

“AND SO, MY HEART WAS CONSTANTLY JUST WANTING TO BE HOME, BUT NOWHERE WAS HOME”: A STUDY INTO THE VOICES OF DISPLACED REGENT PARK RESIDENTS



Graduate Program in Social Work



“And so, my heart was constantly just wanting to be home, but nowhere was home”: A
Study into the Voices of Displaced Regent Park Residents

(Title)

by

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a practice-based research paper submitted to the School of Social
Work of York University in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of **Master of Social Work**

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York University

Faculty Advisor: Anne M B O’Connell

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Dedication

I want to thank God for His unwavering faithfulness, favour and grace for bringing me this far and providing me with this opportunity. I could not do this without him. A special and heartfelt thank you to my Faculty Advisor, Dr. Anne M. B. O’Connell. Thank you for your unconditional support and endless encouragement throughout this process. Back in 2016, during my Bachelor of Social Work undergraduate program, Dr. O’Connell was one of my professors. Her engagement and interest in a poem that I wrote about Regent Park marked the first time I had ever written about my community in an academic space. That moment allowed me to take pride in where I was from and showed me that my story mattered in academia.

Nine years later, I am honoured to have your continued support and to watch the seed you planted flourish in this research. To my cohort, thank you for your intelligence, laughter, and unwavering support. Your enthusiasm for my project meant more than words can express. Thank you to all the brilliant professors I had throughout this program. The critical thinking you cultivated and our rich discussions filled an intellectual void I had felt before returning to school.

Thank you, Dr. R.K. James, for taking the time to speak with me about this project during my uncertainty and fears. Your academic work on Regent Park has been foundational to my work. To my friends and family, words cannot express my appreciation for the sacrifices you have made for me to be here. To my parents, Mercy and Prince Dapaah: Your endless prayers, support, and encouragement never went unnoticed. God’s greatest gift to me was placing you two as my parents. Thank you to Regent Park. To all my friends, family, teachers, neighbours, Salvation Army mentors, and loved ones lost, thank you for inspiring this research.

Most importantly, thank the community members who shared the beautiful and challenging pieces of their lives with me. You made this research project possible. This is a love letter to my

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hood, Southside Regent, for shaping me into the woman I am today. Although this project
centers on Regent Park, it is meant for all individuals raised in or still living in public housing
communities that have given them far more than the world sees.

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Preface

Growing up in Regent Park made me who I am today. I think I’m a well-rounded individual who is non-judgmental and compassionate. Regent Park left many scars that children should never have to bear, but somehow, we got through them, and because of this, I am very intuitive and can relate to and help others from all different walks of life. It is a gift I received from my childhood surroundings. If given the choice to go back and change it, I honestly do not think I would. I am proud of where I started and where I am now.

(Community member, personal communication, 2025)

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Abstract

“A united racialized community to exist on its own terms and to be subject to the same rights and freedoms as the greater white community, remains inconceivable” (Nelson, 2002, p. 129). The gentrification of Regent Park illustrates this reality. This study asks: How is gentrification used as a neoliberal tool to dismantle racialized communities? This research draws on Critical Race Theory (CRT), post-structuralism and spatial theories to examine how policies like “social mix” mask displacement as revitalization. This paper will analyze how redevelopment policies have perpetuated systemic inequities while disrupting vital networks of solidarity and care. Through stories of displaced community members from Phase 2 of the revitalization project, this qualitative study highlights the cultural wealth, resilience, and deep-rooted sense of belonging in Regent Park before gentrification. The findings challenge the logic of social mix and neoliberal assumptions that low-income communities cannot thrive without proximity to whiteness or middle-class norms. Ultimately, this study argues that the erasure of community was not an accidental outcome but a systemic effect of redevelopment efforts that prioritize market interests over the lives of racialized residents.

Keywords: Regent Park, gentrification, social mix, community, solidarity, neoliberalism, territorial stigmatization, racialized bodies, urban development, revitalization.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The year 2025 marks two decades since the redevelopment of Regent Park began in 2005, a process rooted in gentrification. As defined by David Harvey (2005), Gentrification refers to transforming urban spaces to cater to middle- and upper-class populations, displacing low-income, often racialized, communities. The redevelopment of Regent Park has been framed around concepts of “social mix” and “revitalization,” which policymakers have used to justify the displacement of marginalized populations (August 2014). However, these terms mask a broader neoliberal agenda that continues to devalue racialized communities while catering to elite interests. My research argues that Regent Park’s redevelopment is not merely an urban renewal project but an extension of Canada’s colonial history and white nation-building practices, which have historically excluded and erased marginalized bodies.

This research seeks to answer the central question: How is gentrification used as a neoliberal tool to dismantle racialized communities and their values? To address this question, I will center the voices of displaced Regent Park residents, whose lived experiences reveal the human cost of policies prioritizing profit over people. Drawing on Critical Race Theory (CRT), post-structuralism, and spatial theories, I aim to analyze how redevelopment policies perpetuate systemic inequities while disrupting vital networks of solidarity and care. Situating Regent Park within this broader trajectory reveals how spatial reconfiguration functions as a tool of racial governance (August 2008, 2014; James, 2017; Razack, 2002). The discourse of revitalization conceals how displacement, exclusion, and the reordering of urban space maintain whiteness as the normative standard (Razack, 2002). By interrogating these processes' historical and ideological underpinnings, this research seeks to challenge the narrative that social mixing

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and redevelopment are neutral or compassionate interventions. But are instead extensions of a long history of racial violence and spatial control (August 2014, 2008; Razack, 2002).

“As a researcher, it is up to you to make those lives visible and to leave the legacy of a well-described and analyzed social world for the next generation” (Reid, Greaves, & Kirby, 2017). This quote encapsulates the foundation of my work. As a former Regent Park resident and now social worker, the community has profoundly shaped my identity. Through this research, I aim to honour its legacy beyond the stigmatizing narratives that dominate public discourse. I hope policymakers recognize mixed-income strategies, which I argue are rooted in colonial practices and neoliberal ideologies, often perpetuate inequality rather than addressing it (August 2014; Kipfer & Petrunia, 2009). By challenging these dynamics, I hope to contribute to a more equitable understanding of urban development and advocate for policies that nurture racialized and low-income communities’ strengths and cultural wealth.

Lastly, this research project is also timely; it is relevant to Toronto's current political and cultural climate. As the city is amid a housing crisis, with an increased demand for new affordable housing to be built and the redevelopment of other communities, my research speaks to the human experience of those amid these recurring changes. With an influx of funding opportunities for builders to create new homes and communities, we need to ensure that there are frameworks in place which can be utilized to implement the appropriate programs, support and knowledge that centers the individuals who undergo these significant changes.

Overview

This paper begins by discussing my positionality as a researcher, where I reflect on the personal values and lived experiences that inform my approach. Chapter Two introduces the theoretical frameworks that ground this research, offering readers a foundation for understanding the critical

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perspectives that guide the analysis. This chapter also includes an in-depth literature review that traces the historical context of Regent Park, from its inception to the onset of revitalization, situating the community within broader social, political, and spatial dynamics.

Chapter Three continues the literature review, highlighting the key narratives and themes mobilized to justify Regent Park's redevelopment. This chapter deepens the reader's understanding of how space, race, and stigma have been constructed within the community.

Chapter Four outlines the methodological framework, including data collection, coding, and analysis processes. Chapter Five presents the study's findings, organized into thematic sections that reflect the lived experiences of Regent Park residents and respond to the initial research questions. Finally, Chapter Six offers concluding reflections and key recommendations, drawing connections between the findings, theoretical insights, and implications for policy, practice, and future research.

Situating Myself – Considering the Researcher's Position

In my experience as a social worker, one of the most consistent sources of resilience in the face of stress, anxiety, and depression has been the community. While this is not to minimize the importance of other forms of intervention, my upbringing in Regent Park, my cultural background as a Ghanaian woman, and my professional experience have all demonstrated the power of solidarity. My interactions with racialized individuals and immigrants have shown that many come from social contexts where support networks and communal care are integral to everyday life. In their research, scholars Salami et al. (2019) found that immigrants with a strong sense of community belonging were likelier to report excellent and very good self-perceived mental health (Salami et al.,2019).

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For example, my mother hails from Akim Swedru, Ghana. Whenever I visit, I am reminded of my childhood in Regent Park, not because the two spaces are identical, but because of the shared communal beliefs that define them both. In my mother's village, people may not have much material wealth, but care, interdependence and joy are abundant. Children are raised not just by their immediate family but by an extended network of aunties and uncles, both blood-related and chosen. The phrase "it takes a village to raise a child" is not just a saying it is a lived reality. Similarly, in Regent Park, I witnessed this dynamic: neighbours looking out for each other, sharing resources, and creating informal support systems beyond state intervention.

Yet, I have also learned that institutions in Canada do not always uphold these values. Instead, restrictive policies and the pervasive influence of Western individualism work to suppress the strength found in communal practices. For instance, my experience within shelters, child-minding policies can create barriers, making it difficult for women to rely on trusted roommates or friends for support. Similarly, the surveillance of Black and racialized families through agencies such as Children's Aid Services (CAS) reflects a broader governance of racialized bodies, what Foucault might describe as the exercise of power through surveillance and control (Foucault, 1999; Lindsay, 1994). These policies reinforce neoliberal ideals that privilege individual responsibility over collective care, ultimately fragmenting the support systems that many communities have historically relied on (August, 2008; Harvey, 2005; Rosa, 2006).

This paper is grounded in the understanding that we need community. The stories shared by my community members will illustrate how displaced residents of Regent Park continue to resist ideals of individualism, drawing on memories of a time when mutual aid, care, and solidarity defined their community.

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In the early stages of my research, I spoke to my father about his thoughts on community, solidarity, and government intervention. He reflected on the fact that back home in Ghana, issues were resolved with elders and the community itself, without the involvement of formal state institutions. "In this country," he told me, "They make us believe the government is the one that settles the matters here, but back home, no." He spoke about the lasting effects of colonialism, particularly how British colonizers introduced a fixation on money and control. According to him, before colonial rule, people in his village lived simply, only taking what they needed to sustain themselves. However, through colonial influence, Ghanaian chiefs and leaders were taught that power could be consolidated through wealth, disrupting older traditions of communal reciprocity. My father's informal storytelling and broader connection to power, money and community highlight Katherine McKittrick's (2021) black storytelling notions that appear disconnected and uneven ideas; however, they challenge the primacy of traditional evidentiary and insular normalcies. This insight from my father connects to broader histories of dispossession and governance, particularly the experiences of Indigenous and Africville communities in Canada, who similarly faced colonial interventions that dismantled their communal ways of life and problem-solving. (Blackstock, 2009; Nelson, 2002; Rosa, 2006). Wealth accumulation became a tool of colonial control in Ghana, and this was evident amongst the indigenous communities here in Canada. This form of colonial violence bred from ideations of wealth and economic gain is present in modern practices of gentrification as real estate and private property become an economic driving force for neoliberal market achievement.

At the same time, it is crucial to avoid romanticizing non-Western cultural values or creating a simplistic binary between "the West" and "the rest." No community is uniform, and not everyone in Regent Park may share the same experience of solidarity. However, it remains

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clear that the forced displacement of communities through gentrification disrupts more than just physical space, it erases ways of being, knowing, and supporting one another that have sustained people for generations (Razack, 2002).

As this paper unfolds, I will return to the narratives of my interview participants, whose memories of Regent Park challenge dominant narratives of deficiency. By centring their voices, I hope to demonstrate that Regent Park was a space of community, resistance, and care—an alternative to the neoliberal order that sought to erase it (August, 2014).

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CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS & LITERATURE REVIEW

This research draws on an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that combines Critical Race Theory (CRT), post-structuralist thought (especially Foucault), Henri Lefebvre’s theory of the production of space, and Sherene Razack’s racial spatial analysis. These frameworks allow for a deeper understanding of how gentrification in Regent Park is not simply about housing but racialized governance, neoliberal control, and the historical organization of space.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) provides the foundation for examining how systemic racism and white supremacy are embedded within redevelopment policies. Central to this framework is interest convergence (Bell, 1980), which suggests that racial justice is only accommodated when it aligns with the interests of those in power. In Regent Park, revitalization efforts are framed as community improvement. Still, they have resulted in the displacement of racialized and low-income residents, revealing how inclusion is conditional and often performative.

CRT also helps illuminate how contemporary housing policies are shaped by racial capitalism and financialization, as Dr. Nemoy Lewis (2022) outlines in his report *The Uneven Racialized Impacts of Financialization*, racialized communities in Canada, particularly Black and immigrant populations, bear the brunt of housing financialization. This process transforms housing from a social good into a vehicle for capital accumulation¹, driven by investors, developers, and government actors. Through a CRT lens, financialization reveals how systemic racism persists in urban planning by commodifying land historically occupied by low-income,

¹ The chair of TCHC praised the project as the “largest public/private sector urban redevelopment ever undertaken in Canada” and declares Regent Park “open for business,” a “go zone for revitalization.”(Kipner & Pertrunia, 2009, p 121). *“My home was “open for business”? That is crazy”*. My exact sentiment reading this statement.

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racialized residents (Lewis, 2022). Regent Park’s transformation into a market-driven "mixed-income" space exemplifies this shift.

CRT also values counter-narratives, and in this research, the lived experiences and voices of Regent Park residents challenge dominant narratives that position public housing as failed or inherently dangerous. As Yosso (2005) emphasizes, marginalized communities hold rich cultural knowledge, and this study aims to center that cultural wealth as a source of resilience and power.

Post-structuralist theory, particularly the work of Michel Foucault, is used to interrogate the discursive and institutional power relations at play in social mix policies. Foucault’s concepts of discourse, governmentality, and biopolitics (Foucault, 1991) provide language to understand how phrases like “revitalization” or “social mix” are deployed to justify the reorganization of space and subjectivity. These discourses subtly frame low-income and racialized residents as in need of fixing, and middle-class norms as the default standard. Governmentality is key here, redevelopment is not just a spatial project, but a political project aimed at managing “undesirable” populations through the built environment.

This project also draws from Henri Lefebvre’s theory of the production of space. Lefebvre (1991) insists that space is not neutral rather, it is socially produced and historically shaped by capitalism, ideology, and power. This allows me to think about Regent Park not as a failed project, but as a deliberately racialized and stigmatized space, one that was created through discourses of containment and later reimagined as an urban real estate opportunity. Scholars like Kipfer & Petrunia (2009) and Rosa (2006) extend Lefebvre’s theory to show how spaces like Regent Park are transformed to serve capital, often at the expense of their communities.

Finally, Sherene Razack provides a distinctly Canadian context to understand how whiteness and belonging are mapped onto urban space. Razack (2002) reminds us that Canada’s

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geography is not innocent, it has been shaped through processes of colonization, racial exclusion, and forced displacement. This is evident in the way revitalization has removed racialized families from Regent Park, while constructing a “new” community that aligns with middle-class and often white norms of citizenship and respectability (August, 2014). The spatial reorganization of Regent Park becomes an extension of Canada’s nation-building project one that continuously remakes its cities in the image of whiteness.

Taken together, these theories allow for a critique of revitalization not only as urban policy but as a racial, political, and colonial practice. This framework supports the use of lived experiences as valuable data and situates the redevelopment of Regent Park within broader struggles over race, space, power, and belonging.

Did we ever Stand a Chance? Historical Context of Regent Park

History is central to my understanding of Regent Park. Scholars emphasize in their work history is not just about the past; it is key to understanding the present and the conditions that shape racialized communities (August, 2014, 2019; James, 2017; Kipfer & Petrunia, 2009, Sewell, 1994). In this context, my literature review needs to illustrate some of the history of Regent Park. I say “some” because the history of this community and space is far more extensive than what can be captured here. Regent Park has existed across multiple generations, each with its narratives and lived experiences, making it a uniquely layered 70 acres of community and struggle. However, for this research, historical context is essential in understanding how Regent Park came to be, particularly concerning urban planning, governance, and racialized displacement.

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However, history is not only a tool for uncovering structural violence but also a means of reclaiming community narratives. The dominant narratives of Regent Park often focus on its supposed deficiencies, reinforcing the need for state-led intervention. Yet, within the community itself, there exist histories of care, kinship, and resilience that these external constructions have overshadowed. While I will outline how historical context helps us understand Regent Park’s racialized governance later in this paper, I turn to a different form of history, the lived experiences and memories of displaced residents, to highlight the strength and beauty of the community before revitalization. These personal histories challenge state-imposed narratives of decline and offer a counter-story that affirms the power of communal belonging and the significance of Regent Park beyond its physical redevelopment.

Introduction to Regent Park’s History

Regent Park, developed in the late 1940s, is significant in Canadian public housing history. Initially framed as a progressive response to urban overcrowding, the project was heralded as a modern solution to poverty (August, 2014, 2019; James, 2010, 2017; Sewell, 1994). However, its trajectory has been shaped by systemic patterns of racialized stigma and socio-economic exclusion (August, 2014, 2019; James, 2010, 2017; Purdy 2003).

1940s–1950s: Public Housing as a Mechanism of Control

The construction of Regent Park was part of a broader post-war urban renewal movement that sought to eliminate so-called “slums” and replace them with rationally planned, modernist housing developments (August, 2008, 2014, 2019; Dunn, 2012; James, 2010; Rosa, 2006). Approved by Toronto City Council in 1945, with construction occurring between 1947 and 1959, Regent Park replaced what was once Cabbagetown; a working-class, predominantly white

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British enclave considered undesirable by city officials (August, 2014, 2019; James, 2010; Kipfer & Petrunia, 2009; Purdy, 2005).

Rooted in modernist planning, Regent Park was designed by eliminating street grids, reducing traffic, and maximizing open green space through significant building setbacks and separation from urban noise and pollution (Holmes, 2022). These physical interventions were not just aesthetic, they were part of a larger political project to create “healthy” environments through spatial order and population control (August, 2014, 2019, James, 2010; Kipfer and Petrunia, 2009). As Kipfer and Petrunia (2009) note, Regent Park gained political support partly because it removed “undesirable” urban areas, thereby protecting land values and paving the way for future corporate and governmental investment in downtown Toronto.

The racial and national context of postwar Canada also shaped who was imagined as deserving of this new housing. In the 1940s and 1950s, Canada’s immigration policy still functioned as a white-only system, and Regent Park’s early population reflected this demographic (Johnstone, 2015; Kipfer & Petrunia, 2009; Purdy, 2003). Housing reformer Albert Rose², who also advised on the demolition of Africville, described Regent Park as an experiment “in social control through design” (Kipfer & Petrunia, 2009; Rosa, 2006). According to Rose, such “orderly physical planning,” combined with proper tenant screening, could reduce delinquency, increase work productivity, reinforce efficient domestic roles, and stabilize family structures (Kipfer & Petrunia, 2009). In short, housing was not just about shelter, it was a biopolitical tool for shaping behavior and upholding dominant moral norms.

² In his article, James K. Ryan (2017) highlights that Albert Rose was also a longtime Dean of Social Work at University of Toronto. In his novel *Rose’s* in 1958, he discussed “whose fault” it was that so many Canadians were poorly housed or not housed at all in the 1940s. Rose concluded that it is ‘the fault of everyone’ as, ‘for the most part, it is the community which has failed’. He blamed families for their own poor living conditions for he believed [they] simply do not care’ (James, 2010)

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Tenant selection processes were similarly influenced by political ideologies. As Sean Purdy (2003) documents, Regent Park North’s long-time housing manager Frank Dearlove a Conservative Party member prioritized housing access for individuals aligned with his vision of traditional citizenship, including city workers and party affiliates (p.462). This reveals how public housing was never a neutral policy tool but was deeply embedded in race, class, and political loyalty. From the outset, Regent Park was managed to reflect and reproduce dominant ideals of respectability, whiteness, and middle-class morality (Purdy, 2003).

Drawing on Foucault’s (1991) concept of governmentality, Regent Park can be understood as a space where low-income, racialized populations were governed through mechanisms that appeared compassionate; like housing, sanitation, and green space but functioned to regulate behavior and reinforce state control (August 2014, 2019; Foucault, 1991; James, 2010; Kipfer & Petrunia, 2009; Purdy, 2005). This planning logic framed poverty as a spatial and moral failure that could be solved through design, discipline, and surveillance, rather than through redistribution or social justice.

1960s Systematic Barriers faced Tenants

Critical urban development scholars August (2019), Sean Purdy (2003) and Kipfer & Petrunia (2009) have highlighted the systemic barriers faced by citizens of Toronto and Regent Park residents from the 1950s onward. Economic restructuring and discriminatory housing policies disproportionately impacted working-class and racialized communities, including Black, Asian, and Jewish residents (August, 2019; Kipfer & Petrunia, 2009; Purdy, 2003). By the 1960s, many tenants were spending 30–50 percent of their income on rent, amidst housing shortages driven by gentrification and rising land costs (Purdy, 2003). The 1970s brought further instability, as the loss of unionized jobs and the rise of low-wage, precarious work deepened poverty for many

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(James, 2010; Kipfer & Petrunia, 2009). In the 1990s, the housing crisis worsened for newcomer and refugee families, particularly large, racialized households who faced systemic discrimination. Afro-Caribbean single mothers, for example, encountered layered barriers of race, gender, and income in the public and private rental market, pushing many to turn to public housing for stability (Purdy, 2003).

1960s–1980s: The Rise of Racialized Stigma

During the early development of Regent Park North, public housing advocates proposed rent-g geared-to-income (RGI) rates at 20 percent of household income, reflecting the economic realities of low-income tenants (Purdy, 2003). However, despite these efforts, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) implemented a 25 percent rate, later increasing it to 30 percent in the early 1980s. This policy shift coincided with a broader ideological retreat from the welfare state, where housing was increasingly reframed through neoliberal logics of individual responsibility and cost-efficiency (Harvey, 2005; Purdy, 2003). Rather than meeting housing as a right, public discourse began framing tenants as burdens on the state, justifying reduced investment and support.

By the 1980s, Regent Park’s demographic was shifting, becoming more racially and culturally diverse as immigrant and racialized families moved into the area (Slater, 2015; August, 2014; Kipfer & Petrunia, 2009). Yet, this period also marked the state’s growing disinvestment in public housing, driven by policies prioritizing privatization, austerity, and market-based solutions (August 2008; August & Walks, 2018; Holmes, 2022). For instance, instead of improving public housing, federal priorities shifted to subsidies for nonprofit housing and co-op housing in the 1970s(Kipfer & Petrunia, 2009). In later years, the federal government

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downloaded social housing responsibilities to provinces (from the late 1980s to 1996), and Ontario’s Mike Harris Conservative government completed devolution from provinces to municipalities in late 1995 (Kipfer & Petrunia, 2009). During his time, he cancelled the scheduled development of 17,000 affordable units (August, 2008; August & Walks, 2018; Holmes 2022; Kipfer & Petrunia, 2009). These reforms effectively changed the supply, quality, and planning of social housing in the following years--as state funding declined, housing infrastructure deteriorated (August 2008; Kipfer & Petrunia, 2009; Homes 2022).. For Regent Park residents, this meant living in under-resourced conditions, with fewer services and worsening stigmatization (August, 2008; Rosa, 2006). The media often reinforced these conditions through racialized portrayals of the neighbourhood as “dangerous” or “crime-ridden,” which further justified abandonment by the state (August,2019; Kipfer & Petrunia, 2009; Purdy, 2005; Thompson et al., 2013). To fully understand the stigma attached to Regent Park, it is critical to acknowledge these systemic barriers and how they have shaped its residents’ lives. The dominant narratives about Regent Park residents erased the structural forces at play.

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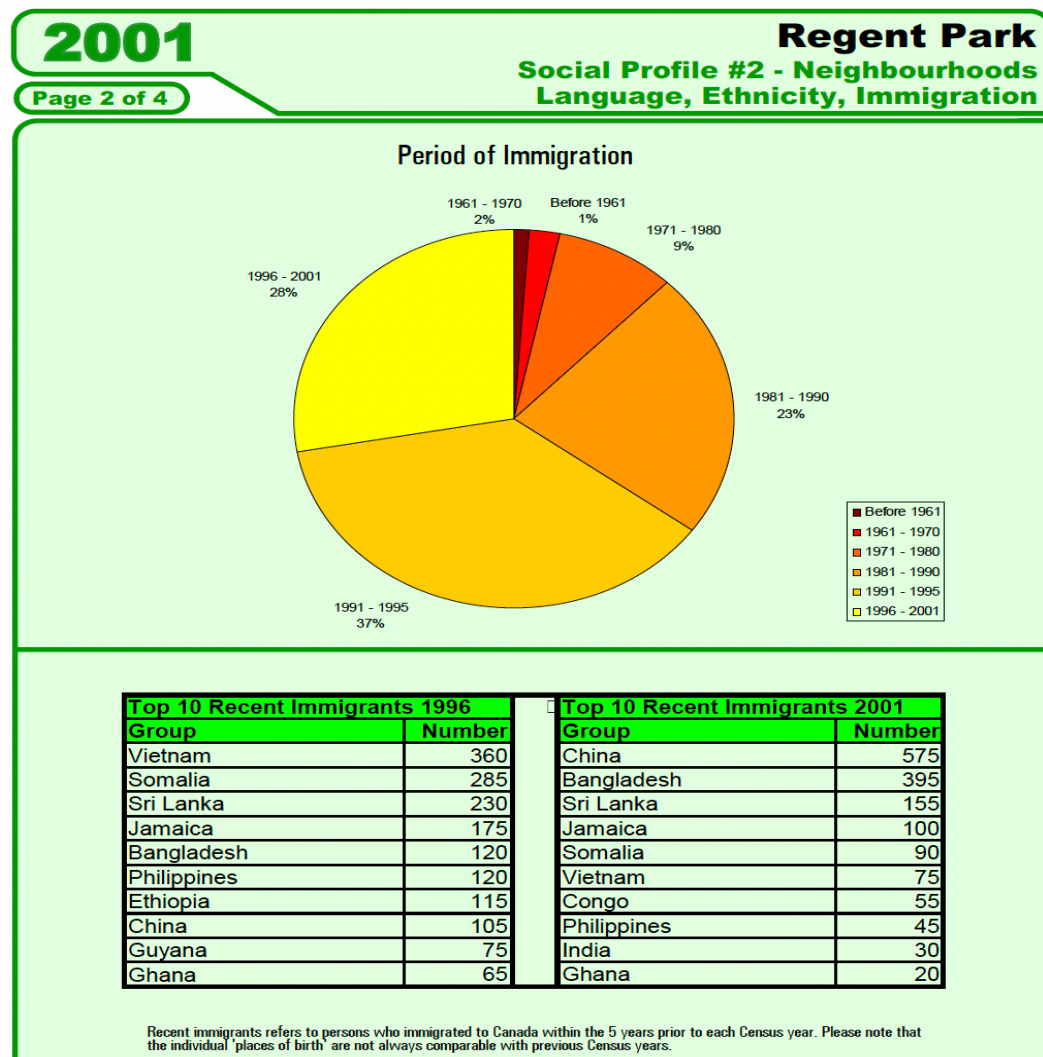


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1990s–2000s: Preparing for Revitalization

As public discourse around Regent Park grew increasingly hostile in the late 1990s, policymakers began advocating for revitalization through mixed-income housing strategies (August, 2008; Purdy, 2003). Martine August (2008) describes this redevelopment as a public–private partnership led by market logic and guided by New Urbanist design principles. The goal was to "deconcentrate" poverty by reducing the number of on-site public housing units and

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introducing over 5,400 new market-rate condominiums (August, 2008, 2014; James, 2010,2017, Kipfer & Petrunia, 2009). Ultimately, the share of rent-geared-to-income (RGI) units would drop from 100% to a projected 26% a dramatic shift in the social composition of the neighbourhood August, 2008, 2014; James, 2010,2017, Kipfer & Petrunia, 2009).

While this plan was framed as a progressive solution to urban decline, it increasingly catered to the interests of developers, taxpayer groups, and city officials who were uneasy about the visibility and density of low-income residents (August,2008, 2019; Brail & Lorinc, 2023; Holmes, 2022.; James, 2010 Kipfer and Petrunia 2009). Kipfer and Petrunia (2009) reveal this account in their study:

...developers pressured the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) to go further in "diluting the poverty" of the area. They suggested relocating tenants outside of Regent Park and replacing promised units with "affordable ownership" options (p. 123). Eventually, political actors gave in: the city abandoned its original promise that all RGI units would be rebuilt on-site. Roughly 600 of the 2,087 original public housing units were planned for relocation elsewhere for Phase One in 2006, undermining the much-publicized "right to return." In demographic terms, public housing tenants once the sole occupants of Regent Park would become a clear minority in a redeveloped neighbourhood projected to house over 12,000 people. (p.123)

This development plan and policy shift demonstrate how social mix in Regent Park functioned less as an inclusive urban strategy and more as a carefully managed displacement. Although it is easy to criticize TCHC for breaking promises, it's essential to recognize that municipal housing agencies operate within a broader system of austerity and disinvestment. Harris famously declared that the government was "[getting] out of the housing business" (Brail & Lorinc, 2023). The federal and provincial governments had long withdrawn from public housing, effectively forcing local authorities to turn toward private capital through public-private partnerships (August,2008, 2019; Brail & Lorinc, 2023; Holmes, 2022; James, 2010; Kipfer &

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Petrunia, 2009). Yet despite this shift, all three levels of government still invested approximately \$500 million into the redevelopment, raising critical questions about how that money was allocated and whose needs it ultimately served (University of Toronto Mississauga, 2023).

This shift can also be understood through Foucault’s (1991) concept of biopolitics, where planning and policy become tools for managing populations through spatial and social reordering. Social mix was framed as a solution to the “failures” of concentrated poverty, yet it obscured the deeper roots of disinvestment and inequality. Instead of addressing decades of state neglect and racialized policy, redevelopment in Regent Park displaced long-standing residents and redefined who belonged in the city and on what terms (Purdy, 2003; Rose, 2010).

CHAPTER THREE: Territorial Stigmatization + Social Mix = Gentrification aka Modern-

Day White Nation Building

Social Mix as a Tool of Displacement

The concept of social mix has been widely promoted as a universal truth in public housing reform, framed as a benevolent intervention to deconcentrate poverty and create balanced, healthy communities (August 2014, 2019, James 2010; Kipfer and Petrunia, 2009). However, these narratives mask the displacement and harm they often cause. While working as a transitional tenant worker in 2024, I encountered firsthand how deeply this ideology has been internalized. A tenant once told me, “If you research housing, you’ll learn the benefits of social mix. That is the ideal model for housing in society.” His concern was that too many low-income families were moving in and that their presence could negatively affect the neighbourhood. I sat there, a bit stunned—first, because I was a low-income resident, and second, because it was the

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first time I had heard someone so casually use the term “social mix” in conversation. Little did I know, I would soon be doing a lot of research on it myself.

From my research, I found this same notion in my tenant at the policy level. Former CEO of Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) justified the importance of revitalization in Regent Park by stating: “Breaking up the concentration of social housing there is deliberate... none of [the most successful models] are homogeneously low-income” (cited in August, 2019). These statements reflect a deeper discourse that frames low-income people as inherently problematic and their removal as necessary for neighbourhood success. In this way, social mix becomes a legitimized mechanism of gentrification and spatial control (August 2014, 2019; James, 2017).

Territorial Stigmatization and Media Narratives

Public discourse around Regent Park increasingly positioned the neighbourhood as a “failure” of Canada’s public housing (August, 2014, 2019; James, 2010; Kipfer & Petrunia, 2009; Purdy, 2005; Rosa, 2006). As conceptualized by Wacquant (2007) and grounded in Lefebvre’s spatial theory, territorial stigmatization refers to the symbolic degradation of specific urban areas to justify their transformation (August, 2014, 2019 ; Rosa, 2006). In the case of Regent Park, the media frequently portrayed it as a “ghetto” needing to be wiped clean: a place where “drug dealers hung out in courtyards,” where “troublemakers smashed windows,” and where life was so bleak, only a drug dealer could love it” (Philp, 1997; Hume, 2007, as cited in August, 2014). One Toronto Star article summarized the public mood with its remark: “only a clean slate will do” (Toronto Star, 2002, as cited in August, 2014).

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These portrayals built public consent for redevelopment by reinforcing that the community was beyond repair. As August (2014) notes, such narratives often claim compassion, framing redevelopment as necessary to help poor people, while ultimately serving capital accumulation and legitimizing the displacement of racialized, low-income communities (August, 2014; August & Walks, 2018).

Lived impacts of Stigma and Racialized Space

This racialized stigma had real-life consequences for residents. Growing up in Regent, I remember my sister and her peers using alternative addresses on resumes to avoid discrimination. The stigma attached to our postal code became a barrier to employment. This aligns with what David Theo Goldberg describes as the experience of the “racial other” those confined to marginalized spaces and denied full citizenship (cited in Rosa, 2000, p. 45). These spatialized forms of racism do more than limit opportunity; they assign an identity to residents.

As Dwayne Sybbliss (2017) explains, territorial stigmatization intersects with systemic racism to create compounding barriers to upward mobility. Regent Park residents were expected to become productive citizens within a system that criminalized and abandoned them. Survival required daily resistance to a narrative that insisted our neighbourhood, and by extension, our lives, were less worthy.

Isolated?

One of the most persistent justifications for redevelopment was the claim that Regent Park was physically and socially “isolated” from the rest of the city. However, this narrative does not align with the lived experiences of many residents, including myself. A 10-minute streetcar ride

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brought me to the Eaton Centre. Every Thursday, I attended a girls’ group at Verity³ Women’s Club, a private, members-only women’s club in downtown Toronto, thanks to a partnership with the Salvation Army. Through community programs, we always took field trips out of Regent Park. Were we truly isolated? I felt more isolated in Scarborough than I ever did in Regent Park.

Empirical research supports this contradiction. Martine August (2014) found that many Regent Park residents expressed satisfaction with their access to nearby amenities such as grocery stores, services, and public transit, contrary to popular claims that the neighbourhood was isolated or lacking resources. These claims, August argues, often reflected the classed and racialized assumptions of outside observers rather than the lived experiences of residents. In her interviews, residents described Regent Park as a supportive and well-connected community, where mutual care was a defining feature, especially compared to the social isolation often found in suburban public housing areas (August, 2014).

Modern Day White-Nation Building

August (2014) argues that Regent Park came to represent everything “white, middle-class Torontonians fear” violence, racial difference, and poverty. As the neighbourhood became increasingly racialized in the 1990s, these fears intensified. Understanding Canada’s legacy as a white nation-building project helps contextualize this process. Drawing on anti-colonial theory, Canada’s white nation-building project can be understood as a settler colonial process that required both the dispossession of Indigenous lands and the regulation of racialized bodies (Lawrence & Dua, 2005; Simpson, 2014). The racial composition of Canadian society was

³ <https://www.verity.ca/about>

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actively engineered through immigration policies that privileged European and British settlers while excluding, marginalizing, or assimilating those deemed “unfit” for the emerging nation (Johnstone, 2009; Poon, 2009).

Scholars Sean Purdy (2003) and Marjorie Johnstone (2009) highlight that between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Canada's immigration strategies were not simply about population growth but about maintaining a white, Anglo-Saxon national identity. Those who did not fit this ideal including Indigenous peoples, Black Canadians, and immigrants from non-European backgrounds were constructed as racial and social outsiders (Johnstone, 2009; Poon, 2009). Assimilation was framed as both necessary and altruistic, reinforcing the belief that belonging was conditional upon the adoption of white, middle-class norms (Johnstone, 2009; Poon, 2009).

Regent Park’s history is not the first example of racialized displacement in Canada. The destruction of Africville in Nova Scotia offers a powerful historical parallel, illustrating how racialized communities were deliberately neglected, denied services, and ultimately removed under the rhetoric of urban modernization (Nelson, 2002; Kipner & Petrunia, 2009; Rosa, 2006). Sherene Razack (2002) argues that mapping the nation involved systematic exclusions and space reorganization to uphold whiteness. Africville residents were systematically denied basic infrastructure such as clean water, sewage systems, and road maintenance, and their eventual displacement was framed as an act of progress rather than a continuation of racialized spatial violence. (Nelson, 2002; Kipner & Petrunia, 2009; Rosa, 2006)

Through redevelopment, Regent Park was not only physically redesigned it was remapped in ways that aligned with dominant ideologies of citizenship, productivity, and

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respectability (August, 2014; Razack, 2002). In doing so, the state maintains control over who belongs, and under what terms (Foucault, 1991). The discourse surrounding social mix policies reaffirms historical assimilationist logics, framing the influx of middle-class, often white, residents as a civilizing force meant to model "appropriate" forms of living for racialized, low-income communities. In this way, contemporary urban redevelopment projects like Regent Park continue the colonial project of regulating space, belonging, and racialized life under the guise of progress (Kipner & Petrunia, 2009; Razack, 2002).

Community Resilience, Solidarity and Street Codes

Vanessa Rosa (2006) opens her thesis with a compelling quote from James Baldwin to his nephew:

This innocent country set you down in a ghetto, in which, in fact, it intended you to perish...The limits of your ambition were, thus, expected to be set forever. You were born into a society which spelled out with brutal clarity, and in as many ways as possible, that you were a worthless human being. You were not expected to aspire to excellence: you were expected to make peace with mediocrity. (2006)

This powerful statement resonates with the lived experiences of Regent Park residents, where the inferiority of racialized bodies has historically shaped the perception and treatment of the community (August, 2014; James, 2010,2017; Rosa, 2006). The stigma surrounding Regent Park echoes Baldwin's observation that individuals in such environments are often conditioned to internalize societal expectations of mediocrity. These narratives perpetuate systemic racism and uphold structures of whiteness through othering and framing racialized residents as inherently deficient and in need of "fixing."

As someone from Regent Park, I reflect on how these narratives have shaped my sense of self. Growing up, I often experienced impostor syndrome, questioning my place in spaces that demanded more than what society expected of someone from my community. In Harjeet

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Badwall's work (2015), she cites Sara Ahmed, who conceptualizes the ways words and feelings “stick” to particular subjects to produce specific effects (Ahmed, 2004). These emotional responses, Badwall explains, aren't created in isolation but are formed through complex social and relational dynamics. The systemic attack on neighbourhoods like Regent Park operates through the assumption that only the arrival of wealthier residents can produce “better” citizens (August, 2019). This logic suggests, directly or indirectly, that Black and racialized people are never enough as they are. And yet—here I am, writing a master's paper about the community others only associate with deficiency.

Amid these processes of erasure and displacement, counter-narratives challenge the dominant discourse. Dwayne Slybbliss, a community member from Regent Park whom I remember from my childhood as a community mentor, provides his reflection of our community in his paper *Last Ride through Regent* (2017). He highlights public housing communities' strength and cultural wealth (Slybbliss, 2017). Contrary to narratives framing public housing as a failure, Slybbliss attributes his success to the values and support he gained from his community. He writes: "My success was not because I had left my community but was a result of growing up in my community and my obligation to be loyal to it" (Slybbliss, 2017). This perspective aligns with Tara J. Yosso's (2005) concept of Community Cultural Wealth, which emphasizes the often-overlooked strengths, knowledge, and skills in racialized and low-income communities. Regent Park residents, despite systemic challenges, foster resilience, solidarity, and support networks that are rarely acknowledged in mainstream discourse (August, 2008, 2014, 2016; Kipfer & Petrunia, 2009; Slybbliss, 2017; Urbanik et al., 2017).

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Street Codes and Safety

Dominant narratives around Regent Park often framed it as a space plagued by crime and gangs, reinforcing the idea that safety could only be achieved through redevelopment and policing. However, such narratives failed to account for how safety and care were maintained within the community, often through informal structures not recognized by state institutions. Urbanik, Thompson, and Bucerius (2017) challenge this one-dimensional framing in their study of Regent Park, revealing that longstanding residents, including gang-affiliated “older heads,” often operated as informal community protectors. Their research highlights how adherence to a local street code and tightly knit social ties helped regulate violence and protect uninvolved residents:

People that don’t live here, they think it’s usually like a bad area, full of gangs and violence. There are gangs and there is violence, but it’s not like, all that. Like, if you lived here... as long as you weren’t messing with people, then you’re good” (Urbanik et al., 2017, p. 431).

While the presence of crime was real, the community’s internal structure created a form of social control and collective accountability that “expert” knowledge often overlooked. As the authors note, redevelopment disrupted this balance, removing figures who had once guided younger youth and replacing them with surveillance and displacement (Urbanik et al., 2017).

This resonates with my own experience growing up in Regent Park, where some of the people involved in street life were like family. This theme also emerged in my interview data, where participants described “older heads” as mentors and protectors. Including this lens is crucial to understanding how safety was understood and practiced in the community.

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Urban redevelopment plans for Regent Park were heavily influenced by New Urbanist design principles, which emphasized through-streets, mixed-use spaces, and Jane Jacobs' (1961) idea of “eyes on the street” as key to safety. Policymakers and designers argued that the neighbourhood's original layout, closed-off courtyards and pedestrian walkways contributed to crime and isolation (August, 2008; James, 2017; Kipfer & Petrunia, 2009; Urbanik et al., 2017). However, researchers and residents alike have contested this narrative. Martine August (2014), Dwayne Sybbliss (2017), and James K. Ryan (2017) all challenge the assumption that safety was absent in pre-revitalization Regent Park, showing instead that residents maintained informal surveillance networks, often watching children from their balconies or windows or mutual community trust as neighbours looked out for one another. The lack of through-roads meant anyone entering the neighbourhood had to do so on foot, reducing the likelihood of anonymous or drive-by violence. Ironically, the introduction of new roads, promoted as a safety measure, made it easier for outsiders to enter quickly and even led to concerns about increased drive-by shootings (Urbanik et al., 2017). Moreover, the expanded street grid facilitated greater police access, which many residents interpreted not as a safety improvement but as heightened surveillance (James, 2017; Urbanik et al., 2017). As discussed in my findings, interviewees frequently described feeling less safe after redevelopment, not only due to changes in street layout, but because of the erasure of the community's self-regulating care systems.

Conclusion

This literature review has allowed me to critically analyze the formation and transformation of Regent Park through a historical, spatial, and racial lens. My research aims to explore the intentional erasure of Black and racialized communities through the neoliberal practice of gentrification, while also illuminating the cultural wealth, communal ties, and resilience that

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existed, and still exist within Regent Park. Drawing on scholars such as August (2008, 2014, 2019), James (2010, 2017), Purdy (2003), Kipfer and Petrunia (2009), Rosa (2006), Slybliss(2017), Urbanik, and Bucerius (2017), and Thompson et al. (2013), I’ve been able to trace both the ideological roots of “revitalization”. These authors have offered valuable ethnographies, critical spatial analyses, and policy critiques that frame Regent Park not simply as a site of decline or reform, but as a contested space shaped by power, race, and discourse.

At the beginning of this research, I was overwhelmed by the depth of existing literature, but that feeling quickly transformed into gratitude. It affirmed that the beauty of my community had not been erased, but documented and honoured. Through narrative analysis, my project builds on this body of work by centring the voices of displaced Regent Park residents and offering counter-narratives to the deficit-based portrayals that continue to shape policy and public perception. Their stories challenge the logics of social mix, territorial stigmatization, and neoliberal “progress” by revealing what was lost and what was already there.

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CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the design and approach I used to conduct this research. I begin by describing the methodological approach and the theoretical anchors that guide this work. Following this, I detail the research design and data collection process, including participant profiles, recruitment methods, and the semi-structured interviews. I also discuss how data was analyzed, including the tools and strategies for identifying themes and discursive patterns. The chapter closes with a reflection on ethical considerations and my own positionality as a displaced Regent Park community member conducting research within and for my community. I refer to interview participants as community members throughout this section, and especially within the findings section. This choice is intentional and rooted in my ethos as someone grounded in community work. These individuals are not strangers or subjects to be studied, they are people I share genuine connections with. This research is not a solo pursuit, but a collective project.

Methodological Framework

This research employed a qualitative methodology using semi-structured interviews and a narrative inquiry that addressed the critical discourses that could arise. Narrative inquiry allows for the centring of lived experience, particularly for communities who have been historically marginalized, like those from Regent Park. For me, narrative was the most meaningful approach because I am not interested in reproducing harm or using stories to extract trauma. My research aligns with Eve Tuck’s (2009) concept of refusal and her critique of damage-centred research, instead highlighting the cultural knowledge, strength, and resilience within displaced Regent Park residents. As Katherine McKittrick (2021) writes, “Black livingness produces knowledge often disqualified by traditional academic norms.” This research embraces “livingness,”

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understanding Black and racialized narratives as valid forms of theory, evidence, and social critique.

Semi-structured interviews offered a balance between structure and openness, allowing participants to reflect on their experiences of displacement and redevelopment in a conversational and affirming way. This method also created space for unexpected themes to emerge, what Clandinin and Connelly (2000) describe as the unfolding of meaning over time, shaped by memory, location, and relationality.

Discourse analysis supported this work by examining how institutional and everyday language shapes how we understand public housing, poverty, race, and community. Drawing from Foucault (1991), discourse is not just descriptive, but productive: it constructs subjectivities and defines who belongs, who is stigmatized, and who is granted legitimacy in society. Starks and Trinidad (2007) further explain that language is central to how social roles are created and challenged, making it a powerful tool for unpacking the logics embedded in redevelopment narratives.

Theoretical Frameworks

This research is grounded in Critical Race Theory (CRT), post-structuralism, and spatial theory to guide the questions and how the narratives are interpreted. Together, these approaches support a methodological commitment to uncovering how Regent Park displacement, gentrification, and revitalization are structured by race, space, and power.

CRT's emphasis on interest convergence (Bell, 1980) and counter-storytelling (Yosso, 2005) informs this study's goal of centring the lived experiences of displaced residents and challenging dominant narratives that pathologize public housing. Post-structuralism, primarily

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through Foucault’s concepts of discourse, biopolitics, and governmentality, offers a lens to understand how language and power shape whose lives are deemed valuable and whose are made disposable (Foucault, 1991). Sherene Razack’s (2002) spatial analysis further deepens this critique by exposing how Canadian urban space is organized through racial hierarchies. Her work on white settler nation-building helps situate Regent Park’s redevelopment within a broader history of colonial governance and racialized spatial control. Finally, Lefebvre’s (1991) theory of the production of space highlights how urban redevelopment is not just physical, it is political and ideological. This aligns with the project’s aim to read space as contested and socially produced, not neutral or natural. Drawing on these theories, this research understands both storytelling and space-making as political acts that resist erasure and reclaim the right to memory, presence, and belonging.

Research Design & Data Collection

This study employs a qualitative research design grounded in narrative inquiry supported by semi-structured interviews and discourse analysis. Narrative methods are particularly effective when working with communities that have experienced systemic marginalization, as they allow for storytelling that carries meaning, memory, and resistance (Tuck, 2009; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Rather than framing displacement solely as harm, this research centers community knowledge, joy, and resilience echoing Eve Tuck’s (2009) call to move beyond damage-centred narratives.

Four interviews were conducted with racialized former residents of Regent Park: three women and one man, all of whom I shared a prior connection with as a fellow community member. Two community members are Black, one is of Hispanic descent, and one is biracial of Caribbean heritage. Two of the community members were displaced and remain with Toronto

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Community Housing (TCHC), while the other two purchased their own homes outside of Regent Park following redevelopment. Both an interviewee and I, displaced and rehoused within TCHC during revitalization, were moved to Scarborough North, specifically in Malvern and Morningside Heights, which are approximately 35km away from Regent Park. Community members who purchased homes outside TCHC also moved to the Scarborough area. Only one interviewee who was displaced during revitalization moved near Pape and Gerrard, which was about 15-20 minutes from Regent Park. The participants were displaced between 2010 and 2014; one returned to Regent Park in 2019. Community members were selected through purposive and snowball sampling. Eligibility criteria included being 18 years or older, having lived in Regent Park for at least two years, and having experienced the redevelopment period from the 1990s to 2023 a timeframe marked by increasing racialized stigma (August, 2014; James, 2010). Invitations were emailed or shared through community networks, such as referrals. Including participants across different generations added depth to the study, reflecting how the impacts of redevelopment varied across life stages. As one community member noted, “Regent Park has many histories” (Donna, personal communication, November 2024).

Before interviews, I sent community members the questions in advance, offering time to reflect and decide what they wanted to share. While three of the four did not review the questions beforehand, I appreciated their spontaneous and heartfelt responses. One community member reviewed the questions to ensure they didn’t forget anything important, which reflected their passion for sharing the full story of their Regent Park experience. The interviews lasted between 45 to 115 minutes. While I initially planned for 60–75 minutes, I did not enforce a strict time limit. These conversations were moments of connection, not rigid data extraction. As participants shared, many expressed that no one had ever asked for their perspectives. For me, this reinforced

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the importance of creating space for genuine storytelling. Community members often opened up deeply, reflecting on their identities, childhoods, and the emotional weight of leaving Regent Park.

Before beginning the interviews, some community members asked if they needed to “speak professionally” or if they could use slang. I reassured them they could speak however comfortably, as I would handle the transcriptions myself. They were all relieved. This moment felt meaningful; a reminder that knowledge can be produced in any language. That moment reminded me that part of honouring community knowledge is allowing it to show up in its voice. As McKittrick (2021) writes, “Black methodologies imagine research as a practice of relation, where knowledge is co-produced, often outside traditional academic protocols (McKittrick, 2021)

The interviews were conducted over the phone, allowing flexibility and convenience for me and the community members, since we all lived far from one another. Conversations were recorded using my iPhone’s call recording feature and saved in an encrypted, password-protected folder. I used Zoom Office software to play back recordings, and transcriptions were created using Zoom’s live closed-captioning feature. However, I soon realized the transcription quality was poor especially when speech involved accents so I manually edited and corrected the transcriptions.

Interview questions were open-ended and structured around home, identity, relocation, loss, and resilience themes. They invited participants to share lessons, memories, and values that shaped their journeys. In keeping with Tuck’s (2009) desire-based research, these conversations were about more than loss, they revealed visions, hopes, and dignity in the face of structural

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erasure. As Tuck states, “Desire is involved with the not yet and, at times, the not anymore.” (

Tuck, 2009)

Data Coding and Analysis Methods

All interviews were transcribed using Zoom’s auto-captioning feature while playing back the recordings from my phone. However, due to inaccuracies in automated transcription, particularly with slang, each transcript was manually edited while listening closely to the audio and anonymizing data for participants who wish to remain confidential. This careful process deepened my familiarity with the material and allowed me to begin identifying key quotes and emerging patterns. I deeply immersed myself in the stories, remembering exact phrases and interview moments.

For coding and analysis, I primarily used Microsoft Word. As I read the transcripts, I left comments to mark keywords, themes and codes, then transferred these insights into a coding matrix in a separate document. I tried using MAXQDA, but it didn’t align with my workflow.

The analytic process included open coding to surface recurring ideas and experiences and axial coding to draw connections across community members’ stories. A thematic analysis helped identify broader insights around community, displacement, and surveillance. In addition to this, I employed Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA) to examine how language particularly terms like “revitalization,” “safety,” and “social mix” works to naturalize power relations and racialized governance (August, 2014; Foucault, 1991;; James, 2010) while also uncovering counter discourses. Moreover, as a researcher with personal ties to Regent Park, this closeness helped me recognize not just patterns, but meaning.

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This approach builds on the work of August (2014) and Kipfer & Petrunia (2009), who combined interviews with discourse analysis to expose the ideological underpinnings of social mix policies. By integrating narrative and discourse-based methods, my analysis centers community members' voices while critiquing the broader systems that shape urban transformation.

Ethical Considerations

As this research project involves contact with human participants, I completed an Ethics Review Process. This process included providing sample questions, describing participants and their relevance to the study, recruitment methods, consent forms, and other essential requirements. Additionally, a part of the process involved outlining a work plan that specified participants' involvement within each methodology.

The potential for psychological or emotional risks may arise if participants reflect on experiences of displacement and community. To minimize any psychological or emotional risks, participation was entirely voluntary, and participants were informed during the consent process about the possibility of discussing sensitive topics. They could skip any questions, take breaks, or withdraw anytime. If a participant becomes distressed, the session would be paused, and they could decide whether to continue, reschedule, or end the interview. Additionally, participants could request a list of resources and support services at the interview's conclusion. They can review their transcript to ensure they are comfortable with the information shared. These measures aim to provide a respectful and supportive environment while minimizing potential risks.

Participants could choose whether they want their identity to be concealed or disclosed. This option allowed individuals who wish to receive credit for their contributions to do so,

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thereby fostering a sense of agency and empowerment and providing this choice aligned with the research’s goal of promoting community resilience and recognizing the valuable narratives of Regent Park residents. Three out of four participants chose to have their identity disclosed. For the community member who preferred to remain anonymous, strict confidentiality measures were upheld to ensure their privacy by using a pseudonym and careful selection of narratives and experiences shared that would not disclose their identity.

Positionality / Reflexivity

For a while, my connection to this research made me worry that it would introduce bias into how I understood and analyzed the data. However, in a conversation with Dr. O’Connell, I was reminded that this wasn’t a flaw but a strength. This is not just my research; it’s a collaborative knowledge-building process between me and my community. This research is grounded in Black ways of knowing, ways that center storytelling, embodiment, and memory. My experience as a displaced resident of Regent Park offers valuable insight and positionality. This connection allowed community members to contextualize me as a researcher and someone who also shares and understands their story. That connection fostered trust, honesty, and a strong collective integrity throughout the process.

To stay reflexive, I documented my thoughts and feelings in various forms: journal entries, notes on my phone, and scattered reflections in Word documents, especially when engaging with literature or reflecting on interviews. These entries became small but meaningful archives of how I moved through this work emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually.

Participants frequently expressed that they enjoyed the interview and the questions during the interview. They said they had never been asked to reflect on Regent Park in this way and

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fully express themselves. For example, Fatima shared story after story, and before sharing another, she laughed and said, “I’m sorry, but those are excellent questions because I’ve never been asked this. I’ve never actually been able to talk about it, you know? So, I’m like, oh wow... Because I haven’t thought about it. Nobody’s asked me.” (Fatima, personal communication, February 1st, 2025). I was happy to hear that because that was the goal. It was essential to give voice to and hear the analysis of this specific group: displaced residents. People often forget about us.

When Regent Park is studied or spoken about, attention is rarely given to those who had to leave. Yet our memories, relationships, and pain matter just as much. This truth was affirmed when I reached out to Dr. James K. Ryan, whose research on Regent Park had deeply informed the early stages of my project. During our conversation, when I was pondering on using this specific demographic, he reminded me that many researchers tend to hear from the same voices repeatedly the ones still visible in the community. But as a community member myself, I could access a demographic that’s rarely represented: those who were displaced. That conversation reminded me of the power of my perspective and the importance of capturing stories that are at risk of disappearing. Community members felt honoured to be included. I thanked them in return, because this research could not have happened without them. These moments reminded me that even through displacement, Regent Park's collective care and solidarity still live on.

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CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

Through my research, participants demonstrated that their homes and neighbourhoods are more than “having a roof over your head.” Stories, memories, and lessons shared highlight the multifaceted experience of displacement within the city. Displacement is often thought of as something that happens when someone moves to a new country or city, but my data speaks to a different kind of displacement: the one that occurs within your city. While I acknowledge that the redevelopment has brought some significant improvements to living conditions in Regent Park, my findings speak to the experience of being removed from one’s community in Toronto and the range of emotions and impacts that come with it.

This section presents the key themes that emerged from interviews with community members, all of which challenge dominant narratives about Regent Park and reveal a deeper understanding of community life, care, and loss. My findings closely connect with the literature that highlights the communal strength of Regent Park and critiques the neoliberal practices that have reshaped it through gentrification. Participants consistently emphasized the networks of support, shared values, and resilience that shaped their lives. The sense of community that once existed is not simply a nostalgic memory, it is a truth that continues to be felt. Moreover, these examples of collective living offer a fundamental challenge to liberal ideals of individualism, private property, and white Western economic models. The community-based ways of living that flourished in Regent Park posed a threat to capitalist structures that devalue human life and thrive off racial hierarchies. It was not merely the presence of racialized communities that invoked fear, but the strength of their solidarity and self-sufficiency outside dominant systems felt.

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While this research aimed to honour and amplify these stories, it's important to note that not every experience could be fully captured in these pages. Countless layers and perspectives within Regent Park extend beyond the scope of this study, but what is shared here reflects a powerful and necessary slice of that truth.

CHAPTER ONE: THE GOOD TIMES - REGENT PARK PRE-GENTRIFICATION

“My experience in Regent Park was great. I feel like pre revitalization, it really felt like one big community. Although it's a really big neighborhood, everyone just felt like family. You know, everybody, you know your neighbors, you know your neighbors in front of you, your neighbors behind you, to the right, to the left. Like you literally know everyone. It just gives a very cozy feeling. You feel warm. You feel safe. You feel comfortable... it's a good feeling, you know? -Karine

Beauty in Solidarity “Everyone Looked out for Each other”

A central aim of my research is to illuminate the positive experiences and collective strength within Regent Park. While the community has endured trauma, loss, and systemic neglect, it has also cultivated resilience, love, and deep solidarity. Through their memories, community members shared stories reflecting Regent Park's essence. In this place, people showed up for each other in ways that disrupt dominant narratives of isolation and hardship. These stories reveal the power of community care and mutual aid, in direct contrast to neoliberal ideals of individualism.

Misty recalled when she was pregnant with her youngest child, an unexpected pregnancy that left her unprepared. “I didn’t have anything saved,” she explained. “I just told a few people, and then suddenly, people started bringing me baby clothes and stuff. It wasn’t new, but it was good enough to help me get started.” In this moment, the community acted as an informal safety net, an unspoken understanding that others stepped in when one person needed help.

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Karine shared a story that, at first, seemed small but revealed the deep sense of trust within the neighbourhood:

It's crazy that this came to mind so fast, but I remember... In the townhouses, we had these small kitchen backyard windows. If you got locked out, you could usually get back in through that window. And for some reason, I became the person that people would call when they got locked out [laughing], I was small and skinny, so I was always the one squeezing through windows. But that was community. Nobody had to be stranded, and nobody was ever truly locked out. If I couldn't open the door for you, you had someone else's house you could go to. Being outside wasn't an option you always had somewhere to go.

Karine's story is about more than just a childhood hack to get back inside, it speaks to a deep level of trust. The willingness of community members to share this secret reflects a sense of safety rooted not in physical security measures but in relationships, trust, and mutual care.

Karine's experience reveals how relationships of trust, careful communication, and mutual access reconfigured space itself, contesting dominant logics that equate safety with privatization, surveillance, and the exclusion of racialized communities. Karine's story challenges dominant narratives that portray Regent Park as a place defined by isolation and danger. Theoretically, it disrupts traditional boundaries between public and private space: homes were not strictly private, isolated units, but part of an interconnected network of access, communication, and mutual support. This everyday experience reflects a broader theoretical rethinking of space, trust, and security. As Lefebvre (1991) argues, space is socially produced through everyday practices and relations, and Karine's experience demonstrates how collective ways of living can reshape spatial meaning. The story speaks to how the community was built through grand gestures and everyday moments of trust and interdependence.

John reflected on a larger community tradition that encapsulated the pride and unity of Regent Park: "Sunday in the Park." Held in the vast green open spaces in Northside, the event brought the entire community together through shared food, music, and cultural celebrations.

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“We set up tables, bouncy castles, and food starting at 6 AM,” he recalled. “There was so much strength in that unity. You could just see everyone’s uniqueness and greatness in a profound and genuine way.”

Sunday in the Park was a memory I shared as well, one that spoke to the neighbourhood's vibrancy. Fatima also mentioned it, recalling how Sri Lankan community members dressed her mother in a traditional saree for the occasion and how beautiful that made her feel. These moments gathering, celebration, and belonging were integral to the Regent Park experience.

Across all these stories, a common thread emerges: the act of helping one another. Amongst interviews, a common statement was “Everyone looked out for each other”. These stories and previous literature highlighting the Regent Park community reflect a resounding rejection of the neoliberal notion that individuals must fend for themselves (Harvey, 2005; August, 2008). Instead, Regent Park functioned through collective care, where support was freely given, and interdependence was the norm. People were building community and culture on their terms, not from the outside.

The idea that community members are ultimately “strangers” can be understood through a Foucauldian lens. This discourse is shaped by modern urban life, where trust and connection have been eroded by systemic forces that prioritize individualism and self-reliance. Yet, Regent Park resisted this discourse, creating an environment where people weren’t just neighbours but family. These narratives are powerful counterpoints to dominant narratives that depict Regent Park as unsafe, dysfunctional, or broken. Instead, they reveal a community rich in solidarity one that, despite systemic barriers, has always looked out for its own. Thompson et.al (2013) highlight this notion in their research that contrary to the belief that residents in many low-

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income neighbourhoods lack collective efficacy, residents developed powerful bonds and a sense of trust, mutual obligation, reliance on each other and solidarity (p.931). The collective care and solidarity described by community members posed a direct challenge to the values of white liberal individualism, which prioritize self-reliance and privatized success. Rather than merely suffering from stigma, Regent Park faced systematic political efforts to malign and dismantle racialized forms of community life that defied dominant norms.

Community Programs

In late November 2024, I attended a Generational Storytelling event in Regent Park. The gathering brought together residents of all ages to share their experiences of the neighbourhood. One youth's words stood out: they spoke candidly about the lack of programs available today for young people. I was in shock. This comment lingered with me, not because I doubted their experience, but because it stood in such strong contrast to what I and many others had access to growing up in Regent Park. Growing up, a unique strength of Regent Park, particularly noted by the community, was the wide range of free and easily accessible programs. Sports, summer camps, tutoring, after-school care, and arts programming created space for engagement, exploration, and community building. Many families did not need to navigate complex systems or extensive paperwork to get their children involved; community trust and word of mouth were often enough to ensure inclusion.

Karine recalled how programs were so embedded in the neighbourhood's social fabric that parental involvement wasn't always needed for registration:

I know that at one point I was doing like Gymnastics, I did summer camps with them, and the funny thing about it is that nobody ever signed me up, you know? [laughs] I never had a parent go into the community centre and register me. My neighbor was in it, and naturally, I ended up doing it too. It was one big family, they picked her up at 6:00 pm, and I went too. It was little things like that I really valued and that I appreciated.

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This narrative reflects a deep sense of communal caregiving that resonates with the concept of “social cohesion” a term used to describe community participation, mutual trust and supportive social ties between residents (Thompson, et al. 2013) In Regent Park, neighbours looked after each other's children, information flowed freely, and trust was high. Today, gaining access to similar programs often involves navigating online systems, having digital literacy, or providing extensive documentation, barriers that disproportionately impact low-income or newcomer families (Eubanks, 2017). The digitalization of access has created a new form of exclusion.

This shift is not only technological but also ideological. Under neoliberal governance, social services have increasingly been framed as individual responsibilities rather than collective rights (Harvey, 2005). The erosion of easily accessible free programs for low-income communities that now have user fees reflects broader systemic withdrawal from public investment in communal well-being. Moreover, social cohesion and collective efficiency promote residents’ willingness to intervene on behalf of ‘the common good’, by monitoring youth behaviour and discouraging them from engaging in crime. They are often sanctioned informally (Thompson et. al, 2013).

These programs were not just recreational they were formative. Fatima shared how joining a free soccer program that a community member led instilled discipline and eventually led to coaching opportunities, scholarships, and even meeting her life partner. She spoke to the fact that her coach held these sessions out of the goodness of his heart, a common practice among many experiences of Regent Parkers. She also noted that access to affordable music lessons allowed her and her siblings to develop creative passions that otherwise would have been financially inaccessible.

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Figure 2. This 2009 image of North Regent Park highlights the once-abundant green spaces that community members cherished for play, gatherings, and informal programs like Fatima’s soccer sessions. Initially praised by 1940s planners for supporting strong families (James, 2010), these areas were later framed as sites of crime and isolation. Yet, interviews reveal they remained vital spaces of connection, care, and recreation. Much of this green space has since been replaced by a single, centralized park, limiting everyday localized interactions. As Lefebvre (1991) reminds us, space is socially produced. Regent Park’s green areas were redefined as risky once associated with racialized, low-income residents, exposing broader patterns of spatial and racial control.

Similarly, another community member, John, highlighted how the Breakfast Club at St. Paul’s Catholic Elementary School not only ensured children started their day with a full meal but also saved parents money and provided a safe, joyful space: “You could eat as much as you wanted: pancakes, cereal, fruits, juice. The staff were always happy... It saved money for our parents and made us feel welcome.”

This aligns with the notion that basic needs provision is foundational to social inclusion and educational success, particularly in racialized, low-income communities (hooks, 2003). For

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many families, programs like these replaced the need for formal daycare, supported early learning, and allowed parents to work without the added burden of childcare costs.

Through these accounts, it becomes clear that accessible, community-rooted programs in Regent Park fostered engagement and learning and a sense of dignity and belonging. Similar to the findings in Martine August’s study, respondents frequently mentioned the presence of agencies and services as key benefits. Her participant, Aziza, stated: “This neighbourhood is good ... my kids go to free classes and use [five different local agencies] there are a lot of opportunities here in RP.” (August, 2014). Today, the absence of such support due to funding cuts and privatization reflects a troubling shift. As Misty put it: “With all the drop-ins and school readiness programs, my kids were ready for kindergarten... and they never went to daycare.”

In Regent Park, organizations like the Salvation Army, K-Club, Dixion Hall and Pathways to Education played essential roles. Pathways, ⁴in particular, provided educational support, free tutoring, and TTC tickets to and from school providing tangible interventions that helped youth persist through high school and post-secondary education. We see that the erosion of free, accessible community programming reveals the broader political agenda of redevelopment: one that masks dispossession under the rhetoric of revitalization (August, 2014, Ryan, 2012). Regent Park demonstrates that investment in community-rooted supports can yield profound, intergenerational benefits but when market logics and austerity replace those investments, the most vulnerable are left behind and the very issues such as crime and violence

⁴ Around 2010, Regent Park had approximately 900 youth in the community, the majority of which actively participate in the programme. According to Pathways to Education, over 90 per cent of the youth population residing in Regent Park goes

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are not solved but often heightened due to the lack of collective efficiency (Thompson et.al, 2013; Urbanik et.al, 2017).

Guidance

Empirical research from Thompson et.al (2013) highlights that many young adults of Regent Park found that the social networks and the tight-knit nature of the community discouraged gang involvement and drug-related activities. The high levels of mutual trust and the willingness of residents to intervene on behalf of the common good served many benefits to the youth in the community. John reflects on this experience as he emphasized how mentorship from older youth steered him and his siblings away from negative influences: “The opportunity to fall into the streets was there, but the ‘older heads’ wouldn’t let us. They knew we were athletes and made sure we stayed on track.”

These community protections challenge mainstream depictions of Regent Park as inherently dangerous. Instead, they speak to a deeply organized and moral community that protected its youth, despite limited material resources. This is similar to the account Dwayne (2017) emphasizes the redirection and guidance he received from a family friend and mentor in the community such as Jermaine aka G-Man. Although G-Man was involved in the street lifestyle, he has always encouraged Dwayne to focus on education (Sylbliss, 2017).

CHAPTER 2: CHALLENGES FACED DUE TO REDEVELOPMENT AND DISPLACEMENT

The first of five phases of Regent Park’s redevelopment began in 2005, when 1,160 residents, representing 381 households, were relocated from their condemned buildings into temporary housing units. Of those displaced, 40% were moved to other Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) units within Regent Park, 56% were relocated to TCHC units in

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different parts of the city, and the remainder exited the TCHC system entirely (James, 2017).

Phase 1 (2005–2010) saw the relocation of around 500 households and the construction of new RGI and market units near Dundas and Parliament, while Phase 2 (2010–2017) relocated about 600 more households, expanding redevelopment westward and introducing more condo units and commercial services (Toronto Community Housing, n.d.).

Community members who were interviewed, including me, had been a part of Phase 2 of Regent Park Revitalization. When asked how they felt about the displacement, Misty stated she was “Heartbroken”, and Fatima said, “It was the worst day of my life”. Through these interviews, I learned a lot about everyone’s individual experience, many noted the financial constraints that came with revitalization, the lack of control tenants felt and the relocation details. Data demonstrated this was the first time for many experiencing guilt and grief from displacement.

Displacement Process

“Especially for my kids you know I thought I could put down roots there, I don't know why I didn't realize it was actually happening until it actually happened to my family as well.”- Misty.

Community members described the broader structure of the relocation process, which often began with town halls hosted in various settings, including churches, TCHC revitalization offices, and schools where leaseholders and their families were given information about upcoming relocation units. At these meetings, tenants were assigned a number, and a lottery-style system was used to determine when they could select from a list of housing options to move to during redevelopment temporarily. These forms included addresses and unit types, many of which were located far from Regent Park and sometimes in areas that felt unsafe, isolating, or unsuitable for families. For example, as previously mentioned, my family had to

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select a Scarborough North home to accommodate our needs. Although we did not want to move as far East, the options for homes nearby were not suitable for our large families. Redevelopment projects were expected to take about five years or so. However, all phases were delayed by either two years or more.

Though each displaced household was promised a Right to return, this became controversial. Some tenants were moved into new mixed-income buildings outside Regent Park, which were later counted as their “return,” despite many not realizing this until years later (Kelly, 2012, as cited in James, 2017).

John and Misty spoke directly about this stage of the process. John reflected on the pressure to accept an option in Scarborough, stating: “We’re not going to look even to entertain the idea of going all the way to Scarborough because the moment we do that, we’re not coming back here.” This refusal to leave the area is more than just a practical decision it was a form of quiet resistance. John recognizes that moving too far is not temporary; it’s a permanent practice to be removed from the space they belong to.

All participants agreed that the options offered failed to meet their family needs. Misty reflected on how disempowering and dismissive the process felt:

I was under the impression we had more control over where we could move to. I didn't feel that we did. I don't think what we wanted was heard, like our needs and wants weren't heard. And we should just be happy they're giving us new apartments. Like they didn't understand how heartbroken we were... You know? Just go live somewhere. You should be happy you have a new place to live. And it's just like... well, that's not it.

Misty’s account reflects a common experience among marginalized communities: being expected to accept displacement without protest, as though access to housing alone should outweigh emotional, cultural, and familial ties. Under neoliberal capitalism, those who are

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considered economically “unproductive” are positioned as undeserving of autonomy or preference. (Harvey, 2005)

Through a Foucauldian lens, we see how control is masked as choice. Misty’s lack of agency in deciding where she and her family would live mirrors Foucault’s (1991) concept of governmentality, where systems of governance function not through overt force, but through subtle mechanisms of compliance and internalized gratitude. Her experience reveals a deeper power dynamic: one where the emotional trauma of being uprooted is rendered invisible, and where the ability to choose is only reserved for those deemed deserving. In this case, choice and even grief become political.

Financial Constraints

All community members acknowledged the financial pressures they experienced throughout the displacement process. Many families were forced to make major financial decisions in a short period of time, some even decided to move out of TCHC entirely and purchase their own homes. Ultimately, this was a beautiful gain for my community members. Through their stories, they acknowledged the emotional and financial toll of this shift.

Karine spoke about attending numerous town halls with her parents and visiting the proposed housing options. Her family ultimately decided to leave TCHC and buy a home of their own. For them, the decision was based on space, family size, and the environment they wanted for their children. Fatima’s family made a similar decision, describing it as a beautiful and courageous step, but one that came with a high degree of stress. Both participants emphasized how quickly they had to plan, save, and transition, often within two years or less.

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One aspect of the process that deeply affected families was the emotional attachment to their possessions. In working-class and low-income households, where resources are scarce, belongings often carry significant sentimental and symbolic value. Items are passed down, saved, and protected, not just because they are helpful, but because they represent stability, care, and survival. Fatima described this clearly: “Yeah, it's very valuable and it's not like we can easily replace these things. Or we worked really hard to get [them⁵].”

There is something symbolic here. Although no one physically discarded residents' possessions, the limited space and rushed timelines acted as a form of control over what people could keep or were expected to let go of. This reminds me of the displacement of Africville residents, whose belongings were thrown into garbage trucks during forced evictions (Rosa, 2006). While Regent Park was not as visibly violent, there is symbolic significance: a disregard for people's attachments, memories, and material ties to place. My family holds onto many possessions, hoping to one day return them to our relatives in Ghana. Often viewed as hoarding. These items carry *meaning*. They represent care, future planning, and cultural preservation.

Sacrifices Without Choice: The Silent Toll on Children

In addition to the structural pressures of displacement, community members also spoke to the personal sacrifices their families had to make to meet the financial demands of revitalization. For some, leaving TCHC and purchasing a home required parents to take on additional work hours, side jobs, or second shifts all under urgent timelines. As Karine explained, this acceleration of

⁵ In my own work as a tenant worker, I witnessed this concern often. During relocations, many families would express anxiety about whether they would have space for their belongings. Even though some appreciated the opportunity to declutter, others felt that the process took away their right to hold on to what mattered.

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financial planning had lasting effects not only on the adults in the household but also on the children:

A lot of parents had to work extra hours. A lot of parents had to work double jobs and things like that. Who gets affected? The kids. That's why my whole childhood, I'm saying all I did was be outside, outside, outside. Because my folks were at work, at work, at work... We needed to save up to get that house ASAP by the following year.

She continues by highlighting the emotional cost of this change:

So now as a result, who also takes the loss? Me, when my parents can't come to my school event. Or when my parent isn't there to help with homework. Then I'm starting to feel that grief and that affects me later on in life, you know?

Karine's reflections demonstrate how displacement and financial pressure reverberate far beyond moving boxes and leases it interrupted care. For many families, there wasn't a real choice. The alternative wasn't stability; it was “another equally poor or lesser option,” as Karine puts it.

These weren't moments of freedom, but sacrifices made under pressure.

A lot of these people, they're dreamers. That's how they ended up here. They still want something better for themselves. But now they're being forced to accelerate those dreams and that has a cost.

As Karine and I spoke, we unpacked the often-overlooked emotional fallout: increased stress, lack of parental presence, and the mental health toll on children and youth who were left to navigate their grief on their own. Karine emphasized how these gaps show up later in life, as unacknowledged trauma, lost support, and mental health struggles that may go undetected.

In our exchange, I remember feeling how much of this is never accounted for in revitalization plans. Policy talks about financial “opportunity,” but never about what's lost in the rush to “succeed.” And as Karine said, many families did push through. They found a way to

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swim instead of sink. That resilience is rarely recognized. “Kudos to y’all... If you want to call it that, you went from nothing to something. That takes strength.” Karine finishes off.

Disruption of Vital Networks of Solidarity and Care

“A lot was changed and lost. There was a lot that we lost, and we didn't get that back. Anything that we worked together and built together was loss”- Fatima

Community members experienced numerous feelings toward the displacement process, which led to different emotions. The forced displacement disrupted longstanding social ties, causing grief, loss of identity, and even fatal consequences. Most participants said that although the new spaces they moved to were lovely and delicate, they were nothing compared to their experiences in Regent Park. Razack argues that racialized people are often pushed out of spaces where they have built histories and communities (Razack, 2002). Regent Park was not just a neighbourhood but a space of belonging, resistance, and shared cultural identity.

Grief and Human Cost

A research gap I noticed and an experience that I never really knew how to explain was validated and discussed by other displaced community members, which was the guilt, grief and death that came from this process. The emotional toll of the deep grief, disconnection, and unresolved trauma that follow individuals long after they leave their communities is often left out of redevelopment conversations. Several participants described how the loss of proximity to support networks left them alone to process overwhelming experiences of death and mental health struggles.

Displacement within Regent Park from Phase 1(2005-2011) had a significant and lasting impact on many individuals. As families were relocated, the process disrupted and dismantled

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care networks, emotional supports, and the familiar presence of neighbours and extended community. For lone mothers, seniors, and those who relied on nearby caregivers, this transition meant more than just change; it meant loss.

In almost every conversation about displacement, "isolation" comes up. It wasn't just about moving to a new place; it was about losing the web of relationships that made survival and healing possible. While isolation was used as a rationale to facilitate gentrification, it was the gentrification that led to it—in one deeply emotional account shared during this research, displacement and the loneliness that followed contributed to the emotional decline and eventual passing of a community member. The anxiety and sadness that came with disconnection were new, overwhelming, and for some, impossible to carry alone. When this moment was shared, I thought about it after the interview for some time. If Regent Park had been truly supported, not stigmatized and not neglected, would this have happened? Perhaps the scale of this displacement would not have been so vast or harmful. However, decades of disinvestment and structural abandonment, the so-called “revitalization” left many to navigate their lives alone. And that loneliness, in some cases, costs people everything.

Karine shared a story about losing a childhood friend shortly after being displaced. The pain of the loss was intensified by the fact that she was no longer in Regent Park, surrounded by the people who would have helped her process it, who would have understood it. As Karine described, this led to feelings of guilt and emotional isolation: “I carried that guilt for a long time... I said, ‘If I were there, what if we had been together that day?’ I blamed myself for that. And then I went to the funeral alone. I hadn’t seen a lot of people since I moved. It wasn’t the place to reconnect. It just felt awkward... and heavy.”

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Her words reflect a grief about the loss of life and the loss of a shared space to hold that grief. As Karine explained, she didn't have access to the people who might have helped her reframe her pain or simply reminded her it wasn't her fault. This absence of communal grounding created a prolonged emotional burden that lingered for years. Fatima shared: “I think I was learning what grief was because I was constantly sad over it, and I was missing something. I felt like I lost a piece of my identity because I took so much pride from being there.”

These emotional fractures aren't isolated incidents. They point to the ongoing nature of displacement as trauma. When people are forcibly removed from environments where their memories, connections, and support systems are rooted, the impact is not momentary. It continues to shape how they carry grief, relate to others, and process major life events. Harjeet Badwall (2015) builds on Judith Butler's (2004) concept of grievability ;the idea that some lives are seen as worth mourning, while others are not. Badwall reminds us that discourse shapes which lives are seen as worthy of care, and which are left to grieve alone. The isolation in Regent Park was not random; it was produced through decades of discourse that framed residents as disposable, poor, and unworthy of full mourning.

CHAPTER 3: CHANGES IN COMMUNITY DYNAMICS POST-REDEVELOPMENT

Right to Return?

One of the central promises of Toronto Community Housing Corporation's (TCHC) revitalization plan for Regent Park was the “Right to Return” policy. Their website states, “Tenants who are moved due to revitalization have the right to return to a new unit in a revitalized community, subject to eligibility rules in the Relocation Agreement they signed with Toronto Community Housing” (TCHC, 2013). This policy was presented as a safeguard to ensure that revitalization would not become a form of mass displacement. However, the reality

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for many former Regent Park residents reveals that this right was not universally accessible, desirable, or meaningful.

Participants shared that even when the opportunity to return was technically offered, it did not reflect the kind of home or community they had once known. Misty, for instance, declined the offer to return: “Well, because I’m not going to get a backyard and now, I have a driveway and a garage.” Her response highlights a broader concern: Regent Park was no longer built with families in mind. Homes that once fostered intergenerational life and proximity to neighbours were replaced with compact units, no backyards, and less social space.

John, the only participant in this study who returned to live in Regent Park, echoed frustrations about the failure of the “Right to Return” policy to deliver on its promise: “They should have followed through on returning the original people... The project was \$1 billion, but they should’ve had quality materials, parking, and proper design. Quality apartments. Not weak drywall and wallpaper.”

This disruption of the physical and social fabric speaks to a broader pattern. As Purdy (2003) documents, the original Regent Park was primarily home to families of four, six, even eight members. The new iteration of Regent Park, shaped through New Urbanist design and neoliberal redevelopment priorities, seems not to have been built with these demographics in mind.

Fatima spoke of the discomfort of existing in a community that no longer reflects its original spirit: “They didn’t come up the same way as us. So, it’s uncomfortable. Before, we all had a certain understanding that sense of community. Now, it’s just gone.” August (2014) documented similar sentiments in her study, where tenants “felt a sense of unity from ‘being in

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the same boat’, which helped them cope with external stigma and prejudice” (p. 1320). The community’s informal networks of support were a response to structural neglect, and they were disrupted when the neighbourhood was redesigned to serve a different class of residents.

Fatima concluded:

Even just visiting now, when I go see my grandma it feels more isolated. You don’t see those same faces. You don’t see big groups of people in the backyard, listening to reggae, having a drink. There’s no room for that. You just don’t see that anymore.”

The physical design of the new community may be sleek and modern, but it has come at the cost of social cohesion. The “Right to Return” may have been written into policy, but the experience is different as community members share.

The Fallacy of Social Mix

Supporters of social mix policies often argue that placing low-income residents alongside wealthier individuals will create access to new social and economic opportunities, such as improved job networks and serve as “role models” to aspirational behaviours (August, 2014). However, this assumption has been critiqued by scholars who suggest that such initiatives, while framed as inclusive, often facilitate gentrification in subtle ways. Bridge, Butler, and Lees (2012) refer to this process as “gentrification by stealth,” while Slater (2006) argues that the language used in these policies is often carefully crafted to obscure their more profound implications (p.1318 as cited in August, 2014). August (2014) similarly notes that redevelopment discourse tends to conceal the real intentions behind urban transformation. Although previous research has indicated that redevelopment projects can sometimes result in improvements in infrastructure, safety, and economic growth (August, 2014), the broader empirical record remains mixed. While anticipated benefits such as increased income, employment, social mobility, and health outcomes

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have not been entirely met (August, 2008, 2016), my data from community members suggests a different set of outcomes altogether. Rather than delivering on promises of socioeconomic uplift, the redevelopment appears to have led to heightened surveillance, the emergence of new and unrepresentative forms of community leadership, social division, and failed promises. These outcomes complicate the dominant narrative of revitalization and point to more profound contradictions embedded within the logic of social mix.

Surveillance

During my interviews, a community spoke about their experience returning to Regent Park. During revitalization consultations and preparations, residents were promised that they would exclusively have the “right to return,” but community members did not feel that this promise to return could be contested. One community member described a troubling barrier upon attempting to return to Regent Park: a new rule under Ontario's Housing Services Act (367/11), introduced under Premier Doug Ford's government in 2019 (Government of Ontario, Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, 2019). The regulation allows landlords and social housing agencies to reject or evict tenants based on criminal charges within the last two years, not even convictions, and impose a five-year ban from reapplying. This impacts the individual with the charge and the entire household (TVO, 2021). The community member shared during the interview:

...moving back was a whole [pause] [sigh] that was a whole ball game as well too they're like, oh, yeah, if you guys come back. Nobody could have criminal records...that's what gentrification was like, it was really severe like that... They could promise you, oh, you will come back. But the moment they realize, oh no you're not quote unquote safe for this area they were able to reject you.

Before this interview, I was not aware of this policy. But the participant's words stuck with me, especially the framing: “gentrification was severe like that.” It highlights how state regulation

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creeps into people’s homes and identities, and community members acknowledging their positionality in the community can be contested. Who gets to return? Who is deemed “safe”? Safe for whom? The “right to return” becomes conditional, framed by dominant discourses of safety, risk, and criminality. This moment illustrates Foucault’s concept of the panopticon: residents are not only watched but governed through internalized fears of rejection and exclusion (Foucault, 1977). The surveillance is not just physical, it is moral, spatial, and deeply racialized. Policies like Regulation 367/11 extend the criminal justice system’s reach into housing, assigning criminalized individuals a fixed identity that renders them ineligible for return. In this way, housing becomes a disciplinary mechanism that pathologizes and punishes marginalized bodies under the guise of safety and revitalization.

The implementation of this new added a new layer of surveillance and exclusion, especially troubling for a community where family and kin networks may include individuals with past or pending criminal involvement. It effectively reshaped who was deemed “deserving” to return.

This policy highlights how the promise of a “right to return” for original Regent Park residents became conditional, shaped by the new image of the community being constructed through revitalization. Foucault’s concept of biopolitics is foundational here, as it reveals how the state exercises power by regulating life itself, determining which bodies are supported, excluded, or rendered disposable (Foucault, 1991). These acts of surveillance and filtering are not neutral; they are deeply racialized and disproportionately impact marginalized communities, particularly those already subject to criminalization and social control.

Safety, safety, safety, a hot topic for Regent Park and mixed-income discourse. Safety has functioned as a political tool, used as a driving narrative to justify revitalization. Framed as

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the solution to significantly reduce the issues of gun violence and such in the community. This narrative of change and safety was crucial in reassuring the new middle-class citizens being brought into the community. This would include increased surveillance and pathologizing of original residents. John recalls this encounter upon his return to Regent Park after Phase 2. He states:

Actually, you live in the community it's still grim. Still sometimes sketchy stuff. Like, you know, the crime hasn't deescalated. These guys, when we moved in, they emphasized it to us like crazy... 'We want to emphasize there are over 147 cameras.' They were telling us, so basically you guys know hey, [they're] watching us every single time. Every single day. Every single night.

John recalled how the TCHC superintendent emphasized the presence of these cameras, not once, but repeatedly. On one hand, this might be framed as reassurance, particularly for newer residents unfamiliar with the community. But for long-time Regent Parkers, especially racialized ones this surveillance signals something else entirely: control, monitoring, and a shift from communal care to carceral oversight (Foucault 1991, Lindsay, 1994).

As John noted, “Why are you even emphasizing this to me? What are you trying to convey?”

The question is piercing. In asking it, John exposes how his identity is already being criminalized. He understands that the surveillance isn't neutral but instead targeted. This can create an emotional and psychological toll of surveillance for these individuals. John describes how residents are subjected to subtle provocations such as “sly quotes” and “subliminal things” as part of an ongoing effort to ignite reactions, then use them to justify exclusion. This is surveillance not as safety, but as strategy and biopolitical tool to manage who belongs and who must be watched. As John and Foucault (1991) teach us, such power operates through overt force

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and normalization: embedding expectations into everyday life until they appear natural, even necessary.

New Face of the Community

Fatima spoke clearly about the discomfort she felt with the redevelopment of Regent Park, noting:

It feels uncomfortable because now you're exposed to these changes happening right in your community. It felt like the redevelopment was really for the higher-income residents and not for the original people. Sure, they improved a park or two, or built an aquatic center, but it's not exclusively for us anyway. So I don't think it was even meant for us—it was just a bonus we get to reap if we even still live here.

Later, she added, “It’s not like they came to our community to be part of it.” Fatima’s observations capture a crucial dynamic of exclusion that emerges from redevelopment: original residents sense they are tolerated rather than genuinely included. Despite sharing physical spaces, there's little meaningful interaction or belonging between original residents and newcomers, highlighting a clear social divide.

John further illustrated this power imbalance, observing how the voices of original residents gradually disappeared in key community decisions. He recalled attending town halls intended for planning subsequent redevelopment phases, noting the striking absence of long-term Regent Parkers: “It was mostly the new people, not those of us who grew up here. They're the ones making decisions now, so whose community is it really?”

Fatima and John’s observations highlight the subtle yet clear forms of exclusion that original residents face. Although social mix promises inclusion, these lived experiences suggest that redevelopment projects prioritize the interests of new, wealthier residents. This aligns directly with earlier discussions of interest convergence and financialization (August 2014; Bell,

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1980; Lewis, 2022), reinforcing that social mixing is the only way racialized spaces are improved to standard and redevelopment policies primarily serve market interests rather than meaningfully addressing structural inequalities.

These accounts illustrate previous literature highlighting how the language of social mix disguises deeper patterns of exclusion and displacement (August, 2014; Kipfer & Petrunia, 2009;). Rather than bridging gaps, redevelopment entrenched invisible divides, leaving longtime residents alienated in their homes.

“It didn’t necessarily change my poverty”

In discussing the presence of new community members, John provides an insightful critique of social mix, highlighting how its assumptions fail to reflect the lived realities and experiences of original Regent Park residents. He states:

They're trying to really enforce this idea, 'Oh, we're going to have mixed income so when you see people that are, quote-unquote, wealthy, it motivates you guys to network and be better with your finances, so that you can see it's possible to be at the level they're at.' This was wrong to the fullest extent, because a lot of these new members that are, quote-unquote, wealthier either benefit from nepotism or generational wealth. They didn't need to work like us; their money came from family, it was passed down. They had that generational wealth locked in, so they could come here just for leisure purposes.

John’s reflection highlights a fundamental flaw within social mix policies: the idea that merely placing people of different socioeconomic statuses together will somehow create upward social mobility or positive change (August, 2008, 2014; Dunn & Ryan, 2012; Holmes, 2022). He recognizes how unrealistic and even harmful it is to assume that original Regent Park residents can easily adopt or replicate the economic successes of new, wealthier neighbours. Social mix ignores systemic barriers like racism, discrimination, and poverty, suggesting instead that proximity alone is enough to overcome structural inequality.

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Historically, Regent Park has housed primarily low-income, working-class families, lone mothers, and immigrants who faced severe discrimination in Toronto’s housing market (Purdy, 2003). These families formed strong communal networks precisely because their experiences of economic hardship and racial discrimination were collectively understood. John emphasizes the disconnect between the realities of Regent Park residents and the leisure-based entry of wealthier newcomers. Unlike the new residents who moved into the community by choice, original Regent Parkers had no option but public housing due to systemic exclusion (Purdy, 2003).

This contrast highlights a crucial flaw in the notion of social mix: meaningful interactions and mutual benefits cannot occur simply by proximity. The idea of residents aspiring to emulate those who have not faced similar barriers is unrealistic and dismissive of structural inequalities. My own experience as a Black woman further reinforces John's point: my lived realities, shaped by systemic racism and discrimination, will always differ fundamentally from those of a white woman, even if we share the same physical space.

John further emphasizes this point by highlighting the demographic shift during the early phases of redevelopment, noting that new community members frequently consisted of singles or couples with pets, rather than larger families like those historically characteristic of Regent Park:

The thing that's so interesting about that as well too, is they're not even bringing in like families to showcase what a what a middle-class family look like. They're bringing middle class individuals for the most part, you will see couples you wouldn't even see, like a whole family of 6 or more, like what the community of Regent Park would convey

This mismatch reveals how flawed the social mix narrative truly is. Families like John’s had to balance significant economic responsibilities such as; feeding multiple children, supporting extracurricular activities, and navigating daily life with limited resources. These realities starkly

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contrasted with the lighter financial burdens of their new neighbours, whose disposable income allowed for leisure rather than survival. More than just a misguided planning strategy, social mix functions as a racialized mechanism of control. Beneath its surface lies a logic of contagion: racialized spaces are imagined as threats to the social body and spaces that must be altered, disciplined, improved, or removed to protect a dominant vision of urban order. In this framing, space and subject become intervention targets, based on the underlying fear that something undesirable might "rub off" on incoming middle-class residents. This logic reinforces whiteness as the norm and justifies the regulation or removal of racialized people under the guise of progress (Foucault, 1991; Razack, 2002).

Ultimately, Fatima's reflections capture the emptiness of social mix promises: "It didn't necessarily change my poverty." A powerful statement expressed in different ways by many community members. For instance, a prominent advocate and community member of Regent Park, Miguel states "We are still living in poverty, living in poverty, it's like you become institutionalized" (Toronto Ward Museum, 2020, "Another Report, Another Study, Another Waste of Money'') demonstrating an apparent disconnect between policy assumptions and lived reality, rather than addressing the real roots of poverty and racial inequality.

Neoliberal Bait: Greatness Comes from Here

The title of this section, "Neoliberal Bait: Greatness Comes from Here," plays on the way neoliberal narratives rely on individual success stories, especially when they come from racialized or low-income communities. These stories are often used to justify systems of inequality, suggesting that if one person can "make it out," then the system is fair. This section offers what neoliberalism looks for success, but not on its terms. The brilliance and

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achievement of Regent Park were not born from personal merit alone, but from deep community ties, collective support, and shared struggle. This challenges white liberal assumptions that greatness cannot come from places like Regent Park, and it rejects the idea that success must be framed as individual exceptionalism. Instead, it insists that the community itself has always been capable of producing greatness, not as a fluke, but as a pattern that was simply ignored, disinvested in, or erased.

While working at Service Canada in 2021, I talked with a colleague who has stayed with me ever since. He came in one morning talking about a recent shooting, and in frustration, began referring to the perpetrators as “these hooligans from these areas.” I calmly responded with some structural inequality insight and said, “You know I’m from Regent Park, right?” His face changed. Genuinely surprised, he stated: “Really? Well... you’re just one in a million.” That statement cut deep. It wasn’t meant to be malicious, but it illustrated a larger message I have heard in many spaces before; the idea that people from communities like mine are not expected to thrive, and if we do, it’s seen as an anomaly. But the truth is, I am not one in a million. I am one of many. Regent Park was always filled with brilliance, resilience, talent, and hope. What we lacked wasn’t potential, it was investment.

This sentiment was shared by several participants in my study. Karine captured it perfectly when she said the community was “already 75% there.” She spoke to the cultural richness, youth engagement, and strong social networks that existed before revitalization networks that could push the community forward if they had been met with proper support. But instead of building on that foundation, governments and developers introduced a model rooted in social mix and market logic. Rather than providing improved infrastructure to the people who

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had held up the community for decades, they created something new, not for the residents who had endured the hardship, but for those deemed more desirable.

What Karine and community members described was not a denial of the fact that Regent Park needed new housing; everyone agreed the old units were deteriorating significantly. But they were denied a chance to grow within their own environment. The homes were fixed, yes, but not for them. Despite the community's long-standing potential, the deficiency narrative was used to justify displacement. Even through decades of deliberate neglect, Regent Park produced countless success stories: artists like Mustafa and Smoke Dawg, athletes like Jahkeele Marshall, students who earned scholarships to private school De La Salle, community organizers, and graduates — including myself — who pursued higher education and returned to serve our communities. These are not exceptions. They are testaments to what was already possible. Fatima always told customers where she was from as a small act of resistance to the dominant narrative. She states: “When I worked in the affluent Summerhill area. I was not ashamed to tell people I’m from Regent. I want them to know you’re being helped by someone who grew up there.” Fatima’s act of resistance also comes from a place of pride— pride grounded in lived knowledge of the community’s power, resilience and legacy.

CHAPTER 5: IF YOU COULD SHARE ONE MESSAGE ABOUT REGENT PARK WITH POLICYMAKERS, RESEARCHERS AND THE PUBLIC, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

The entire findings section is meant to be read by policymakers and the public, those who are often responsible for shaping the future of communities like Regent Park. At the end of each interview, I asked community members. What would it be like if you could share one message

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about Regent Park with policymakers, researchers, and the public? Community members did not hesitate. They spoke about survival, joy, struggle, care, and pride:

Yeah. It was a really good place. Regent Park lost their heart and soul when demolished. I don't know. I've always felt safe there. I never felt threatened. I never felt unsafe. - *Misty*

Y'all destroyed us — ruined a sense of community... I've lived a few places now and I've never found that sense of community anywhere. Despite the violence that was occurring, that wasn't how everyone was... you can go anywhere in Toronto and come across the same things.- *Fatima*

It's corny to say. It runs through our veins, but, like, it feels like that. Like we're really embedded in something, you know? And so it wasn't just a house that I lived in, like, I'm really a part of something, and something is now a part of me. - *Karine*

These reflections challenge the dominant narrative that public housing limits people. Participants described carrying Regent Park with them, not as shame but as power. This is the subjectivity policymakers rarely account for, the deep-rootedness of belonging that can't be measured in property value. Regent Park, as participants described it, was full of cultural richness, mutual aid, and resilience, items that do not show up on a balance sheet but make a neighborhood thrive.

The stories shared throughout this chapter offer a rich, complex, and deeply personal view of Regent Park, not just as a redevelopment site, but as a home. Through these reflections, it becomes clear that gentrification in Regent Park was not just about buildings, but about bodies, belonging, and whose experiences are valued. Community members described resilience, loss, displacement, and pride, revealing the contradictions of “revitalization” and the violence of being made to feel replaceable in one's neighbourhood. These findings show systemic power operates through policy, space, and discourse. Through these findings, I argue that many of the narratives used to justify the need for redevelopment, such as isolation, safety and stigma, were

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exaggerated and created through this project. Community members’ stories share the realities
and experiences of gentrification and displacement in Toronto.

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CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Throughout this research, I reflected on how these processes are not theoretical for me they are lived. I remember the words in a Jane and Finch community video: "We won't let them do us like they did Regent Park." That moment hurt. It reminded me of how unaware I was at the time of the slow erasure of my community not through one event, but through many small policies, omissions, and decisions. Yet now, as a Black woman from Southside Regent Park completing her Master's research on this issue, I reclaim the narrative now. This work is for my community, a refusal to let our stories be buried under the weight of policy reports, gentrification blueprints, or media headlines.

This research began with the desire to complicate the dominant narratives surrounding Regent Park's revitalization. It set out to answer the question: How is gentrification used as a neoliberal tool to dismantle racialized communities? Through interviews with displaced community members and critical engagement with theories of neoliberalism, racialized space, and post-structural thought, this study examined how Regent Park residents have navigated, resisted, and made meaning of the changes imposed on their lives.

What emerged was not simply a story of loss, but of misrecognition. Community members spoke to a past filled with care, solidarity, creativity, and resilience, rarely captured in public discourse or planning documents. The promise of "revitalization" masked a deeper project: regulating space and subject, redefining who belonged and who did not (Razack, 2002). Policies like the Right to Return and regulations around criminal records served as subtle tools of exclusion, often dressed in the language of safety or improvement. Social mix, as this paper has argued, is not a neutral policy; it is deeply racialized, functioning as a form of spatial discipline

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that targets racialized communities under the guise of inclusion (August, 2014, 2018; Holmes, 2022; James, 2017). Although revitalization was presented as a solution to poverty, crime, and spatial stigma—it intensified the very issues it claimed to solve in new and less visible ways.

Colonialism, racial exclusion, and systemic oppression are embedded in Canada’s urban and political landscapes, shaping policies that continue to govern racialized bodies. Some experiences of violence, particularly those passed down through generations or embedded within displaced communities, may not be easily articulated or understood through conventional historical narratives (Razack, 2002).

Foucault’s concepts of biopolitics and surveillance, alongside Sherene Razack’s spatial analysis and Henri Lefebvre’s theory of space, help us see how power operates not only through institutions but through narratives that frame some bodies as threats and others as saviors (Foucault, 1991; Razack, 2002; Rosa, 2006). This research also engaged Critical Race Theory’s concept of interest convergence, showing how policies like revitalization are only supported when they serve the interests of the dominant group. The supposed benefits to marginalized residents, such as improved housing or mixed-income integration, are often secondary to the economic and political gains secured by middle-class newcomers, developers, and the state. Regent Park’s transformation can thus be understood not only as a spatial project but as a manifestation of financialization: the treatment of land, housing, and communities as assets for profit rather than spaces for care and belonging.

As a social worker, I know the weight of the word neglect. It is used to justify interventions, child removals, and institutional oversight. Yet, the neglect experienced in places

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like Regent Park, the piled garbage, unaddressed maintenance, pest infestations never triggered the same urgency. That silence was systemic.

This research also makes clear that revitalization was never the only path. With proper financial investment in maintenance, infrastructure, and community programming, Regent Park could have thrived without mass displacement. The so-called “recipe for success” of collective care, youth engagement, and social ties was already in place. What was missing was not motivation but material support. The community didn’t fail—it was failed.

As a tangible solution or recommendation that resists further displacement, one such initiative is the City of Toronto’s Multi-Unit Residential Acquisition (MURA) program, which provides grants to non-profit housing providers, land trusts, and Indigenous housing organizations to purchase existing rental buildings and preserve them as permanently affordable housing. By supporting community ownership, the MURA program helps tenants remain in their homes and reduces the risk of displacement caused by private redevelopment, renovictions, or financial speculation (City of Toronto, 2023).

Moving forward, policymakers, researchers, and the public must move beyond frameworks that treat racialized communities as problems to be fixed. Instead, we must ask: What becomes possible when we see these communities as already whole and already deserving? Through this all, I’m grateful. Despite the neglect, the love, support, joy, and care I experienced in Regent Park made it possible to ignore the state most days because our community gave us everything it did not.

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APPENDICES 2: Recruitment Material

EMAIL SCRIPT FOR ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS

Dear *[Recipient's Name]*,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Cindy-May Dapaah, and I am a Master of Social Work (MSW) student at York University conducting research for my final project. My study focuses on exploring the narratives and lived experiences of Regent Park residents, particularly in relation to the community's transformation, resilience amidst redevelopment initiatives and effects around displacement.

I am reaching out to invite you to participate in an interview for this research. The interview would involve discussing your experiences, insights, and reflections about Regent Park. It will take approximately 50-90 minutes and can be conducted at a time and place that is convenient for you. Alternatively, the interview can be arranged virtually, if preferred.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and your insights would greatly contribute to a deeper understanding of Regent Park's community dynamics and expanding the perspective on public housing. Please be assured that all information shared during the interview will be kept confidential and used solely for academic purposes.

If you are interested in participating or have any questions about the study, feel free to reply to this email or contact me directly at cindymay97@yorku.ca or 647-281-4475

Thank you for considering this opportunity to contribute to my research. I hope to hear from you soon and would be happy to provide further details about the study if needed.

Warm regards,

Cindy-May Dapaah

Master of Social Work Candidate

York University

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APPENDICES 3: Interview Guide

An interview guide was created consisting of thirteen reflective questions designed to guide participants through their experiences. These questions were thoughtfully developed in connection to the overarching research question, grounded in the theoretical frameworks guiding this study, and shaped by my own insights and curiosities as a fellow displaced community member. The questions were:

Personal and Community Experiences

1. Can you tell me about your experience living in Regent Park before the redevelopment? How has the sense of community or connection?
2. How has living in Regent Park shaped you as an individual?
3. Are there specific memories or stories that highlight the strengths and sense of community in Regent Park before the redevelopment?

Impacts of Displacement

4. How did the redevelopment and displacement process affect you and your family? When did it happen? How did it happen? How did you feel?
5. What challenges have you faced since leaving Regent Park, and how has your life changed because of the displacement?

Social Mix and Policy Perceptions

6. What do you think the redevelopment policies achieved or failed to achieve for the original residents of Regent Park?
7. In your view, what did Regent Park need to thrive and survive as a community without undergoing such significant changes?
8. Are you familiar with the concepts of "social mix"? This term was used to justify the revitalization project. What are your thoughts on how this theory was applied to Regent Park?

Systemic Inequities and Stigma

10. Do you believe race played a role for this redevelopment project to move forward? Are there any specific memories or stories from the redevelopment process that make you feel this way? (or not)
11. How do you feel racialized and low-income residents of Regent Park were portrayed in the media or public discourse before and during the redevelopment?

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12. Do you believe that with more support from the government, Regent Park could have remained 100% RGI (Rent-Geared-to-Income) without the displacement of its residents? Why or why not?

Future Hopes and Reflections

13. If you could share one message or insight about Regent Park with policymakers, researchers, or the public, what would it be?

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APPENDICES 1: Ethics Certificate

**PANEL ON
RESEARCH ETHICS**

Navigating the ethics of human research

TCPS 2: CORE 2022

Certificate of Completion

This document certifies that

Cindy-May Dapaah

*successfully completed the Course on Research Ethics based on
the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research
Involving Humans (TCPS 2: CORE 2022)*

Certificate # 0000459190

21 October, 2024