C. (2000). Urban renewal and its aftermath. *Housing Policy Debate, 11*(2), 443–466. https://doi.org/10.1080/10511482.2000.9521373

Thelin, J. R. (2011). *A history of American higher education* (2nd ed.). Johns Hopkins University Press.

Urban League of Greater Madison. (2008). *State of Black Madison 2008: Before the Tipping Point*. Urban League of Greater Madison.

Vale, L. J. (2007). *From the Puritans to the projects: Public housing and public neighbors*. Harvard University Press.

Wacquant, L. (2007). Territorial stigmatization in the age of advanced marginality. *Thesis Eleven, 91*(1), 66–77. https://doi.org/10.1177/0725513607082003

Wacquant, L. (2008). *Urban outcasts: A comparative sociology of advanced marginality*. Polity Press.

Wacquant, L. (2009). *Punishing the poor: The neoliberal government of social insecurity*. Duke University Press.

Wacquant, L. (2010). Crafting the neoliberal state: Workfare, prisonfare, and social insecurity. *Sociological Forum, 25*(2), 197–220. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1573-7861.2010.01173.x

Wilkinson, R., & Pickett, K. (2010). *The spirit level: Why equality is better for everyone*. Penguin.

Williams, R. Y. (2004). *The politics of public housing: Black women's struggles against urban inequality*. Oxford University Press.

Wilson, W. J. (1987). *The truly disadvantaged: The inner city, the underclass, and public policy*. University of Chicago Press.

Wisconsin REALTORS® Association. (1948, June). *Maintaining neighborhood stability: A professional obligation*. *Wisconsin REALTOR®*, PAM 1948-6 W. Wisconsin Historical Society Archives.

Wisconsin Statutes. § 893.33(6) (2023). Limitation on actions to enforce recorded easements or covenants. *Wisconsin Legislature*. https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/ statutes/893/33/6

Young, I. M. (2000). *Inclusion and democracy*. Oxford University Press.

Young, I. M. (2011). *Responsibility for justice*. Oxford University Press.

Yanow, D. (2000). *Conducting interpretive policy analysis*. SAGE Publications.