

HOUSING FREEDOM: NAVIGATING ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY IN SEARCH OF HOME
A Survey of Housing Policy in New York City, 1934 - present

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of Architecture, Planning and Preservation
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science in Urban Planning

by

ASHLEY REEB ESPARZA

Oct 2021

Abstract

This research takes a survey of housing policy at city, state, and federal levels towards evaluating the material impacts and outcomes that shape the living conditions of low-income communities within New York City. It sets out to define the idea of *Housing Freedom* to point to a set of qualities for dignified housing as a framework within which we can assess the goals and outcomes of policy. Briefly, *Housing Freedom* encircles access to adequate housing regardless of socioeconomic status, secure tenure, and the flexibility of the housing stock to allow for movement and growth without endangering the former. The focus of this paper on New York City stems from the multitude of affordable housing programs at work, historically and concurrently, across multiple scales of government, that allow for a better understanding of the current crisis towards new realms of possibility and programs for action. Synthesizing raw data from surveys, housing development reports and tax records to examine the nature of the housing landscape in New York City over the last 20 years, along with examinations of the parameters of each program and analyses from other housing researchers, this work seeks to excavate the conditions and nature of housing as experienced by residents. Focusing on the dimensions of *Housing Freedom*, the analysis looks at the landscape of the housing stock and aspects of supply and demand, affordability and accessibility of housing, and stability and the realities of displacement against the relative success of resident's ability to stay in their homes for each program.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my thesis advisor, Professor Leah M. Meisterlin, for providing critical support, mentorship, and invaluable insight throughout this process. Meisterlin's contributions to urban research and planning pedagogy expands the discourse, methods, and modes of analysis, and I am humbled to have had the opportunity to conduct research under her academic and intellectual guidance, without which this thesis would not have been possible.

I would also like to extend my appreciation to my thesis reader, Jacob Moore, Associate Director at the Temple Hoyne Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture, for generously providing feedback and probing questions to consider. His research and curatorial work exploring the local and global implications of inequality has left a lasting impression on me.

I would not have gotten so much out of this program if weren't for my professors and fellow students across departments of Urban Planning and Architecture who have inspired new ways of thinking to engage with current realities and future possibilities. Thank you for helping me develop new capacities for analysis and a meaningful praxis to carry forward.

Thank you to my friends and family who forgave me for missing life events, and to the ones who were especially inspiring and encouraging in the most difficult times. Above all, I thank my husband, Tlacacl Esparza, for nurturing me in so many ways throughout this journey. He has motivated me to work harder and be a better human being.

Table of Contents

Abstract	
Acknowledgements	
List of Tables and Figures	
Chapter 1. Introduction	1
Chapter 2. Background	12
New York City	
Housing Programs of Study	
Chapter 2. Literature Review	16
Urban Governance and Affordable Housing	
Technology of Planning	
Housing Freedom	
Chapter 3. Methods	23
Dynamics of Available Housing Policies	
Empirical and Material Dimensions	
Additional Resources: Published Studies and Reports	
Chapter 4. Analysis and Findings	33
Supply and Demand	
Affordability and Accessibility	
Duration and Stability	
Proportional displacement by Sub-borough area	
Neighborhood loss as a proxy for displacement	
Chapter 5. Discussion and Conclusion	53
Right To Housing	
Right to Stay	
A Growing Need	
Metrics and Data	
Opportunities	
Bibliography	58

List of Tables and Figures

Table 01. New York City Housing Landscape, 2002-2017

Table 02. Rent-Stabilized and Market-Rate Units, 2002-2017

Figure 01. Housing Programs of Study

Figure 02. Housing Programs of Study: Types, Hybrids

Figure 03. Program Classification, Structure, and Authority: Section-8

Figure 04. Program Classification, Structure, and Authority: NYCHA

Figure 05. Program Classification, Structure, and Authority: Rent Control

Figure 06. Total Housing Supply, New York City, 2017

Figure 07. Affordable Housing Need against Housing New York Affordability Targets, 2017

Figure 08. Length of Stay by Housing Program Type, 2002-2017

Figure 09. Proportional Displacement Mapping by Sub-Borough Area, 2002-2017

Figure 10. Displacement Defined

Figure 11. Net Change of Rent Stabilized Units by Neighborhood Tabulation Area in North Brooklyn, 2006-2017

Chapter 1. Introduction

This research takes a survey of housing policy at city, state and federal levels towards evaluating the material impacts and outcomes that shape the living conditions of extremely-low and low-income communities within New York City. Though a primary concern for urban planners, housing policy and outcomes cut across all dimensions of society, from political ideologies and agendas, to the prerogatives of capital, to public health concerns and goals around equity. Throughout the long history of housing policy and programs in the city, reaffirmed in Mayor Bill DeBlasio's *Housing New York Plans* (HNY, 2014, 2017), there is a commitment to addressing questions of housing supply and affordability to strive to provide housing for everyone, but the mechanisms for approaching that goal have changed drastically over the last 100 years and the City remains far from achieving it. Further, the meaning of "housing" remains a contested space, with realities for what "home" can mean as expressed through policy and political rhetoric varying drastically across racial and class divisions (Madden and Marcuse, 2016a).

Tracing the transformations and large-scale shifts in policy over time, dating to New York City's first public housing development in 1934 to the enactment of the United States Housing Act in 1937 and spanning to the present, through New York City's Mandatory Inclusionary Zoning

established in 2016, allows for a long-view evaluation of subsidized housing programs and regulations and seeks to understand the ways in which political and economic dimensions have shaped housing policy of the past and the present. Broadly speaking, with the emergence of housing as a commodity, initially realized in industrial capitalist cities in Europe in the 1840s and the United States in the early 1900s, the landscape of housing for the poor, elderly, and working class is historically and enduringly marked by systemic regimes of inequality and “residential alienation” (Marcuse, 1975). The socio-spatial consequences of a more recent history show unprecedented scales of urban spatial exclusion within “volatile, financialized circuits of capital accumulation” (Brenner et. al, 2009, p. 176) following the logic of what leading urban geographer and scholar David Harvey argues is a fundamental feature of “capitalist spatial development” (2019).

The geographic terrain of housing in New York City echoes these patterns of uneven development following the multiplicity of plans and programs implemented over the study period. From the demographic engineering of redlining and “slum clearance” in the 1930s and 1940s, to “urban renewal” programs providing federally backed funding mechanisms for the large-scale development of public housing in the 1950s and 1960s, to the professionalization of community development models and global economic restructuring that began in the 1970s (DeFilippis, 2003; Fields, 2014; Angotti, 2008; Fainstein et. al 2016), and the further integration of housing policy with financial markets and focus on market-oriented financing mechanisms over the last several decades (Wyly and DeFilippis, 2010), the government itself, via local planning agencies, has shaped the geography of where and how people live. It is within this context that this research aims to disentangle empirical outcomes and disparities from the

rhetorical with the aim of providing an analytical framework that points towards policy, whether at the local, state or federal level, that works towards the goal of housing for all.

Security of tenure is one of the cornerstones of the right to adequate housing (Center on Housing Rights and Evictions, a global nongovernmental organization).

The terms “affordable” and “access” are no longer sufficient as they have been defined within the confines of specific policies and analytical frameworks that don’t describe well the desires and needs of a community as a whole in regards to housing. Within the unregulated housing market, we can discern the qualities of housing that can lead us to a more useful lens to assess policy and outcomes. For those with access to economic capital and social standing, the open market has provided a viable means to obtain housing and secure tenure, build enduring communities, and afford the ability to stay (Newman and Wyly, 2006) and flexibility to move with agency (Mickleburgh, 2012), not under threat or coercion.

Previous theories that have attempted to examine these characteristics in order to engineer them further have often relied on tautologies that simply reinforce the status quo. As studies suggest, agency within communities is more easily afforded to individuals who are “blessed” (Putnam, 1994) with social capital and existing within social networks “by virtue of one’s social position” (Rankin, 2002, p.6), or any combination thereof. But it is such social and community development theories based in the aesthetics of communitarian ideals, supported with empirical evidence, which have a proven record to reproduce homogenous enclaves that serve as closed systems that do not extend beyond themselves but nonetheless impact others in

failing to further the goals of racial, economic and social equity (DeFilippis, 2001, p.784-785; Briggs and Xavier, 2005; Wyly and DeFilippis, 2010). One of the central concerns around discourse in social capital theory and community control, within the broader context of global finance and profit-driven urbanization, is the ability of community leaders working within this broader set of decision-making apparatuses to resist destructive development without major compromise (DeFilippis, 2001). The literature on “new urban politics” sets up a theoretical framework for understanding such systemic shifts in urban governance models in the U.S. and Europe, following the turn from “redistributive” and “managerial” Keynesian models to the adoption of economic theories of capital accumulation deployed in “late capitalism” (Chatterjee, 2013, p. 11-13). DeFilippis’ analysis of new urban politics intersects with the changing nature of community development and its relationship with capital and the city; he asserts, “autonomy is not a discrete commodity that is possessed or not possessed, by individuals or localities. Instead, autonomy is a set of power relations” (DeFilippis, 2003, p.25).

Planning practice and theory continues to contend with the interplay of power, agency, and the use of empirically-based indexes for classifying healthy communities and evaluating the success of policy outcomes. Broadly, housing policies aim to address the lack of equity in housing provided by the market, from federally funded urban renewal projects of the New Deal Era, to newer tax subsidized luxury waterfront developments with inclusionary zoning requirements (which have gained much attention throughout mayor’s offices nationwide). Urban theorists and planners critically engaging these questions around “project[s] that legitimize [] material exclusion by means of symbolic incorporation” require a rethinking of theories to refocus and

redefine the metrics and goals in which economic and social justice needs are considered (Miraftab, 2004, p.240).

For the purpose of this research, the term *Housing Freedom* is a useful tool towards operationalizing the discussion of housing as a human right and serves as a lens to drive the methodology and analysis. Briefly, *Housing Freedom* encircles access to adequate housing regardless of socioeconomic status, secure tenure, and the flexibility of the housing stock to allow for movement and growth without endangering the former. Looking to relevant principles regarding the connections between community, class struggle and adequate housing conditions in what Friedrich Engels called “the housing question” and the larger political dimensions of dwelling, participation, and public space in what Henri Lefebvre and David Harvey describe as called “The Right to the City”, to evolving social theories around housing as a human right, this research sets out to define the idea of *Housing Freedom* to point to a set of qualities for dignified housing as a framework within which we can assess the goals and outcomes of policy.

Though the focus here is New York City, housing affordability and security of tenure is a crisis that deeply impacts people across the country and the globe. While national wages in the U.S. have stagnated over the last several decades (Desilver, 2018), deregulation and a growing focus on real-estate speculation and financialization as the driving economic forces within urban economies have pushed long-standing communities out of their homes and neighborhoods (NLIHC, 2021; Stein, 2019; Madden and Marcuse, 2016a). National measures show that just one in four income-eligible households receives housing assistance (NLIHC, 2021). In accordance

with the federal standard, broadly accepted across public support agencies, rent affordability is defined where rent and utility costs do not exceed 30% of household gross income (HUD-PDR). In New York City, when the pandemic began, the NYU Furman Center report shows that half of renters paid more than 30% of their income on rent (Raetz and O'Regan, 2020). While it is accurate to describe New York City as a statistical outlier on a national scale, the “subordination of the social use of housing to its economic value” (Madden and Marcuse, 2016a) has forged a national and global affordability crisis. The focus of this paper on New York City stems from the multitude of affordable housing programs at work, historically and concurrently, across multiple scales of government, that allow for a better understanding of the current crisis towards new realms of possibility and programs for action.

Chapter 2. Background

New York City

The background turns to a brief overview of current housing policy in New York City and its impacts in the context of affordability, stability of tenure, and trends in displacement.

Addressing New York City's affordable housing crisis, Mayor De Blasio's renewed commitment, first outlined in *Housing New York: A Five-Borough, Ten-Year Plan* (HNY, 2014), to achieving new affordable development through private funding strategies and an emphasis on preservation to stop the loss of the existing affordable housing stock, sets the current context for housing programs in the city. The plan to build and preserve 200,000 units increased to 300,000 units, with expanded affordability and legal protections in *Housing New York 2.0* (HNY, 2017; Mayor's Office to Protect Tenants).

But, at the local level, with certain neighborhoods absorbing the brunt of rapidly rising costs and deregulation, preservation efforts outlined in *HNY* do not match the force of the market. New development, which relies on strong real estate markets to attract private investment, faces a fundamental contradiction regarding housing as use-value vs. profit-value, which Madden and Marcuse (2016a) define as the shift to the "commodification of housing" where

the “structure’s function as real estate takes precedence over its usefulness as a place to live” (p. 17).

With its emphasis on private development with Mandatory Inclusionary Housing requirements, New York City’s current policies have ceded rhetorical and material ground to real estate capital, designed to allow private capital to further shape the housing terrain. Due to the growth in reliance on market and financial mechanisms to create opportunities for investment in housing, older regulatory protections are continuing to erode, recent reports by National Low Income Housing (Aurand et. al, 2021) and Coalition for the Homeless (Routhier, 2021) show that homelessness rates have surpassed those of the Great Depression, a New York City Comptroller report illustrates that HNY affordability targets do not reflect the state of housing need and current subsidy programs are not designed to last (Stringer, 2018).

Housing Programs of Study

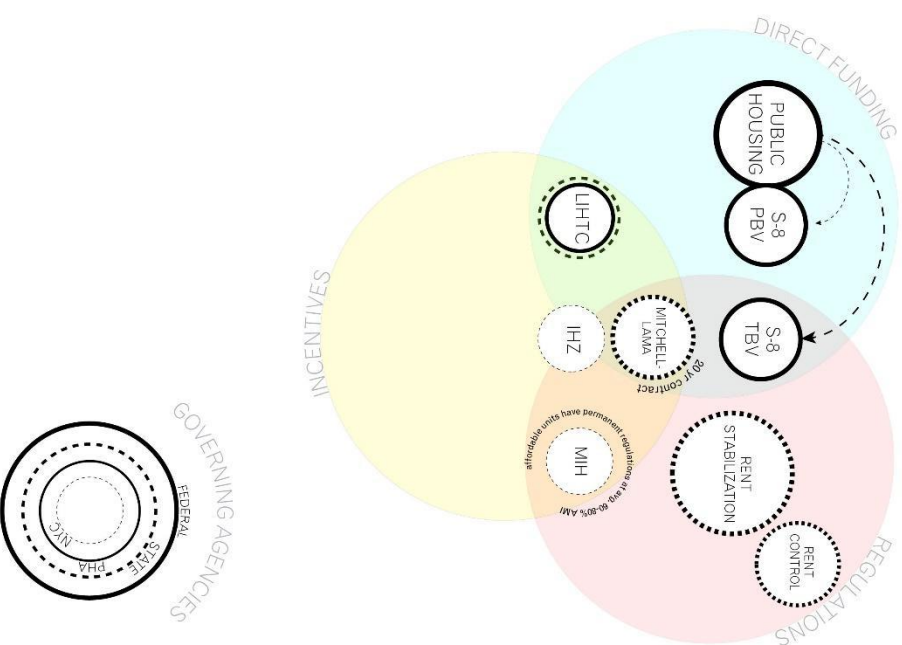
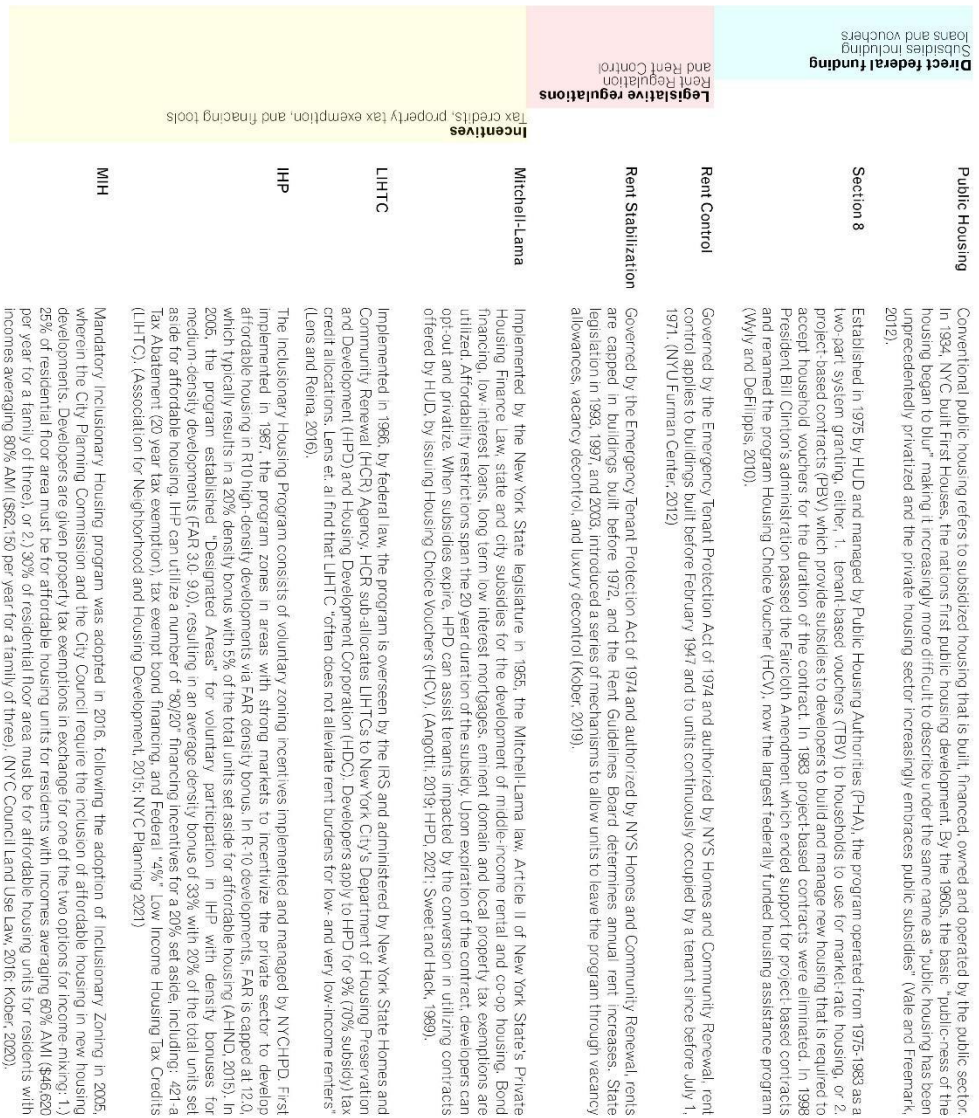
Compared with previous precedents of large scale public housing, homeownership subsidies and involuntary rent control regulations, current plans and policies have shifted away from obligatory regulatory systems, and direct funding for the design, construction and maintenance of public housing, in favor of mixed-financed transactions, market-driven zoning amendments, property tax exemptions, and voucher based programs, all of which are heavily means tested at the tenant level and tightly controlled compared with previous precedents of large scale public investment and conventional welfare-era public housing.

At the state and local level, this shift is largely attributed to federal funding cuts to the Department of Housing and Development over the last several decades -- culminating in structural transformations in the way that low-income public housing is supported and financed. This raises a number of questions about the use of the term “public housing” in the American context and the changing target populations of such subsidies. Scholar Vale et. al (2012) suggests the term “public-private housing” more aptly describes the history of federal housing initiatives since the 1970s; examples include Community Development Block Grants (est. 1974), Section 8 programs (est. 1974), and LIHTC (est. 1986) -- together ending welfare-era public housing by transferring ownership to the private sector. Vale et. al argues, “at a time when public housing has been unprecedentedly privatized and the private housing sector increasingly embraces public subsidies, a hybrid term seems warranted” (2012, p.380). Federal authorization to leverage private capital for the management, construction, maintenance, and absorption of overhead costs has cascading effects on low-income housing policy and legislation at the state and local level. New York state law, Section 402-B, authorizes public authorities or public benefit corporations to engage mixed-financing options to sell or lease all- or part-of state- or city-funded city-owned public housing managed by the New York City Housing Authority (NY PBG). Utilizing the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, mixed-financing agreements secure increased access to federal funding inaccessible to public housing authorities, transitioning remaining units from public housing funding to Section-8 funding via public-private partnerships. At the city level, incentive to privatize is reflected in

Mayor DeBlasio's HNY and NYCHA 2.0 plans to construct new and preserve existing low-income housing stock.

Under these efforts there are a number of programs active in New York City focused on addressing the crisis of housing affordability. Included in Figure. 01, a list of programs and policies surveyed in this study includes program types, summaries and terms, and governing agencies, of which will be examined in further detail in this section and in the methodology.

Figure 01. Housing Programs of Study



Chapter 2. Literature Review

Urban Governance and Affordable Housing

This research understands governance to mean the broad set of actors and practices that guide “the mobilization and organization of collective action” (Coaffee and Healey 2003, p. 1979). This will involve understanding the dynamics of local, state, federal, and private-sector actors working together in the affordable housing landscape, how these relationships have evolved, and their politics of action through the lens of institutionalist theory. As scholar Jon Pierre describes institutionalist theory: “institution refers to overarching systems of values, traditions, norms, and practices that shape or constrain political behavior” working from within public organizations responsible for carrying out legal and social dimensions of urban political processes (1999, p. 373-374).

The literature on urban governance provides a foundation for analysis of the affordable housing landscape. Pierre distinguishes urban governance – as opposed to government – as a broader set of political, social and economic decision-making processes between public and private actors (1999, p. 375-376). This expanded definition of how urban decision-making happens illustrates the complex exchange between public and private actors involved in “the task of governing” (Pierre, 1999, p. 377) and the implications for political power and control (Pierre,

1998). Pierre explains: “because different configurations of the governance process offer different actors’ participation and influence, one also must look at the economic, political, and ideological framework within which these processes are embedded” (1999, p. 377).

Looking at the issue of governance in the broader context of globalized urbanization Neil Brenner describes the expansion of public-private configurations as “expressions of a politics of scale that is emerging at the geographical interface between processes of urban restructuring and state territorial restructuring” (Brenner 1999, p. 431). This perspective highlights the confluence of power dynamics and evolving practices within governance processes. Brenner’s critical framing of private-public partnerships, recognized as prevailing undercurrents in governance processes embraced by cities across the world, seeks to challenge the notion that the health and wellbeing of communities is worth sacrificing for the prospect of endless profit accumulation (Brenner and Theodore 2005, p. 105).

Technology of Planning

Technological approaches to examining historical context and housing policy outcomes as well as generating new policy remain a beguiling avenue for planners. But, as many researchers have pointed out, the reality of such approaches run into the complexities of scale, accuracy, consistency and political will to provide the necessary data. Much of the methodology in this research is an exercise to both analyze what can be learned with available data on housing, but

simultaneously to highlight the difficulty of the task, and ultimately to glimpse the epistemic nature of such an approach.

Housing scholar and planning practitioner, Lance Freeman has advanced a critical analysis of the discourse around, and operationalization of, empirically based planning methods in affordable housing policy. He describes the “lack of timely, consistent, reliable data on even basic program elements and output [as] a serious barrier not only to academic research but to governments’ own ability to assess the effectiveness of their policies” (Freeman et. al 2017, p. 225). Whether designing or evaluating policy or advocating for communities, planning practitioners, researchers and scholars rely upon adequate and appropriate information that reflects that which it claims to describe. Mukhija et. al (2010) described some of the challenges of empirically based planning. Such methods necessitate processable data as input, but become untenable in the face of a dearth of tracking, inconsistent formatting, and idiosyncrasies of a shifting landscape of programs and outcomes.

Recent efforts by researchers at Princeton’s Eviction Lab, highlight the difficulty building datasets on housing. Focusing on evictions, they set out to build a nationwide dataset that tracks evictions from 2000 to the present as a vital tool in understanding how housing works in the US. Eviction data is not tracked at the federal level, and so they faced unwilling local governments, lack of data collection, and an uneven terrain that in some cases required purchasing data, and time-consuming hand-processing of paper records (Badger and Bui, 2018). Further, bridging collected data to a more synthesized understanding of an issue. As Matthew

Desmond, the founder of the Eviction Lab, notes in his book *Evictions*, while official eviction numbers provide a starting place, understanding displacement on the ground reveals complexity not captured by this data. He shows that many effective evictions come in different forms, falling under the term “informal evictions”, which include extreme rent increases and tenant harassment, among other realities experienced by displaced families. In his deep dive on evictions in the city of Milwaukee, he notes that “Nearly half of all forced moves that take place among Milwaukee renters are informal evictions: off-the-books displacements not processed through the court.” (Desmond, 2016, p. 398).

Critical to this analysis of technology in planning is the relationship between rationality and power undergirding the context in which planners, administrators and politicians derive plans and evaluate outcomes against material and social realities (Flyvbjerg, 1998, p. 318). Flyvbjerg describes a misuse of knowledge in planning practice where powerful positions abuse knowledge through the manipulation of reality. The strategies “define reality by defining rationality [as] a principal means by which power exerts itself” (Flyvbjerg, 1998, p. 319). Here, knowledge does not tend to be the product of democratic planning principles but rather a system that prioritizes a curated knowledge to support the agendas defined by existing power structures, all of which collectively define what we refer to as urban governance. This deployment of power is a defining characteristic of policy implementation and urban governance models whereas “planners also secure consent by cloaking their power in rationality” (Stein, 2019, p. 28).

Housing Freedom

The concept of Housing Freedom, though defined here as a rubric to parse and evaluate the design and outcome of existing housing programs, is grounded in the works of critical urban theorists, planning and legal scholars, and housing advocates who have outlined visions for an expanded understanding of human rights within the urban context.

I. Housing as a Human Right

Adequate housing is a human right is a widely recognized concept. The right is protected in Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights; Article 27 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; Article 5 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; Article 14 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; and Article 11 of the American Declaration on Rights and Duties of Man. Housing is also included as an element of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Goal 11, which seeks to ‘make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable’ posits that sustainability requires addressing the shortage of adequate housing and advances the idea that by 2030, all countries must ‘ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums (Bergeron, 2019).

In their leading work on critical urban theory, David Harvey (2003, p. 939) and Peter Marcuse (2009, 1985) each demand for a *Right to the City*, by first highlighting the need to clarify whose right and to what? In an expansion of the term first coined by Henri Lefebvre in his 1968 book, *Le Droit à la Ville*, or *The Right to the City*, Harvey defines a set of new rights that contend with urgent realities of inequality necessitated by “endless capital accumulation”; “like the right to

the city which is not merely a right of access to what the property speculators and state planners define, but an active right to make the city different, to shape it more in accord with our heart's desire, and to re-make ourselves thereby in a different image" (Harvey, 2003, p. 939). Harvey's critique of the definitional boundaries of fundamental and derivative rights, is rendered inverted under capitalism wherein the rights of property and profit usurp "the right to be treated with dignity" (Harvey, 2003, p. 940), is a useful lens for analyzing the accessibility of affordable housing and "whose rights" are centered in policy design and outcomes.

The demand has only become more urgent since the marking of the FIRE sector, or Finance, Insurance, and Real-Estate, as the main economic driver for the city in the 1970s (Stein, 2019, p. 28-29). Peter Marcuse calls attention to the 100-year history of the capitalist contradiction in his survey of housing "crises" (2009, p. 189), and further frames a useful critique of the term as it is wielded in political discourse, stating, "the idea of crisis implies that inadequate or unaffordable housing is abnormal, a temporary departure from a well-functioning standard. But for working-class and poor communities, housing crisis is the norm" (Madden and Marcuse, 2016b). This analysis of power that facilitated concentrations of wealth and the political leverage financial institutions maintain in urban governance sets forth implications of how demands for change will motivate those in power to act.

II. The Right to Stay

While home has different meanings for different people (Marcuse, 1975; Rose, 1984, p. 54), unregulated and unsubsidized housing markets do not provide this for most people, and instability is built into housing for profit-value. One of the central concerns around the themes of “accumulation and class struggle” (Harvey, 1978, p. 102), “commodification of housing” (Madden and Marcuse, 2016a) is the question of one’s ability to resist displacement in the face of development forces and global capital flows (Newman and Wyly, 2006).

Housing stability is a centrally important factor in creating and maintaining a sense of “home”. In describing “home” as a societally important good, Desmond writes that “Civic life too begins at home, allowing us to plant roots and take ownership over our community...” (Desmond 2016, p. 94). Here, “home” operates as a central locus from which community is made possible. Threats to building a “home” through displacement therefore threaten the fabric of society. Further, at the individual level, a sense of home plays an important role in personal and social health (Lens and Reina, 2016). As Desmond contends, “Residential stability begets a kind of psychological stability, which allows people to invest in their home and social relationships.” (Desmond 2016, p. 296).

Chapter 3. Methods

Dynamics of Available Housing Policies

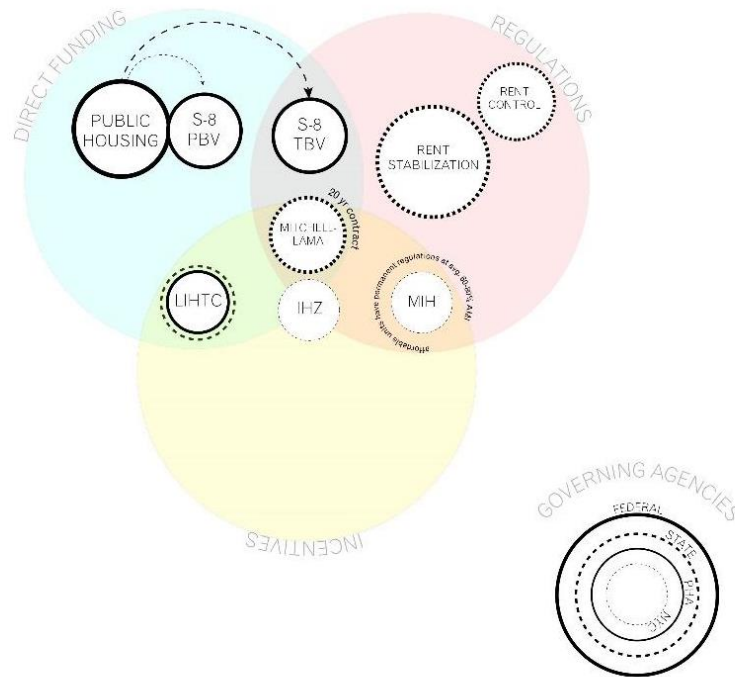
The methodology begins by classifying and laying out the structure and dimensions of the available housing policies from federal to local. Specifically, this research sets out to identify the critical shifts in policy implementation, including program typologies and respective authorities, as a means to analyze program mechanisms where they have warped, expired and emerged throughout the survey period. In a review of affordable housing literature and studies, the plans and programs of study have been selected by an order of relevance and their contribution to the affordable housing landscape. In the following series of diagrams (Figure. 02, Figure. 03, Figure. 04) and in an effort to understand the dynamics of some of the city's older, politically threatened public programs, programs are roughly grouped by their method of action and which governing authorities interact with and guide their implementation and maintenance.

For this research, the methods of action include incentive programs, regulatory mechanisms, and direct funding strategies (Figure. 01). Although these classifications are not always mutually exclusive, and nuance within each program provides additional layers of complexity, briefly defining these categories serves as a datum for a structural analysis of program implementation (Figure. 02). Incentive programs include inclusionary zoning tools, tax credits and property tax

exemptions granted to private and non-profit developers for the new construction of multi-family developments that set aside a portion of units at affordable levels (NYU Furman Center, 2021). Aside from raw unit counts, affordability rates, and duration of affordability, restrictions vary by program (HPD and DCP, NYC.gov; NYU Furman Center, 2021).

Regulatory systems include rent control and rent stabilization. Direct funding includes subsidies, loans and vouchers, which together provided the foundation for “conventional” public housing, defined as publicly financed, owned and operated, but has transformed since the 1960s through various housing experiments (Lens and Reina, 2016).

Figure. 02. Housing Programs of Study: Types, Hybrids



Current implementation is more commonly a hybridized program typology. Whereas older programs initially deployed from a single method of action, such as public housing, voucher programs, and rent regulation post-1947, have moved to intersect with incentive programs in more recent years.

The following diagrams (Figure. 02, Figure. 03, Figure. 04) isolate some of the city's oldest running programs to trace inter-agency coordination and identify where policy decisions lie among departments, agencies and local authorities. Major events in the program's history are detailed in the contextual timeline anchoring each diagram. A focus of this analysis seeks to define who has power in making policy decisions, in what ways has authority been undermined or strengthened over time.

Figure 03. Program Classification, Structure, and Authority: SECTION-8

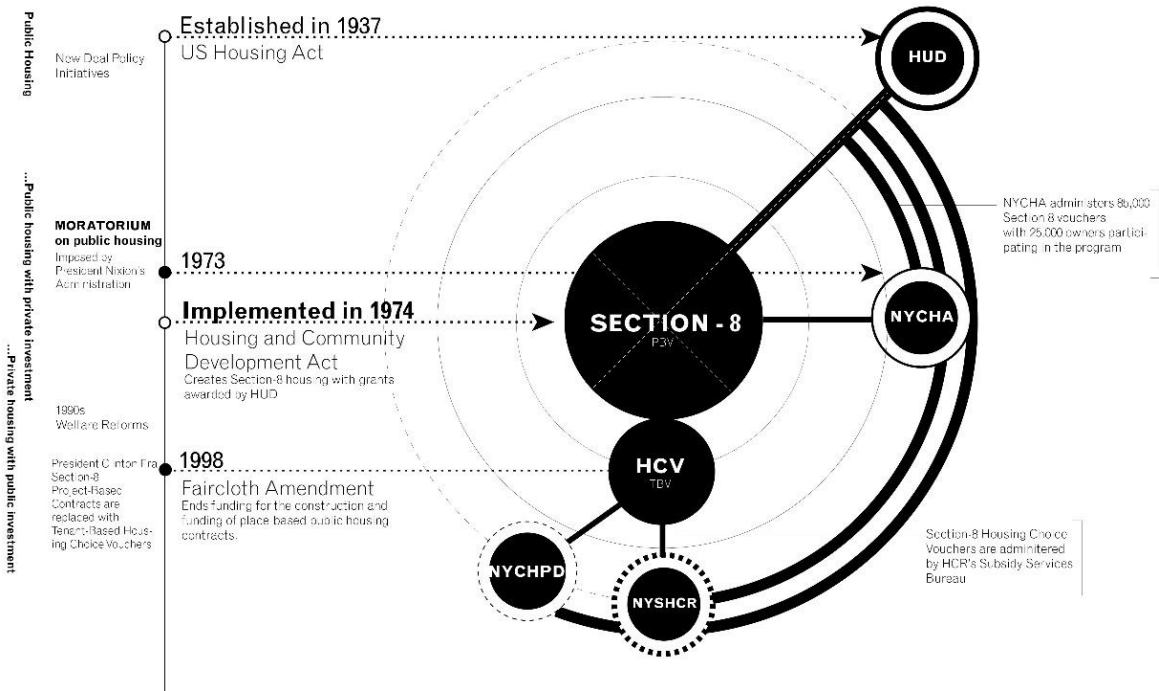


Figure 04. Program Classification, Structure, and Authority: NYCHA

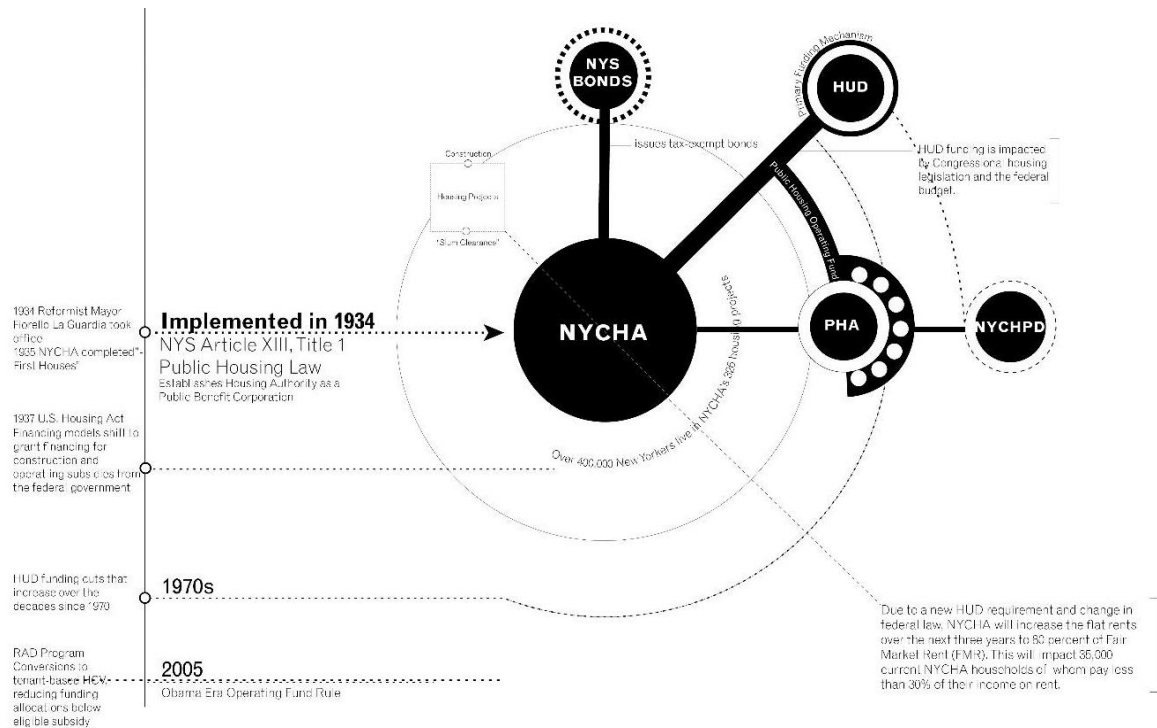
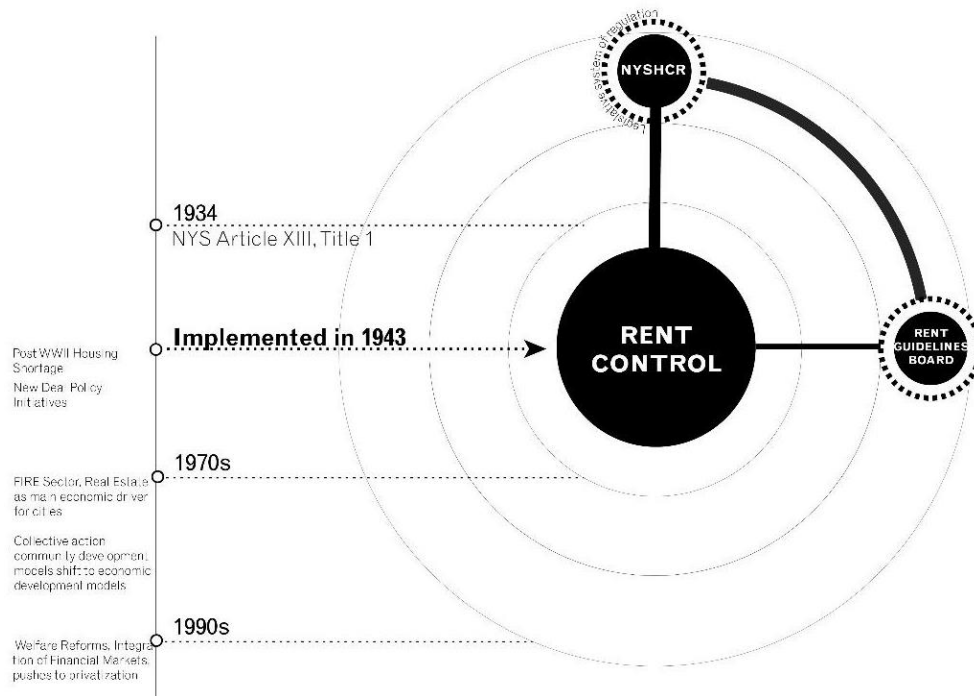


Figure 05. Program Classification, Structure, and Authority: RENT CONTROL



For some of these programs the complexity and overlapping authority stands out, in particular with NYCHA and the complex interaction between the federal, state, and local authorities, reflecting changes in federal legislation that has drastically transformed the program since its inception. As HUD funding has continued to decline through various welfare reforms over many decades, tenant-based voucher programs have grown in place of public housing, in a move toward funding that directly upholds the housing stock versus funding that aims to allow tenants to bridge the gap between their income and market rate housing.

Empirical and Material Dimensions

The programs under study in this research span back nearly 90 years with public housing in New York City beginning in 1934. Ideally, a data-driven approach to examining the dimensions and outcomes of each program would account for this entire period and include information pertinent to the questions of Housing Freedom; duration of stay, cause of displacement, affordability, precise figures on availability and demand, among other dimensions. However, as widely noted by other researchers, reliable data is not readily available, and that which is available only goes back several decades.

Given this constraint, this research surveys and analyzes information from available data on NYC Open Data portal, namely the New York Community Housing and Vacancy Survey (NYCHVS) data from 2002 through 2017 as well as other studies and analysis put forth by researchers and government agencies. Though this nearly 20-year period reveals identifiable phenomena and qualities among these programs, it crucially misses the majority of history for public housing and rent control regulations and begins after an intense period of privatization and austerity that marked the post 1970's through 1990's era in publicly subsidized housing. This era saw changes in funding, changes in the nature of the programs and a general move toward voucher programs, public-private partnerships, and financialized real-estate markets (Fields, 2017; Lapavitsas, 2013; Vale and Freemark, 2012).

Though the city does make the NYCHVS microdata from 1999 - 2017 freely and openly available, processing it into a usable and analyzable dataset requires significant effort. For data from 2011 on, the city provides import scripts for STATA and SAS software tools which makes analysis relatively easy. However, prior to 2011 the data are in a raw DAT format with no import scripts, creating a significant barrier to including these years in this analysis. A data researcher Anthony Joseph Damico has published scripts and instructions for processing NYCHSV data from 2001 on (<http://asdfree.com/>) which allowed the inclusion of these years in the following analysis. These scripts rely on a crucial parameter library created by researchers at the Furman Center, further highlighting the collaboration required to analyze such data.

Because the questions and the formatting of the NYCHVS have changed over the years, many of the data points relevant to this research had to be re-coded and regrouped manually. This preprocessing included adjusting variable name “recodes” from report to report and accounting for added or changed responses in the “reasons moved” and section 8 program responses, among other minor formatting adjustments. The following analysis primarily relies on grouping analyses by program type to compare each program’s efficacy against qualities of tenants’ ability to stay, obtain and afford housing presented in the form of charts and geo-located maps.

Another source of data critical to the spatial analysis in this research comes from a volunteer effort led by the data hacker and mapper John Krauss (2015). While the city does not provide data tracking the loss of rent stabilized unit by building, or even by neighborhood, property tax documents do show unit counts and can be downloaded in PDF format, as explained on his blog

<http://blog.johnkrauss.com/where-is-decontrol>). To turn this data into a machine-readable format, his open-source project automates the downloading and parsing of these documents into CSV format. As Krauss notes, this data is only accurate to the degree the counts on tax bills are accurate, which are self-reported by the landlord and go unfilled in some years. Despite this caveat, the data provides a useful view into how rent deregulations compare with efforts towards creating new affordable housing at the neighborhood level.

Additional Resources: Published Studies and Reports

As a survey across a complex landscape of agencies and historical contexts, in addition to data analysis, this research leverages published studies and reports that look at various aspects of the housing programs in question.

The discussion encompassing **Questions of Supply and Demand**, and **Access and Affordability** is informed by examining the parameters and terms of each program along with NYU Furman Center Reports (2013; Ellen et. al, 2015; Raetz and O'Regan, 2020), a 2018 New York City Comptroller Report (Stringer), and reports published by the Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development (Sosa-Kalter, 2019; Williams, 2013 and 2018).

The analysis of **Duration and Stability**, extends the approach of Newman and Wyly (2006) in their work on displacement within neighborhoods from 1989-2002 by using U.S. Census New York Housing Vacancy Survey data and mapping households answering the “reason moved”

question. Taking a view of displacement that goes beyond forced evictions, they grouped responses based on economic reasons and more subtle forms of coercion, like harassment.

Chapter 4. Analysis and Findings

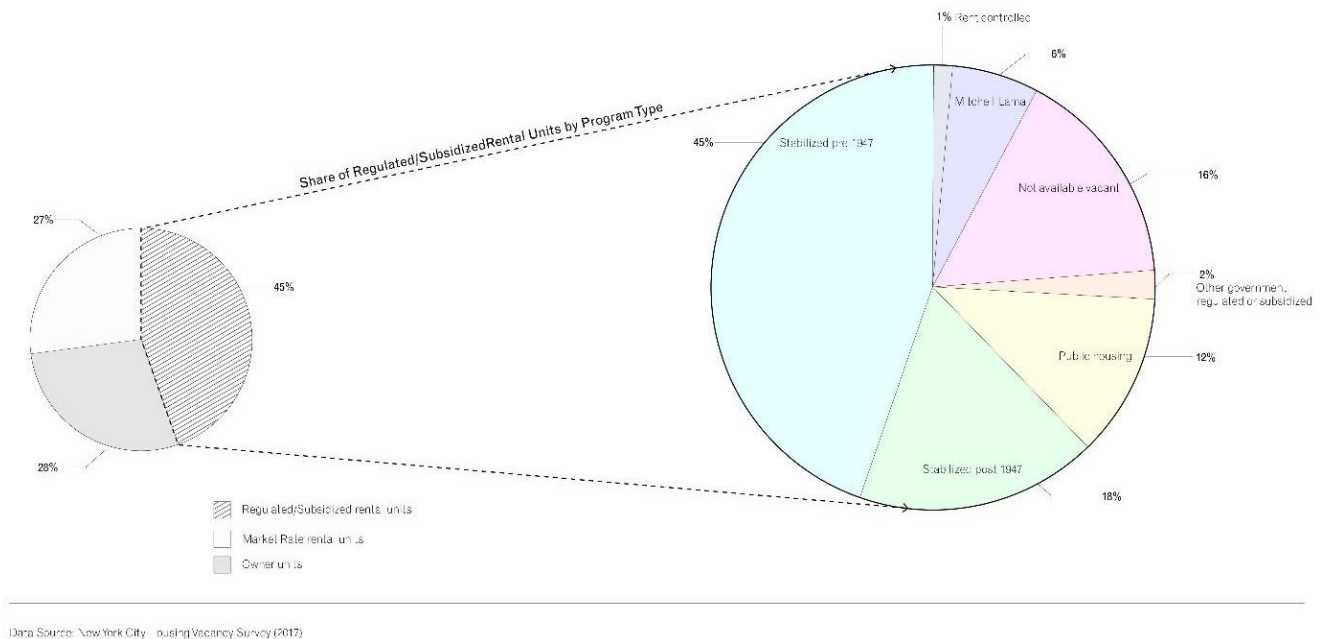
The following analysis synthesizes raw data from surveys, housing development reports and tax records to examine the nature of the housing landscape in New York City over the last 20 years. Supplementing this data analysis approach, the discussion engages the parameters of each program and analyses from other housing researchers to excavate phenomena that the data point to. Focusing on the dimensions of *Housing Freedom*, the analysis looks at the landscape of the housing stock and aspects of supply and demand, affordability and accessibility of housing, and stability and the realities of displacement against the relative success of resident’s ability to stay in their homes for each program. The following analysis attempts to assess these programs based on the last 20 years of data, acknowledging both that the data doesn’t extend back far enough for a comprehensive longitudinal study, and that the data that is publicly available begins well after the effects of the 30-year period of transformation, privatization and deregulation that took place since the 1970s.

Supply and Demand

Turning to an overview of New York City’s current housing landscape, the following begins by outlining total program shares of the housing market and overarching trends in the supply of

rental units by program type, as a means to establish a baseline. Table. 06 provides a breakdown of regulatory and subsidized housing programs utilizing data from the 2017 Housing Vacancy Survey.

Figure 06. Total Housing Supply, New York City, 2017



The 2018 New York City Comptroller Report shows that Mayor Bill DeBlasio’s current housing plan (*HNY, 2017*) targets a higher-income earning class than households in need (Table. 07); the report sketches out a more accurate methodology of affordability metrics needed to address housing demand in honest terms. The deep need for truly affordable housing for 580,000 New Yorkers remains, and 89% of whom are extremely-low to low-income households (Stringer, 2018). The current targets are insufficient to meet those needs.

Figure 07. Affordable Housing Need in relation to NYC Affordability Targets, 2017



Table adapted from Office of New York City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer (2018).
 Data Source: NYC Comptroller's Office from U.S. Census Bureau and Housing and Vacancy Survey microdata, NYC Department of Homeless Services; Housing New York 2.0

Despite the substantial undertaking and commitment to build affordable housing in *HNY*, NYC Housing Vacancy Survey (HVS) data points to both supply and demand side dimensions of policy outcomes over the initial years of the plan’s implementation. While a city-wide decrease in the share of total rental housing dropped from 64.2% in 2014 to 62.9% in 2017 (Table. 01), the Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development cited HVS data showing the increase in supply of high-rent units (with median asking rents greater than \$2000) by over 100,000 units, and a decrease in supply of low-rate units (with median asking rents below \$1,500) that fell by over 165,000 units (Williams, 2018). A 2019 Community Service Society report points to the discrepancy between high-rent and low-rent vacancy in 2017, reported at 9% and less than

2% respectively (Miranova, 2019). This data reinforces the broadly supported finding that a misplaced focus on high-rent unit production increases precarity for low-income renters (Mironova, 2019).

Table 01. New York City Housing Landscape, 2002-2017

	2002	2005	2008	2011	2014	2017
Total Housing units ^a	3,081,772	3,196,118	3,180,269	3,181,772	3,217,522	3,221,263
Owner units	997,008	1,031,780	1,010,607	1,014,940	1,033,226	1,038,200
Rental units	2,084,769	2,092,363	2,179,662	2,172,633	2,184,296	2,183,064
<i>Share of Rental units by program type</i>						
Rent Controlled	2.8%	2.1%	1.9%	1.8%	1.2%	1.0%
Rent Stabilized, Pre 1947	37.1%	35.7%	33.1%	34.2%	35.1%	31.7%
Rent Stabilized, Post 1947	11.5%	14.2%	13.7%	11.2%	12.1%	12.5%
NYCHA Public Housing	8.5%	8.2%	8.6%	8.5%	8.6%	8.5%
Mitchell Lama	3.1%	3.0%	2.8%	2.3%	2.2%	4.6%
Other Government Regulated		3.5%	2.9%	2.9%	2.0%	1.3%
Market Rate	36.8%	33.6%	39.9%	39.1%	38.9%	42.9%
Share of vacant units not available for sale or lease	6.08%	6.53%	6.44%	7.90%	5.40%	7.10%

^a includes occupied and vacant units and excludes "vacant unavailable" units

^b includes HUD-regulated, In Rem, Article 4, Off Board, and Municipal Loan

Date Source: New York City Housing Vacancy Survey (2002-2017)

Further, the broad definition of an “affordable unit” often means that newly added affordable units do not match the affordability of what was lost. “Unit” as a metric does not describe what kind of household can live there; while a new affordable studio apartment counts towards total units created, it does little for a family seeking multi-bedroom housing. This issue was pointed out in a 2013 Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development report evaluating outcomes of the Bloomberg administration’s housing policies (Williams, 2013). The report

shows how change in the housing stock changes from neighborhood to neighborhood and interrogates the general guidelines of 421a, the “80/20” property tax exemption that continues to be heavily relied upon for Inclusionary and Mandatory Zoning Incentives in Mayor DeBlasio’s housing plan -- providing historical evidence that the needs of specific low-income communities are not well met by the current program. The report advocates for more meaningful metrics to evaluate program success and value added to communities by looking at length and depth of affordability, unit size and other community impacts a development might bring (Williams, 2013, p. 40-44). Williams describes how a focus on “people served” as a metric for analysis is insufficient: “by simply counting units,” affordable housing production incentives are “skewed toward creating smaller less affordable units which are superficially less expensive to create but do not necessarily provide the most public benefit” (Williams, 2013, p. 15).

Affordability and Accessibility

Pricing and affordability operate very differently across these programs, ranging from universal price controls to subsidies and vouchers based on household income and rent burden targets. In the context of housing, the word “affordable” carries the baggage of technocratic definitions that, as Scott Stringer’s report notes, do not necessarily line up with the needs of households. Generally, affordability is measured against a household’s income as a percentage of AMI against an expected rent burden of 30% of income.

This term “affordable” is employed heavily in DeBlasio’s housing plan, with MIH programs imposing requirements for a percentage of affordable units within new developments. Within this scheme, affordability targets a mix of income levels, with projects meeting the requirement with some mix of affordability levels, from households between 40% to 115% AMI. Affordability restrictions are often tied to the duration of subsidy. For example, the city’s 421-a tax exemption program is responsible for the lion share of newly added stabilized units (NYC Rent Guidelines Board, 2020), however its affordability restrictions are determined by the length of the subsidy, which ranges from 10-25 years depending on project location and affordability income-mix (see HPD, NYC.gov). Affordability restrictions are hard to track because units subject to affordability restrictions under 421-a are not well defined. For example, the city’s managing agency, Housing Preservation and Development, reports the total number of units (including market rate and affordable units) receiving tax exemption, making it infeasible to determine the number or share of affordable units produced by the program or to identify target AMI affordability restrictions (or income mix) for subsidized projects.

A predecessor program, Mitchell-Lama, targets middle-income households through state-based tax funded subsidies to developers to build affordable housing (Angotti, 2008, p. 73). Rentals and Co-ops generated through Mitchell-Lama maintain affordability restrictions for 20 years, of which case studies in Stuyvesant Town, Jamaica Bay and Harlem show that the pressure of real estate markets and financialized capital are influential factors that compromise Co-op consensus to renew affordability contracts for the additional 15-20 years (Angotti, 2008).

Federally funded public housing and project-based Section 8 vouchers provide for low-income families, but have strict requirements for re-evaluation of income qualifications, along with other means testing such as family size, biannual inspections, and restrictive social measures. Unlike state LIHTC and Mitchell-Lama also utilizing federal funds, the affordability terms of Section 8 and remaining public housing do not have a built-in timeline, but are subject to federal budget cuts, and changes in program type with public-private hybridization, or the transition to privatization and tenant-based vouchers.

Rent regulations work in an entirely different way in regards to affordability. The regulations aim to control rental price increases for units that fall within the regulation and do not engage with income brackets or impose income requirements on tenants. For rent stabilized apartments, max rental price increases are set by the city's Rent Guidelines Board every year, preventing sudden increases that the market may accommodate, for instance, in a gentrifying neighborhood with inflated real estate speculation. Unlike voucher programs and public housing, rent regulation is not determined by affordability measures of tenants at a household level in a given year, but rather, provides price stability and predictability across geographies and generations.

Accessibility for individuals and families applying for housing within these various programs has a more complicated landscape for subsidized programs. Rent control is a closed program, only accessible to those who are already in it. Rent stabilization is widely accessible, without income restrictions, but is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain because of a shrinking pool of units.

All other programs require income verification with annual or biannual re-verifications depending on the program. This can become a difficult proposition for growing families and households who experience even a marginal increase in household income seeking unsubsidized affordable options. Additionally, a growing body of research on the relationship between subsidized housing and poverty deconcentration challenges stated program benefits. A study conducted at NYU Furman Center shows that a growing number of place based subsidies expire in high opportunity neighborhoods as strong markets incentivize owners to privatize and convert to market-rate rents (Ellen and Weselcouch, 2015). This finding means that there is also an increased concentration of subsidies in lower opportunity neighborhoods (Ellen and Weselcouch, 2015; Lens and Reina, 2016).

The tenant-based Section 8 voucher program requires the involvement and approval of landlords, and access to an available supply of market-rate units available at fair market rents to qualify for the federal subsidy. Proponents of the program cite increased public benefit in tethering subsidies to the tenant, however a number of studies show otherwise. Wyly and DeFilippis find that “vouchers are not consistently associated with poverty deconcentration” (2010, p.61). Further challenging the benefits of Section 8 programs over other subsidy programs and affordability regulations, authorized termination of a Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) contract can be destabilizing and occur outside of the initial lease agreement. Life events and domestic oversights inconsequential to other subsidized and market-rate renters can lead to tragic outcomes including eviction, displacement, and homelessness. Examples include family separation or increase in family size or “composition” (HAP Contract,

2019, p .4) reported within 30 days of change, reported to HPD within 30 days of change, “any drug-related criminal activity on or near the premises,” tenant-caused Housing Quality Standard (HQS) failures such as a battery-dead smoke detector or an outstanding utility bill, as well as owner-side HQS failures that can result in unanticipated tenant burden (HPD, Section 8: HCV). The death of a single-person household with or without a live-in aide serves as grounds for contract termination (HUD-HAP, p. 4), presenting barriers to intergenerational housing stability.

Requiring HUD approved Fair Market Rate (FMR)¹ can be a difficult barrier in cities like New York with high housing costs. Under HAP contract, NYC HPD is not permitted to approve an apartment of which the tenant share is greater than 40% of adjusted household income (HPD, NYC.gov). Relative to these terms, the 2017 Housing Vacancy Survey data shows that 32% of New York City households paid 50% or more of their income towards rent; all of whom do not meet the standards to qualify for federal rental assistance through Section 8 - highlighting that the housing affordability crisis in New York City does not align well with the “reasonable” standards as defined by FMR.

¹ Fair Market Rent (FMR) - HUD annually calculates FMRs across the country to determine payment standards for Section-8 contracts and Housing Choice Voucher programs. FMR is typically in the 40th percentile of gross rents for “standard-quality modest” or “non substandard” rental housing for all metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas.

Duration and Stability

Ensuring housing for all residents is often recognized as a primary goal of subsidized rental housing programs. But recognizing the importance of resident's ability to stay in their homes as a central tenet of *Housing Freedom*, critical to maintaining a sense of security and to building lasting communities, this analysis aims to examine the outcomes of the various programs with respect to duration of stay and stability of tenure.

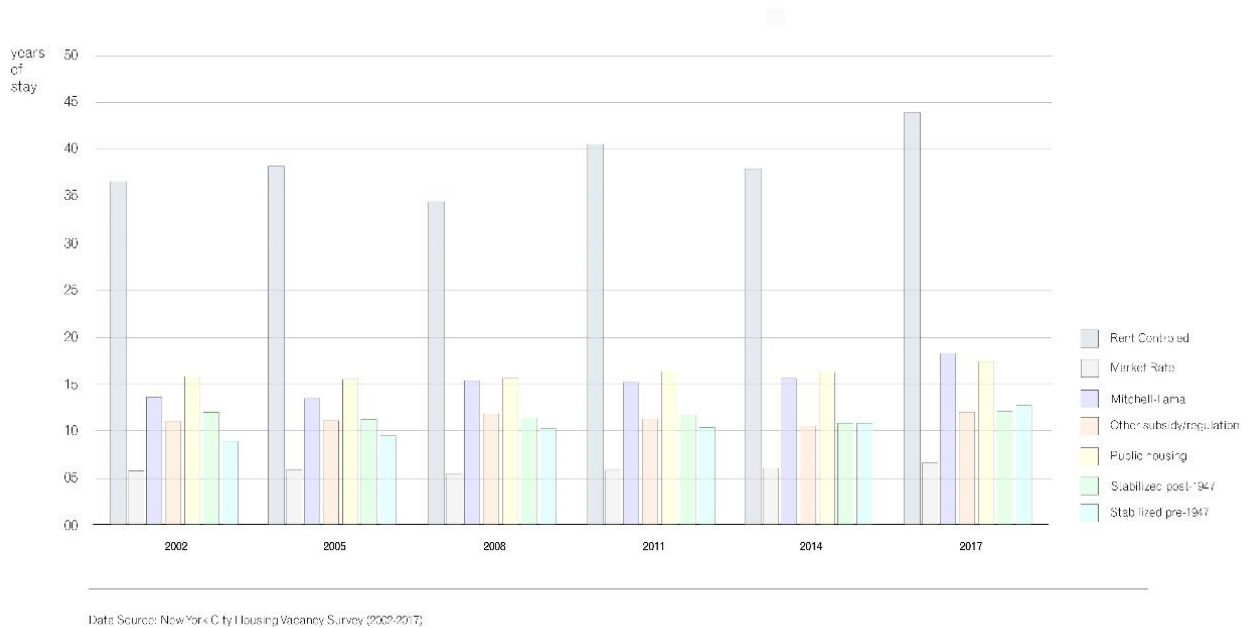
There is a wide variance among housing programs in how their design and terms interact with a tenant's ability to stay. Regulations like rent control and rent stabilization have no specifications or rules for determining the length of stay for tenants, but the regulation's ability to counteract rapid changes in rental price from market forces allows for predictability in rent burden for tenants. However, gradual rent increases can lead to deregulation under rent stabilization rules and tenants often face landlord harassment and other illegal methods to get them to move (Rolnik, 2019; Newman and Wyly, 2006; Lens and Reina, 2016).

HNY emphasizes preservation strategies and points out the struggles of tenants facing illegal rent increases and displacement. The focus on preservation provides new financing agreements to keep public and stabilized units affordable including programs to address building maintenance and repairs, supportive housing, public-private development agreements for "underutilized" public housing and Mitchell-Lama properties to fund capital improvements in existing buildings, as well as legal services for renters facing harassment from predatory landlords (HNY, 2017).

Other programs have a much more complex structure and relationship to duration. Public housing and Section 8 voucher programs come with income and family size requirements, and require annual income verification to remain in the programs. This means that, unlike with rent regulations, ability to stay depends on a tenant's status. With roughly half of the city's housing stock being rent regulated units, available to tenants without special requirements, the nearly double average duration of stay compared to market rate apartments strongly suggests that the protections against rent increases have a positive impact on tenants' ability to stay in their homes.

Figure. 08 charts the average duration of stay for tenants for different programs, including tenants in unregulated market rate apartments, from New York Housing Vacancy Survey data from 2002 through 2017. In this, we can see that regulation, public housing and other subsidy programs have much higher average length of stays over market-rate apartments. Though, some of the variance between these groupings may be tautological. For instance, long stays in rent-controlled units are definitional since the units only remain in the program if the tenant has lived there continuously prior to 1971, and, for Mitchell-Lama and Public Housing, these programs are not readily available to new or temporary residents to the city because of long wait lists. But, a surface level reading of the averages that shows a durational benefit to affordability programs, whether regulatory or subsidized, should not be dismissed given the variance in averages above market rate.

Figure 08. Length of Stay by Housing Program Type, 2002-2017



From a *Housing Freedom* perspective, where not only the ability to stay, but also freedom to move is a valued characteristic, interpreting this chart is not straightforward. The longer lengths of stay within these programs can be viewed as a benefit to the tenants, able to stay continuously in their home despite market forces. However, this data does not provide conclusive explanations because some of the current incentive mechanisms for generating new affordable housing such Mitchell-Lama, LIHTC, MIH and IH are not easily accessible through this data because these programs have different terms and units subject to regulation are warped by the financing mechanisms leveraged to create them. Looking back to Figure. 01, examining the terms of each program through its stated goals, one might see limitations of program design reflected in the definitions of the programs themselves, and in the outcomes reflected in the bar graph (Figure. 08).

I. How is Displacement Defined?

Though duration of stay provides a limited view for a potential measure of success for a given program from the perspective of Housing Freedom, the myriad reasons for what drive the variance in length of stay is not well presented by this measure. The ability to move, either for preference of a different neighborhood or a larger space for a growing family can be viewed as a desirable characteristic, while the restrictive nature of certain programs like public housing within the context of a limited housing stock and rising market rent prices may be a perverse incentive to stay against a tenant's preference. To take another view of housing stability and the "right to stay put" (Hartman et. al, 1986), understanding displacement, where tenants are forced to move through one means or another, can help highlight the differences in how housing programs operate within this context.

Important to the examination of displacement is the impact of state and city housing legislation authorizing the deregulation of rent-stabilized housing through high-rent vacancy decontrol in the 1990s; and the facilitated transfer of economic burden for building improvements from the landlord to the tenant. Newman and Wyly (2006) found that cost considerations drove the overall trend in displacement rates throughout the 1990s, with the rate of displacement most severe in the early and late years of the decade, reaching nearly one tenth of total movers in 2002. In the following years between 2005-2009, as Rolnik (2019) cites a 2009 report by the Association of Neighborhood Housing and Development: "around 100,000 stabilized-rent units - that is 10 percent of New York's housing stock - were bought by private equity funds" (p.270)

The dimensions of displacement in relation to housing deregulation further intersect with the processes associated with the reality that “financialization of rental housing has been a result of public policy” -- “strengthening a financial asset-based housing and urban policy” (Rolnik 2019, p.271). This political and economic shift, historically recognized in New York City’s late-1970s fiscal recovery, with processes of privatization and disinvestment from social services shaped by finance, real-estate lobbies and municipal unions, builds on many decades of urban exclusion at the hands of the banks and planners (Stein 2019, pp.46-48). The federal government’s Home Owners’ Loan Corporation (HOLC), a fixture of the 1934 New Deal era, professionalized practices of racial segregation and exclusion by systematically disinvesting in black and immigrant neighborhoods by denying homeowners loans to its residents. Rolnik traces the thread between “financial asset-based housing” and displacement to illustrate the racial disparity among “those who are most affected by the machinery of dispossession,” citing eviction lawsuits recorded by the New York City Public Advocate’s Office between January 2013 and June 2015, to support the claim the most of the city’s evicted tenants are African American and Hispanic (2019, p.272). The disproportionate impact of recorded evictions was most pronounced in predominantly African American and Hispanic neighborhoods of Crown Heights, Bronx, Washington Heights and Bushwick (Rolnik 2019, p.272).

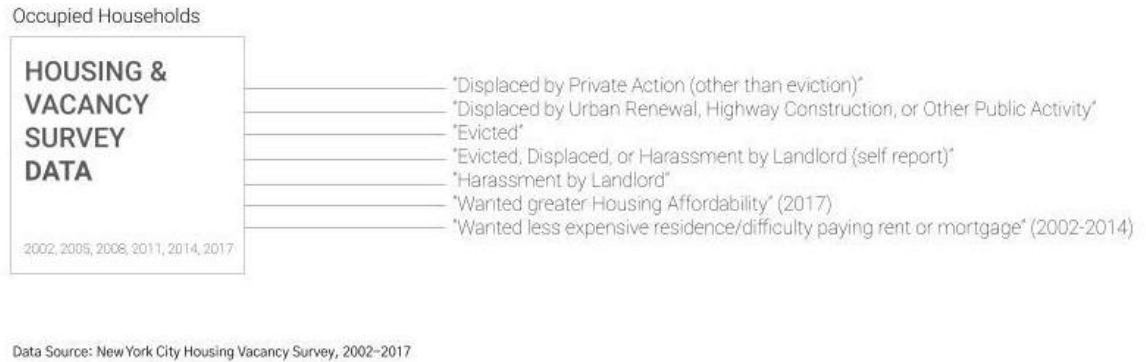
II. Proportional displacement by Sub-borough area

Drawing on the methodology presented by Kathe Newman and Elvin Wyly (2006), which tracked displacement rates in New York City 1989-2002 by broadening the definition of displacement to encircle events that go beyond recorded eviction rates and include urban renewal displacement, economic strain, and landlord harassment. As explained in their methods, the data provides a fragmentary understanding that only allows for mapping people who had previously been displaced, not where they were displaced from. But, the data does allow for a view into the unevenness of displacement across communities with a fine-grained stratification of NYCHVS data over five consecutive survey years, and for a sense of how displacement patterns changed over the two decade period. Figure 09 takes a similar approach as Newman and Wyly's, beginning in the final year of their analysis, showing the proportion of displaced households by neighborhood using 2002-2017 NYCHVS data. Corresponding maps for each survey year are shown in sequence to show displacement changes over time and variation among survey years. Figure. 10 describes the query process and defines displacement by using the "reason for move" responses in the Housing Vacancy Survey: "eviction", "displaced by private action", "difficulty paying rent or mortgage", "displaced by urban renewal, highway construction, or other public activity", "harassment by landlord".

Figure 09. Proportional Displacement Mapping by Sub-Borough Area, 2002-2017



Figure 10. Displacement Defined



Though this map does not show where displacement occurred, which would be a more direct representation, showing instead where households who had been displaced moved to, as noted by Newman and Wyly it shows a wide degree of variability across neighborhoods, indicating that displacement is not a geographically even phenomenon, but impacts some neighborhoods more than others.

III. Neighborhood loss as a proxy for displacement

Though these maps show considerable differences across neighborhoods over time, they do not describe where displacement is actually occurring or how subsidized programs interact with this movement. Further, displacement also operates at the community or neighborhood level, where a resident might not only lose their home, but also their community.

With the large majority of New York's rental housing stock divided between market rate and rent stabilized units, the availability of rent stabilized units can be seen to play an important role in displacement versus household stability in general. The preceding analysis on duration of stay shows the strong effects of rent stabilization against market rate units, with rent stabilized units showing nearly double the average duration. In Newman and Wyly's study (2006), they cite public housing and regulations as being the main buffers against displacement.

DeBlasio's administration has recognized the importance of rent stabilization and has introduced a number of programs in the Housing New York initiative (HNY, 2014 and 2017) to preserve existing subsidized units through expanded modes of public-private partnerships and building maintenance loans made available to owners with stabilized units. Financing and zoning mechanisms such as MIH and IH zoning and incentives are utilized to create new units. In city published literature and reports, they cite total units preserved or built under the program, working towards an updated goal of 300,000 units by 2026 (HNY, 2017). But, despite these efforts, as Table. 02 shows, the total number of stabilized rental units has continued to see losses over the years while the deregulated housing stock grows, and the neighborhood context, shown to be an important characteristic of displacement, is not well addressed.

Table 02. Rent-Stabilized and Market-Rate Units, 2002-2017

	2002	2005	2008	2011	2014	2017
Rent Stabilized Units	1,042,397	1,043,677	1,003,767	986,840	1,029,918	966,443
Market-Rate Units	672,368	697,363	792,130	849,800	848,721	936,837

Data Source: New York City Housing Vacancy Survey (2002-2017)

Inclusionary zoning (MIH and IH) is the city’s most aggressive tool for incentivizing affordable housing development that can create additions to the rent stabilized stock, but its focus on neighborhoods where strong markets can support new development does not benefit neighborhoods that see deep losses in regulated units with weak speculative real estate markets.

Tracking the spatial implications of the city’s strongest tools to increase and preserve the supply of low-income units is infeasible due to inconsistent data archiving and lack of public access.

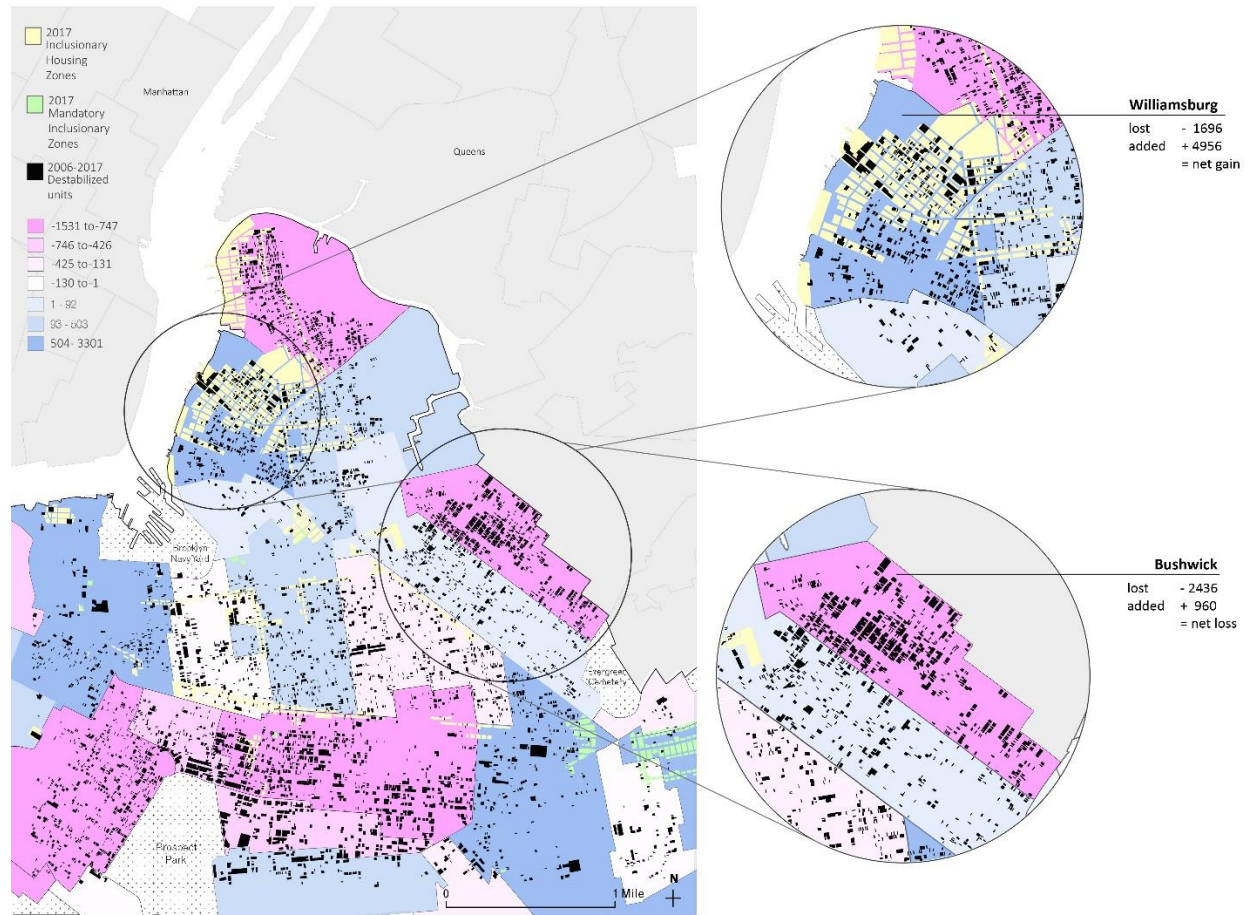
New York State Homes and Community Renewal is the state’s housing agency responsible for the management of rent-regulation programs in New York City, but the agency does not make this data publicly available despite Freedom of Information Law requests (Krauss, 2015).

Although NYC Rent Guidelines Board provides a list of buildings that have regulated units in them, the data does not differentiate between a building that has one rent-regulated unit from a building in which all units are rent-regulated, making it difficult to track and quantify losses to the regulated housing stock and where deep losses take place across the city. The utilization of

John Krauss' coded dataset that makes use of NYC's Department of Finance's tax records provides a glimpse into the geography of rent deregulation.

Figure. 11 maps units lost to rent deregulation relative to MIH and IH zoning in North Brooklyn, showing that any net gains in units reported by Mayor DeBlasio's office obfuscate the geographic reality at the neighborhood level. This mapping experiment reveals the net loss of regulated units in Bushwick, while Williamsburg, a focus of MIH efforts, shows a net gain. For residents of Bushwick displaced by increased rents due to high-vacancy decontrol, the availability of new units in another neighborhood involves community-level displacement. The mapping shows focused areas of loss that do not align with the contours of inclusionary zoning. This spatial disparity suggests a contradiction inherent within program goals and stated outcomes, where some of the neighborhoods with the greatest losses of regulated housing units have been largely untouched by the policies aimed at replenishing this stock.

Figure 11. Net Change of Rent Stabilized Units by Neighborhood Tabulation Area, 2007-2014



Data Sources: New York City Department of Finance (tax bills, 2007-2014) made accessible via open-source dataset (Krauss, 2015) [CSV format]; New York City Department of City Planning (2017). [zoning shapefiles].

In addition to rent regulations, subsidy programs and Section 8 contracts are designed to bridge the gap between low-income residents and market rate housing costs. As housing subsidies expire through programs such as LIHTC, Mitchell-Lama, and Section-8 project-based contracts, private owners are allowed to opt-out and privatize their developments, forcing tenants to move due to the termination of affordability restrictions, without the means to access units undergoing market-rate conversion. The city’s office of Housing Preservation and

Development's remaining tool to help tenants maintain housing is the allocation of HUD financing via Section-8 tenant-based voucher program, also referred to as the Housing Choice Voucher.

Lens and Reina (2016) examined the dynamics of where housing subsidies expire across geographies of neighborhood opportunity from 2000 to 2010, and point to a lack of literature focused on the implications expiring subsidies for increased household rent burden, displacement, and reduced access to high-opportunity neighborhoods (Lens and Reina, 2016, p. 716, 725-728). Their analysis of LIHTC, Mitchell-Lama and Section-8 project-based contracts, finds that “the tenant protection voucher - often provided to tenants that have to leave housing with expired subsidies - does not appear to protect households from these realities” (2016, p. 728). Their research findings conclude, “that all else being equal, a number of families equal to the number of units that expire will suddenly find themselves at a higher risk of having to move. Further, they are more likely to have rents raised where market rents are higher, which is in the higher opportunity neighborhoods that housing policy makers and advocates hope that low-income households can access” (2016, p. 728).

Chapter 5. Discussion and Conclusion

Though this analysis spans programs from different eras, with different operating principles and structures across city, state and federal agencies, *Housing Freedom* is utilized as a standard framework to examine goals and outcomes. In looking at subsidized and regulated units in relation to market-rate housing stock, these comparisons show several benefits from governmental housing support as well as severe points of weakness and potential directions for improvements.

Right To Housing

A right to housing for all residents of the city remains a distant goal, with rising housing costs and diminished housing support for low-income residents at local and federal levels. Access to housing is still primarily predicated on a person's level of income, with the available options still unmatched to the income makeup of residents. While programs for homelessness were not a focus of this study, none of the existing housing programs analyzed were designed for or capable of providing housing for households with extremely-low or no income.

Ideological shifts over the last several decades pushing away from broader universal protections and social safety nets such as rent regulation and directly funded and operated public projects like public housing, towards voucher programs that rely heavily on means testing put a heavy burden on applicants, subject to the landscape of the rental market and the biases of private landlords.

While rent stabilization regulations have effectively protected a large portion of the housing stock from rapidly rising rents, they are diminishing in number compared to rates of growth in the private market, and subsidy programs to create new units with affordability regulation are unequal to the needs of the population and are designed to expire with the development contract. While modest gains have been made under Mayor Bill DeBlasio's *Housing New York* program, the goals of the program are not well-tuned to the affordability needs of residents and are not ambitious enough to counteract the widening gulf between the income levels of residents and rising market rates and increasing deregulation of units.

Right to Stay

Housing price stability and protections from localized market volatility are crucial to tenants' ability to remain in their home. With the higher lengths of stay associated with rent stabilized units, the diminishing scope of this regulation will lead to increased rates of displacement and a greater difficulty for tenants to remain in their homes against deregulation and price increases. While incentive programs to build new affordable housing under 421A have added to the overall housing stock, the localized and market driven nature of these efforts unevenly impacts

neighborhoods, with new housing not lining up geographically where displacement is occurring and misguided affordability targets.

Apart from need-blind rent regulations, many of subsidized programs are not designed around goals for maintaining a consistent home within a community. Federally funded programs like public housing and Section 8, with their strict income requirements, among others, place tenants in a precarious situation where maintaining their home hinges on remaining under a certain income level and household size, among other harsh social restrictions. Modest increases in income may result in contract termination and drive displaced tenants to look for market-rate units in a housing landscape lacking adequate supply of affordable units.

Taking a multi-generational view of “home” where stability can last for many decades from parents to children and on, is something widely recognized that homeowners and high-income renters have the right to enjoy. The low-income and subsidized housing landscape provides no path to such stability. Within the terms of programs like affordable housing under MIH, Mitchell-Lama co-ops, and rentals, are affordability expirations that coincide with tax abatement expirations. This short-term affordability window forecloses on the possibility of long-term housing stability at the inter-generational scale.

A Growing Need

While growth in the housing market was not a central point of analysis of this research, impacts of climate change and the future of the city make it clear that this will be an increasingly urgent

issue, further compounded by the present housing crisis not being well-addressed by current efforts. New York's population continues to grow as the overall population increases. But, the urgent issue of climate change and climate migration will inevitably put increasing pressure on the city's housing supply. This fact should be planned for and met with a housing ecosystem that aims for *housing freedom* for all residents, new and existing.

Metrics and Data

While tracking the size and contours of the housing stock and understanding the realities of affordable housing has improved over the last several decades, it is clear that much more needs to be done to make this data accessible, relevant and more complete. The NYCHVS provided an important window into the nature of housing in the city, and helps to identify gaps in the data towards a more robust understanding of policy impacts across time and space. Planners and researchers continue to struggle with inconsistencies in formatting and collection as well as access, and many dimensions relevant to understanding displacement are not well tracked. Despite nearly 100 years of housing efforts in New York, with data sets only going back to the late 1980's, well after many of the austerity measures and deregulation efforts had taken place, it is difficult to examine and compare the relative success and outcomes of past programs like public housing and involuntary regulatory programs. Going forward, stronger, federally mandated data collection on housing that goes beyond surveys and estimates will help planners better understand and plan for the present and future. Additionally, while surveys are helpful to understand impacts, the existing housing stock can be better understood through stronger reporting requirements for government run agencies as well as private owners. In particular,

better tracking spatial aspects of housing and displacement can help understand local dynamics and impacts of policy.

Opportunities

Given this broad surveyed understanding of past and current housing efforts, working towards greater *housing freedom* for all residents suggests three interdependent paths: 1. The present demands for housing and the projections of increasing needs to accommodate growth necessitate a massive investment at the federal and state level in building new housing. 2. With the inability of market-led efforts to meet the housing needs of residents, and the strong track record of previous housing regulations in providing and protecting homes for residents, universal housing price controls can help provide stable and lasting homes for all. 3. To guarantee the right to stay for all residents, direct income supplements tenants in need can help maintain consistent and continuous residence in a home in the face of a fluctuating economy, calamity and persisting inequalities.

References

- Angotti, T. (2008). *New York for Sale: Community planning confronts global real estate*.
- Aurand, A., Emmanuel, D., Rafi, I., Threet, D., & Yentel, D. (2021). *Out of Reach: The High Cost of Housing*. National Low Income Housing Coalition.
<https://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/todays-read-out-of-reach-2021/>
- Badger, E., & Bui, Q. (2018). In 83 Million Eviction Records, a Sweeping and Intimate New Look at Housing in America. *New York Times*. Retrieved from
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/04/07/upshot/millions-of-eviction-records-a-sweeping-new-look-at-housing-in-america.html>
- Bergeron, E. (2019). Adequate housing is a human right. *Human Rights*, 44(2), 0_2,4-6. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/trade-journals/adequate-housing-is-human-right/docview/2308831287/se-2?accountid=10226>
- Brenner, N. (1999). Globalisation as Reterritorialisation: The Re-scaling of Urban Governance in the European Union. *Urban Studies*, 36(3), 431–451.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/43084539>
- Brenner, N., & Theodore, N.. (2005) Neoliberalism and the urban condition, *City*, 9:1, 101-107, DOI: [10.1080/13604810500092106](https://doi.org/10.1080/13604810500092106)
- Brenner, N., Marcuse, P., & Mayer, M. (2009). Cities for people, not for profit. *City*, 13(2–3), 176–184. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/10.1080/13604810903020548>
- Briggs, De Souza, Xavier, N. (2005). *The Geography of Opportunity : Race and Housing Choice in Metropolitan America*. Brookings Institution Press. Retrieved from <https://search-ebSCOhost-com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e025xna&AN=142727&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- Chatterjee, Ipsita. (2014). *Displacement, Revolution, and the New Urban Condition : Theories and Case Studies*. Sage Publications Pvt. Ltd. EBSCOhost, <https://search-ebSCOhost-com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e025xna&AN=1069114&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- Coaffee, J., & Healey, P. (2003). “My Voice: My Place”: Tracking Transformations in Urban Governance. *Urban Studies*, 40(10), 1979–1999. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43196963>

- Damico, A. J. (n.d.). Analyze the new york city housing and vacancy survey (nychvs) with r. *Unlocked Public-Use Data Sets*. <http://asdfree.com/>
- DeFilippis, J. (2001). The myth of social capital in community development. *Housing Policy Debate*, 12(4), 781–806. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10511482.2001.9521429>
- DeFilippis, J. (2003). *Unmaking Goliath: Community Control in the Face of Global Capital* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/10.4324/9780203499917>
- Desilver, D. (2018). For most Americans, real wages have barely budged for decades. *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/08/07/for-most-us-workers-real-wages-have-barely-budged-for-decades/>
- Desmond, M. (2016). *Evicted : Poverty and Profit in the American City: Vol. First edition*. Crown Publishing Group. Retrieved from <https://search-ebSCOhost-com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1022630&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- Ellen, I. G., & Weselcouch, M. (2015). *Housing, Neighborhoods, and Opportunity: The Location of New York City's Subsidized Affordable Housing* (pp. 1–28). NYU Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy. <https://furmancenter.org/research/publication/housing-neighborhoods-and-opportunity-the-location-of-new-york-citys-subsid>
- Fainstein, Susan S., & DeFilippis, J. (2016). *Readings in Planning Theory: Vol. Fourth edition*. Wiley-Blackwell. *EBSCOhost*, <https://ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login?url=https%3a%2f%2fsearch.ebscohost.com%2flogin.aspx%3fdirect%3dtrue%26db%3dnlebk%26AN%3d1084383%26site%3dehost-live%26scope%3dsite>.
- Fields, D. (2014). Contesting the financialization of urban space: Community organizations and the struggle to preserve affordable rental housing in New York City. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 37(2), 144-165. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/10.1111/juaf.12098> X
- Fields, D. (2017). Unwilling Subjects of Financialization. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 41(4), 588–603. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12519>
- Flyvbjerg, B. (1998). *Rationality and Power: Democracy in Practice*. University of Chicago Press.
- Michael C. Lens & Vincent Reina (2016) Preserving Neighborhood Opportunity: Where Federal Housing Subsidies Expire, *Housing Policy Debate*, 26:4-5, 714-732, DOI: [10.1080/10511482.2016.1195422](https://doi.org/10.1080/10511482.2016.1195422)

- Freeman, L., & Schuetz, J. (2017). Producing Affordable Housing in Rising Markets: What Works? *Cityscape*, 19(1), 217–236. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26328307>
- Hartman, C., & Lauriat, A. (1986). The housing part of the homeless problem. *New Directions for Student Leadership*, 30, 71–85. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/10.1002/yd.23319863009>
- Harvey, D. (1978). The urban process under capitalism: A framework for analysis. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 2(1–3), 101–131. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.1978.tb00738.x>
- Harvey, D. (2003). The right to the city. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 27(4), 939–941. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0309-1317.2003.00492.x>
- Harvey, D. (2019). Spaces of Neoliberalization: Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development. Franz Steiner Verlag. <https://search-ebSCOhost-com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e025xna&AN=2249074&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- Housing Assistance Payments Contract (HAP Contract): Section 8 Tenant-Based Assistance, Housing Choice Voucher Program, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Form HUD-52641 1 (2019). [exp. 2022, July 31].
- Housing New York: A Five Borough, Ten-Year Plan. (2014). Retrieved from [wilyhttps://www1.nyc.gov/site/hpd/about/the-housing-plan.page](https://www1.nyc.gov/site/hpd/about/the-housing-plan.page)
- Housing New York 2.0. (2017). Retrieved from <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/hpd/about/the-housing-plan.page>
- HPD Section 8: Housing Choice Voucher. (HPD, Section 8: HCV). Rights and Responsibilities. Frequently Asked Questions. NYC.gov. Retrieved from <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/hpd/services-and-information/section-8-rights-and-responsibilities.page>
- Lapavistas, Costas (2013) The financialization of capitalism: ‘Profiting without producing’, *City*, 17:6, 792–805, DOI: 10.1080/13604813.2013.853865
- Marcuse, P. (1975). Residential Alienation, Home Ownership and the Limits of Shelter Policy. *The Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 3(2 November), 181–193. https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol3/iss2/10?utm_source=scholarworks.wmich.edu%2Fjssw%2Fvol3%2Fiss2%2F10&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages
- Marcuse, P. (2009). From critical urban theory to the right to the city. *City*, 13(2–3), 185–197. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13604810902982177>

- Marcuse, Peter. (2009). From Critical Urban Theory to the Right to the City. *City*, 13(2–3), Routledge, pp. 185–97. *Taylor and Francis+NEJM*, doi:[10.1080/13604810902982177](https://doi.org/10.1080/13604810902982177).
- Madden, D., & Marcuse, P. (2016a). *In defense of housing: The politics of crisis*. Verso.
- Madden, D., & Marcuse, P. (2016b). The permanent crisis of housing. *Jacobin*.
<https://jacobinmag.com/2016/10/housing-crisis-rent-landlords-homeless-affordability>
- Marcuse, P., & Keating, W. D. (2006). The permanent housing crisis: The failures of conservatism and the limitations of liberalism. *A right to housing: Foundation for a new social agenda*, 142.
- Mayor’s Office to Protect Tenants. Tenant Protection. NYC.gov.
<https://www1.nyc.gov/content/tenantprotection/pages/>.
- Miraftab, F. (2004). Making neo-liberal governance: The disempowering work of empowerment. *International Planning Studies*, 9(4), 239–259.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13563470500050130>
- Mironova, O. (2019). *Where have all the affordable rentals gone? Rents, incomes, and rent burdens in stabilized and unregulated housing*. Community Service Society.
<https://www.cssny.org/publications/entry/where-have-all-the-affordable-rentals-gone>
- Mukhija, V., Regus, L., Slovin, S., Das, A. (2010). Can Inclusionary Zoning Be an Effective and Efficient Housing Policy? Evidence From Los Angeles and Orange Counties. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 32(2), 229–252.
- Newman, K., & Wyly, E. K. (2006). The Right to Stay Put, Revisited: Gentrification and Resistance to Displacement in New York City. *Urban Studies*, 43(1), 23–57. Jstor,
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/43197378>
- New York City Rent Guidelines Board. (2020). Changes to the Rent Stabilized Housing Stock in NYC in 2019.
- NYU Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy. (2014). Profile of Rent-Stabilized Units and Tenants in New York City. NYU Wagner School of Public Service, NYU School of Law.
- NYU Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy. (2021). Directory of New York City Housing Programs. Coredata.nyc. [2005-2021]. NYU Wagner School of Public Service, NYU School of Law
- Peters, B. G., Pierre, J., & King, D. S. (2005). The Politics of Path Dependency: Political Conflict in Historical Institutionalism. *The Journal of Politics*, 67(4), 1275–1300.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2508.2005.00360.x>

- Pierre, J. (1998). *Partnerships in urban governance: European and American experience*. St. Martin's Press.
- Pierre, J. (1999). Models of Urban Governance: The Institutional Dimension of Urban Politics. *Urban Affairs Review*, 34(3), 372–396. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10780879922183988>
- Putnam, R. D. (1994). Social Capital and Public Affairs. *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 47(8), 5–19. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3824796>
- Raetz, H., O'Regan, K.M. (2020). *State of New York City's Housing and Neighborhoods in 2020*. State of the City 2020. NYU Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy. Retrieved from <https://furmancenter.org/stateofthecity/view/state-of-renters-and-their-homes>
- Rolnik, R. (2019). *Urban Warfare*. Verso.
- Rose, D. (1984). Rethinking Gentrification: Beyond the Uneven Development of Marxist Urban Theory. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 2(1), 47–74. <https://doi.org/10.1068/d020047>
- Routhier, G. (2021). *State of the Homeless 2021, Housing is Health Care, A Lesson for the Ages* (pp. 1–53). Coalition for the Homeless. <https://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/state-of-the-homeless-2021/>
- Section 402-B. Power of authority to enter into mixed-finance transactions to continue viability of public housing, Article 13, Title 1, 44-A, New York State Senate, PBG. Retrieved from <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/PBG/402-B>
- Sosa-Kalter, S. (2019). *Maximizing the Public Value of New York City- Financed Affordable Housing*. Association of Neighborhood and Housing Development. Retrieved from <https://anhd.org/report/maximizing-public-value-new-york-city-financed-affordable-housing>
- Stein, S. (2019). *Capital City*. Verso.
- Stringer, S. (2018). *NYC For All: The Housing We Need*. NYC Comptroller, Bureau of Economic Development; Bureau of Budget. Retrieved from <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/nyc-for-all-the-housing-we-need/>
- Vale, L., J., & Freemark, Y. (2012). From Public Housing to Public-Private Housing: 75 Years of American Social Experimentation. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 4(78), 379–402. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944363.2012.737985>
- Williams, B. (2013) *Real Affordability: An Evaluation of the Bloomberg Housing Program and Recommendations to Strengthen Affordable Housing Policy*. Association of Neighborhood and Housing Development. Retrieved from <https://anhd.org/report/real-affordability-evaluation-bloomberg-housing-program-and-recommendations-strengthen>

- Williams, B. (2018). Housing Vacancy Survey Shows New York City Is in The Midst of An Affordability Emergency. *Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development*. <https://anhd.org/blog/housing-vacancy-survey-shows-new-york-city-midst-affordability-emergency>
- Wyly, E., & DeFilippis, J. (2010). Mapping Public Housing: The Case of New York City. *City & Community*, 9(1), 61–86. *EBSCOhost*, doi:[10.1111/j.1540-6040.2009.01306.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6040.2009.01306.x).
- Wyly, E., Newman, K., Schafran, A., & Lee, E. (2010). Displacing New York. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 42(11), 2602–2623. <https://doi.org/10.1068/a42519>

Data Bibliography

- BYTES of the BIG APPLE. (2017). Mandatory Inclusionary Housing [shapefile]. The Department of City Planning. Retrieved 2021.
- BYTES of the BIG APPLE. (2017). Inclusionary Housing [shapefile]. The Department of City Planning. Retrieved 2021.
- Krauss, J.. (2015). Changes in Rent Stabilization 2007-2014. [CSV format]Retrieved from <http://blog.johnkrauss.com/where-is-decontrol>
- New York City Open Data. Housing New York Units by Building [CSV format]. Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD). <https://opendata.cityofnewyork.us/>
- U.S. Census Bureau. (1999-2017). New York City Housing Vacancy Survey [tables and microdata]. Retrieved 2021.