Spring 2021

Systems of Erasure: An Archival Analysis of Gentrification in Hudson, N.Y.

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Systems of Erasure: An Archival Analysis of Gentrification in Hudson, N.Y.

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of Social Studies
of Bard College

by
Danielle Ranieri

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York
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Abstract

Past analyses of gentrification have largely examined the phenomenon along the consumption-production theory binary; the former contending that the middle-class consumer is to blame for initiating the process, the latter illuminating the contributions of larger political entities. This oversimplifies the complex process of gentrification, boiling its causal factors down to a singular class, policy, event, or point in time. This tendency to homogenize the root cause of gentrification gives a narrow understanding of a city’s history and largely ignores the overarching, systemic patterns of class and race-based oppression that have played into a city’s development over time. Furthermore, colonizers and gentrifiers alike have claimed that city investments are intended to benefit the community at large, but these same efforts often work against the needs of, and often displace, local community members. Hudson, NY proves useful as a case study to test the hypothesis that the disproportionate means of betterment that gentrification has historically allowed for is largely a result of the gatekeeping of capital that was initiated by the region’s colonizers. This hypothesis is assessed through the analysis of various means of financial and social betterment - property ownership, public safety, and public services - that we born during Hudson’s colonization in the fifteen and sixteenth centuries. The strength and persistence of these colonial legacies will be evaluated through the comparison of various bodies of legislation and institutions that have been actively functioning during Hudson’s more recent period of gentrification - beginning around 1960 and lasting until current day. This study ultimately reveals that the degree to which one possesses the “correct” means of social and financial capital, as determined by Hudson’s colonizers, severely affects the extent to which one
has access to property ownership, public services, and protection by public safety measures today, which together guarantee one’s chances for individual betterment and improvement.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Situating Gentrification

Decades of academic literature surrounding the topic of gentrification have worked to identify causal factors and effects, examine the role of various actors involved in the process, and best define the phenomenon. The term ‘gentrification’ was first coined by Ruth Glass, a British sociologist, back in 1964. She was studying metropolitan housing and development in inner-London, and she had used the term to refer to the alterations in the economic and social structures of the housing markets of which she was observing.¹ In her book titled, London: Aspects of Change, Glass notes how many new homes, in Notting Hill and Islington specifically, were being taken over and renovated by “bohemian couples,” who were wealthier and more resource-rich than the working class residents who had lived there prior.² She describes the process of gentrification as “an invasion by the middle classes - upper and lower.”³ Her work on the subject emphasizes the all-encapsulating nature of gentrification, that spans the resulting displacement of long-term residents, to the overall erasure of the pre-existing social and cultural character of the community. Glass’s early research on the process gave way to a plethora of further studies and investigations into this global occurrence.

In the years following 1964, defining gentrification and identifying its root causes has been highly contested in the academic arena. Despite the copious amount of theories surrounding the issue, scholars have yet to reach a consensus on the phenomenon’s main driving force. The majority of the dominant literature that assesses the causal factors of gentrification is commonly categorized into one of two groups; it is either grouped under the umbrella of consumption or

¹ Glass, London Aspects of Change, xvii.
² Bartlett 100, “Ruth Glass and Coining ‘Gentrification.’”
³ Lees, Slater, and Wyly, The Gentrification Reader, 7.
production theory. The ideas of predominant theorists, Richard Florida, Michael Jager, and Jon Caulfield, align themselves with the consumption-side theories of gentrification. This framework asserts that the process of gentrification and urban reconfiguration stems from and appeals to the tastes and desires of middle-class consumers, establishing the middle-class individual as the gentrifier. Other theorists, such as Neil Smith, David Harvey, and Elvin Wyly and Daniel Hammel, have produced explanations of gentrification that fall under the side of production theory. Production theory instead contends that the production and curation of a space, usually urban spaces, by a larger political entity is at fault in beginning the process of gentrification.

Consumption theories of gentrification place greater emphasis on the social factors that contribute to gentrification, pointing toward the middle class consumer as the main catalyst. The theories set forward by Richard Florida, Michael Jager, and Jon Caulfield each conclude that the middle-class’s taste for urban culture, including its high-tech, innovative amenities, diversity, high-quality experiences, and authenticity, fuel the process of gentrification.

Richard Florida specifically defines the group of people to which he believes is to blame for gentrification - the creative class. In his work titled, “Cities and the Creative Class,” Florida characterizes the creative class as a group of highly-educated, creative professionals who he claims are key in driving regional and national economic growth. Composed of, “scientists and engineers, university professors, poets and novelists, artists, entertainers, actors, designers, and architects, as well as the ‘thought leadership’ of modern society: nonfiction writers, editors, cultural figures, think-tank researchers, analysts, and other opinion makers,”4 this form of human capital in a given area, he contends, is positively correlated to a region’s economic growth and

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4 Florida, *Cities and the Creative Class*, 8.
success. Departing from previous literature that supposes that places grow due to their proximity to transportation routes or natural resources, which encourage firms, and therefore prospective residents, to locate there, Florida posits that the accumulation of human capital is much more effective in achieving urban growth. Later in his work, Florida lays out the ways in which he believes that cities can effectively attract members of this desirable, creative class, which he calls “creative capital theory.” He claims that they value, “high-quality experiences, an openness to diversity of all kinds, and, above all else, the opportunity to validate their identities as creative people.” Therefore, if this type of atmosphere is present in a given city or region, the creative class, and furthermore, economic growth is bound to follow.

Similarly, in his work titled, “Class Definition and the Esthetics of Gentrification: Victoriana in Melbourne,” Michael Jager asserts that the process of gentrification is intimately connected to social class, status, and consumption patterns. Jager argues that the new middle class’s freedom from economic constraint and concern allows for increased leisure, which in turn creates patterns of “conspicuous consumption.” These superfluous consumption patterns indicate status and a specific set of tastes, “prestige is indicated through decorative excess... through form rather than function.” The new middle class, he posits, are initially drawn to homes that are marketed as authentic and possessing original features, with the luxury of modern amenities. The partnership of history and modernity within a region allows the new middle class to physically distance themselves from the former working class, industrial slums. In this process of distancing, working class slums and labor are stigmatized and excluded from the esthetic of the middle class. Once achieved, Jager notes the appearance of a new type of cottage industry, which

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5 Florida, *Cities and the Creative Class*, 9.
includes, “increasing concentration of alternative/new wave/avant garde galleries, studios, shops, coffee lounges, theatres, restaurants and the like.” These amenities are significant in that they all allow for the promotion of domestic decoration, gastronomy, and entertainment - in other terms, leisure. Jager argues that once this differentiation is established, kitsch becomes esthetic, “in kitsch imitation takes precedence over authenticity,” in which the original lure of cultural authenticity is compromised. In this definition of gentrification, conspicuous consumption is expressed not just through housing investments but also via consumption patterns such as fashion, entertainment, and restaurants, which all contribute to a redefining of the “new urban lifestyle.”

In “Gentrification and Desire,” Jon Caulfield also defines and points to the significance of middle class taste and desires. Caulfield broadly defines gentrification as the “middle-class resettlement of old city neighborhoods.” In his work, Caulfield focuses on and attempts to answer the question of why the middle-class tends to seek out and relocate in old city neighborhoods. Pointing to similar cultural and social desires that both Florida and Jager have noted, Caulfield also suggests that gentrification, “may be in part a reaction to the perceived homogeneity of the suburban dream, a rejection of the suburbs as a place in which to earn and spend, a response to the perceived blandness and standardization of the suburbs.” He argues that the gentrifier’s desire for aesthetic and social meaning can be found in older city places, providing not only a space to live, but a space for vibrant social interactions, leisurely activities, etcetera. Again, similar to Florida’s creative capital theory and Jager’s concept of kitsch

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7 Lees, Slater, and Wyly, _The Gentrification Reader_, 158.
8 Lees, Slater, and Wyly, 158.
9 Ibid, 161.
10 Ibid, 164.
imitation, Caulfield defines a “culture industry” which is responsible for packaging and selling a desired vision of the city, that corresponds to the lifestyle preferences of middle-class consumers. Caulfield suggests that this leads to commodity fetish, where new development is designed specifically to emulate the style of previous developments. This, in turn, allows for profit maximization and exploits pre-existing, less affluent communities and residents.

The consumption theories brought forward by Richard Florida, Michael Jager, and Jon Caulfield share similar causal stories that explain the process of gentrification. These theorists all seem to suggest that the dominating middle-class desire for a vibrant social and cultural urban atmosphere places distance between them and the needs and interests of previous residents. The product that is created from their tastes, which have been referred to as creative capital, kitsch imitation, and/or culture industry, allows for economic growth and development within a city, therefore rendering the presence of middle class individuals as valuable and desirable in an urban landscape.

Production theories of gentrification point toward the economic and political factors that advance gentrification in an area, suggesting that developers and other political actors are the catalysts of the process. Theories crafted by Neil Smith, David Harvey, and Elvin Wyly and Daniel Hammel all seem to coalesce around the idea that producers, whether they are developers or policy makers, are to blame for fueling gentrification, as opposed to individual consumers.

In his well known work titled, “Toward a Theory of Gentrification: A Back to the City Movement by Capital, not People,” Neil Smith coins the rent gap theory. This theory provides an economic explanation for gentrification that highlights the disparity between the current rental
income of a given property and its potentially achievable rental income; a “good” rent gap value suggests that an area is likely to undergo gentrification. Smith argues that David Ley’s “gentrifier as consumer” is not solely to blame but is one of the many actors participating in the process. The role of the individual consumer, he argues, is largely overemphasized in previous literature; individual gentrifiers are only really important in neighborhoods that are located adjacent to already gentrified areas. Instead, the producers - builders, developers, landlords, mortgage lenders, government agencies, real estate agents, etc. - are at fault. Smith’s overarching argument proposes that “the urban renaissance” has been more influenced by economic factors rather than cultural forces, and that the consumer preference for profit is the leading cause of gentrification.

Additionally, David Harvey’s “The Right to the City” asserts that developers and rich capitalists are those to blame for the process of gentrification, like Smith, devaluing the role of individual actors in the process of gentrification. Harvey argues that urbanization is strictly a class phenomenon, since “surpluses are extracted from somewhere and from somebody, while the control over their disbursement typically lies in a few hands.” This consistent need to seek out profitable terrains for “capital-surplus production and absorption” is the catalyst for displacement and the gentrification of an area. To defend his argument, Harvey gives the examples of urbanization projects in Paris and New York, as led by Haussman, Moses, and Bloomberg, that have worked to continue the process of urbanization by capitalism, absorbing the surplus product and producing uneven growth. In the process of these urbanization efforts,
the previous, often poorer and less powerful residents had been bought out and forced to relocate; a process that Harvey refers to as “accumulation by dispossession.” He suggests that vacancies within an area don’t necessarily imply that there is a housing shortage, rather, individuals who are now unable to afford increased rent are displaced. Harvey’s anti-capitalist statement, “the right to the city,” asserts that people, not profit, are entitled to having democratic control over the cities in which they live.

Theorists Evlin Wyly and Daniel Hammel in their shared work titled, “Islands of Decay in Seas of Renewal: Housing Policy and the Resurgence of Gentrification” point to the role of housing policy and urban politics in the process of gentrification. The pair’s main argument, that “urban policy has transformed islands of renewal in seas of decay into islands of decay within seas of renewal,” posits that changes in both housing finance and policy have had dramatic implications for the acceleration of class polarization in city neighborhoods. Placing less emphasis on the consumption-side, production-side rhetoric, Wyly and Hammel instead suggest that understanding gentrification is much more a task of decoding and analyzing public policy and situating its role in social segregation in urban housing markets. Wyly and Hammel continue to discuss two major shifts that have taken place - transformations in housing finance and a shift in housing policy - which have both contributed to the acceleration of gentrification. The combination of these two shifts in housing, they argue, have effectively reinforced private market gentrification in city neighborhoods and have encouraged the mixing of poor and middle class residents. This directly affects the willingness of borrowers, lenders, and other housing market

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16 Harvey, 10.
17 Lees, Slater, and Wyly, 457.
18 Ibid, 459.
19 Ibid, 461.
intermediaries in accepting the risks of investing in, as well as facilitating the dispersal, demolition, and redevelopment of distressed gentrified neighborhoods.

The production theories brought forward by Neil Smith, David Harvey, and Elvin Wyly and Daniel Hammel all suggest that producers, whether it be a developer, “greedy capitalist,” or policy maker, and their search for areas with potential capital surpluses are the main force that drive gentrification and displace poorer residents.

The definition of gentrification that this study will most directly be referencing comes from Azka Nur Medha and Putu Gde Ariastita’s 2017 research paper titled “In the Face of Gentrification: A Case Study of Social Capital in Supporting Community Efforts to Form a Collective Action,” and it reads as follows:

Gentrification is the process of urban renewal that involves the betterment of a neighborhood and has commonly included the displacement of a group of people by others with greater resources. Gentrification is often characterized by a rapid increase in property values, as it causes the origin community to become vulnerable.\(^20\)

The referral to gentrification as a process of “betterment” - in both a financial and social sense, following the form of production and consumption theories - will be evaluated throughout this study. Gentrification often claims to improve a community via investments in public infrastructure, services, culture, economy, etcetera. However, what is often overlooked are the ways in which betterment often only benefits elite politicians or wealthy property owners. Therefore, when referencing gentrification in the light of community “betterment” and “improvement,” it’s important to question and take notice of (1) The underlying motivations of local governments and those with a stake in property values, (2) The power imbalances that are

both inherent to and are perpetuated throughout this process, and (3) With who, and for who, this process is working to benefit.

As this definition and past theories have alluded to, the effects of gentrification provide great financial and social benefits to some and serious negative consequences to others. The actors formerly mentioned - incoming residents, landlords, property owners, developers, politicians, to name a few - view the process of gentrification as a valuable method of attracting new economically-valuable residents, thereby ensuring the self-betterment that comes with profitization of property. The latter party - the dispossessed residents of urban centers - experience eviction, displacement, and neglect, an entire uprooting of their social networks and way of life. The tension that exists between those who would be likely to advocate for gentrification versus those who would oppose it, explains one of the many major reasons why gentrification is so highly contested in the political arena. While the process can potentially foster economic prosperity and growth in a declining urban space, community-oriented values are not prioritized. The communities that are claimed to be “revitalized” and “improved” commonly work to benefit those with property interests, who are looking to further gate-keep their financial and social capital.

1.2 Expanding the Scope of Gentrification

What seems to be missing from the existing body of literature is the assessment of gentrification as a historical process of betterment, set in motion by the profitization of land, invention of “growth”, and capitalistic culture that was born with colonization. The values and

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21 Bernt and Holm, “Is It, or Is Not? The Conceptualisation of Gentrification and Displacement and Its Political Implications in the Case of Berlin-Prenzlauer Berg.”
processes inherent to the functioning of colonialism are linked to the eventual rise of capitalism.

In “Colonialism and the Rise of Capitalism,” James Blaut explains the main operating principles of Eurocentric diffusion,

This doctrine, which became codified around the middle of the nineteenth century mainly as a rationalization and support for colonialism, is quite complex and elaborate, but its core is the functioning of straightforward propositions: (1) Europe naturally progresses and modernizes. (2) Non-Europe naturally remains stagnant, traditional, unchanging. (3) The essential reason for progressive cultural evolution in Europe is some force or factor which is ultimately intellectual or spiritual. (4) Progress comes to non-Europe only through the diffusion of European ideas, institutions, and people - that is, through colonialism.22

He contends that Europe has always been, and still remains, “ahead of the rest of the world in level and rate of development”23 and he argues that this has been primarily allowed by the country’s economic system - capitalism. This Eurocentric explanation of the relationship between colonialism and capitalism is useful in identifying a crucial point of intersection; they are linked by their overarching values and practices that allow and promote a constant state of growth, expansion, and improvement. These principles are also strikingly similar to the concept of betterment provided by Medha and Ariastita, that explains the economic, social, and cultural motivations of contemporary gentrification efforts. This stands in stark contrast to Indigenous cosmologies, traditions, and practices. While Indigenous spiritual beliefs can vary among different First Nation, Mètis, and Inuit groups and individuals,24 their main premises view and value land much differently, regarding “both themselves and nature as part of an extended ecological family that shares ancestry and origins. It is an awareness that life in any environment

23 Blaut, 261.
24 “Indigenous Spiritual Practices.”
is viable only when humans view the life surrounding them as kin.”25 The dynamic that is a result of this kincentric ecology26 preserves and lives in accordance with the ecosystem and its natural elements - dissimilar to the violent methods of extraction enabled by colonizers, capitalists, and gentrifiers alike. The processes of colonization and gentrification both exist under a capitalistic growth model, as they extract and accumulate value from land and its people. The concepts of growth and betterment cannot be separated from capitalism; gentrification is a facet of colonization, in that it reproduces these growth, improvement, and betterment-oriented values and systems.

Tendencies of previous gentrification theories to homogenize the root cause of gentrification, both theoretically and historically, have given a rather narrow understanding of how a city changes over time and, most importantly, largely ignores the many systemic factors that have played into ongoing patterns of classism and racism. This study will therefore evaluate (1) Who has been granted access to the financial and social means of “betterment” that are commonly claimed by efforts of gentrification and city investments, and (2) Determine the extent to which this disparity is historically a result of colonial legacies. Using Hudson, NY as a case study, the following chapters will analyze the degree to which various legislative measures - specifically pertaining to property ownership, public safety, and public services - that were set in place by Hudson’s colonizers have persisted and therefore contributed to gentrification in contemporary times.

The relationship between property ownership, public safety, and public services provides a new perspective to gentrification; this analysis expands the discussion of the topic both

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26 Ibid.
theoretically and historically. The triangulation of these three means of betterment examines
gentrification as a process that goes beyond the real estate and housing market, in both an
economic and social sense, and historically situates their contributions to the process. By
introducing public services and public safety efforts to the discourse, the topic is opened up to a
new realm of so-called “community resources” that contribute to and are absolutely essential to
the acceleration of city growth. This study, situated in the pre-existing body of literature,
analyzes various systemic mechanisms that have been mobilized by local governments and have
effectively pushed and spurred local development over time, evaluating gentrification through a
much longer-term, historical lens. The research presented aims to emphasize the role of
systemic classism and racism, that is inseparable from Hudson’s history, and has actively pushed
forward the processes of colonization and gentrification, in more recent times. Analyzing the
development of the city over time will slowly make visible the systemic and institutional
strategies that have persisted throughout Hudson’s history and development, and have therefore
prioritized the betterment and improvement of certain groups of people over others. Although the
case of Hudson may seem like an isolated series of events, the discriminatory mechanisms
employed by government officials and elites can be traced in other cities and locales as well.

In order to test the hypothesis that the systems and institutions that had been set in place
by the region’s colonizers have persisted, and have therefore contributed to, Hudson’s current
gentrification crisis, a timeline was first established. The timeline highlights relevant time
periods in the city’s history that have spurred economic growth and change, layered with archival
city data, photographs, and documents. The timeline will drive an initial analysis of Hudson’s
history, that indicates broad continuities that exist throughout due to various legislative and systemic tools utilized by the city to gate-keep the benefits of economic growth.

Focusing in more closely on the timeline, the study will then shift to a comparative analysis of two of the major periods of the Hudson’s growth, looking at and comparing more closely, the factors of property ownership, public safety, and public services, that have worked together to serve as tools to ensure self-betterment - both financially and socially - for both colonizers and gentrifiers alike, while claiming community betterment. The relationship between property ownership, public services, and public safety are key in evaluating the nature of betterment that has been alluded to, both by colonizers and gentrifiers. These mediums for improvement - which have historically allowed for disproportionate means of self-growth among different demographics - were largely invented by the region’s colonizers, and they together promote individual advancement over communally-distributed benefits. Evaluating the ways in which these systemic tools have been weaponized throughout history will reveal whether the changes that are currently underway in Hudson are analogous throughout the various eras of the region's development. Analyzing these major time brackets in Hudson’s history, first on a broader scale and then comparatively more in detail, in conjunction with legislation pertaining to property ownership, public safety, and public services, will reveal whether the conditions that render a region ripe for gentrification were first deployed by Hudson’s colonizers.
1.3 Introducing Hudson, NY as a Case Study

Prior to the “discovery” of Hudson by Dutch colonizers, the region was known as Claverack Landing, part of the domain which belongs to the Mahicans.27 For hundreds of years before the arrival of Henry Hudson and the area’s colonizers - who referred to themselves as “the Proprietors” - and eventual genocide of the Mahicans, Indigenous territory “included the land south of what is now Lake Champlain, west to the Schoharie Creek, east to Vermont and New Hampshire, and south to Manhattan Island.”28 In the year of 1609, Henry Hudson had voyaged on their land, documenting the Hudson River as “the finest for cultivation that I’d ever in life set foot upon... it is as beautiful land as ever one can tread upon, abounding in walnut, chestnut, yew and trees of sweet wood in abundance,”29 and it was precisely his testimonials which were responsible for the alluring of Dutch colonizers to the Hudson Valley. He had effectively begun the exploitation of the land and its inhabitants in the name of profit.

Fast-forward to the twenty-first century, it has now been well established in popular media that Hudson is a city that has been gentrified. News sources including the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, and others have - quite similarly to Henry Hudson - advertised the city as a fabulous weekend getaway, a place to shop, eat, view art, and escape from the hustle and bustle of Manhattan. Other news outlets and scholars, the Hudson Reporter and others, have also pointed to the issues of affordable housing and social inequities that these changes have brought about, noting the recent spikes in rent prices as the city is deemed more economically valuable. Although it has been recently acknowledged that gentrification in Hudson has had detrimental effects on the city’s less affluent, long-term residents, the existing narrative leaves

27 Fone, Historic Hudson: an Architectural Portrait, 28.
28 Fone, 28.
29 Ibid, 30.
out the historical exploitation of the land in the name of profit, that has clouded the city’s past and affected the city’s present. Failing to take into account the overarching systemic inequalities that are embedded within history doesn’t give a complete picture of the long term tools and structures that have been brought about by colonizers and gentrifiers alike.

The story of Hudson’s history is one of exploitation, dispossession, and gatekeeping of capital, incessantly employed in the interest of elite property owners looking to reap profit. To ensure this continuous accumulation of wealth, status, and betterment, Hudson’s local government and property owners have had to constantly reinvent the city in order to appeal to wealthy residents and visitors who could provide economic prosperity; an article from the Times Union goes as far to call the city, “a master of reinvention.” The legislative tools enacted by Hudson’s government have allowed for the continual profitability of the city’s property and has ensured the financial and social security of the city’s elites.

1.3.1 *Hudson: An Archival Perspective*

Constructing a visual representation of Hudson’s history begins to test the hypothesis of this study: gentrification, and the disproportionate means of betterment that it has historically allowed for, has resulted largely from the gatekeeping of capital and culture of extraction that was initiated by colonization. Furthermore, it will allow for a broad conclusion to be made on whether gentrification in Hudson had been allowed for by the efforts of the region’s colonizers, and which groups have historically been barred from the benefits of these forms of “community” investment over time. The timeline provides a visual representation of the continuities and trends

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30 Norder, “Hudson's Evolution, from Whalers to Weekenders.”
that are perpetual throughout Hudson’s history. The visual analysis was constructed using various archival photographs and documents that best represent some of the most prominent maps, figures, industries, events, pieces of legislation, and documents of the city’s history; the historical materials presented primarily touch on issues that are largely a result of property ownership, public services, and public safety. Images were obtained from a series of historical accounts of Hudson’s history, as well as archival documents from Hudson’s local library. Each visual datapoint corresponds with numerical keys that contextualize and detail the content represented. Listed from numbers 1 through 39, each photo contributes to and represents a relevant figure, industry, landmark, or document in Hudson’s history. The figures below show the visual analysis; Figure 1 shows the full timeline, and the following Figures, 2 through 5, show zoomed in sections of the timeline.

*Figure 1. Full Timeline*
Figure 2. Hudson, 1600s-1700s

- Edward Moran's "Henrik Hudson Entering New York Harbor", September 11, 1609; Painted in 1892
- "Patroon Street Historical Marker"
- Map of Manor of Rensselaerswyck
- "Northern Right Whales"
- Advertisement for items made from whalebone
- "To Be Sold, A convenient Place for a Merchandie, Packen, or Boiler, on a River in Orange County, where is a good Mulling House, a Barn, and a good Fowre house, garden and orchard: The Landing is so convenient, that a Boat can be let along the River."

Figure 3. Hudson, 1700s-1800s

- "Anti-Rent War Poster; 1841"
- "An 1841 Historic Ordinance: "Concerning the Night Watch, their Number, Power, and Duty"
- "An 1841 Historic Ordinance: "Concerning the Police"
- "An 1841 Historic Ordinance: "Of Vagrants and Beggars"
- "The Mohawk and Hudson Railroad"
- New York Gazette for land for sale, 1759
- "Anti-Rent Protectors and Tenants; 1841"
Figure 4. Hudson, 1800s-1900s

A Summer Evening Scene at the New York State Training School for Girls in Hudson, N.Y.; 1900s

The Atlas Cement Plant; 1911

Advertisement in Hudson’s Directory for the railroad that ran between Hudson and N.Y.C.

Figure 5. Hudson, 1900s-2020

Newspaper clippings from “The Ki News”; 1958

Poster advertisement for a meeting to “Curb Juvenile Crime” led by the N.A.A.C.P.; 1918

Newspaper article about the investigation against the Hudson Training School for Girls

Record of Conviction and Sentence to the House of Refuge for Women at Hudson, N.Y.; 1888

“Patrons of Macabee’s Hall”; One of Hudson’s most well known speakeasies (identified through the peephole on the door)

Figure 5. Hudson, 1900s-2020

Why You Should Buy a Home in Hudson, N.Y.

Hudson, N.Y.: From Industrial City to Tourist Destination

Hudson, N.Y.: An Elegant Transformation

Brooklyn Hipster Virus Spreads to Hudson Valley

Hudson, New York, makes for a perfect weekend getaway

Hudson, New York: The Coolest Small Town in America

13 Best Airbnbs in Hudson


Hudson storefront during economic decline, mid 1900s

Headline from Wall Street Journal, “Hudson, N.Y. From Industrial City to Tourist Destination”, 2016


Headline from Goths, “Brooklyn Hipster Virus Spreads to Hudson Valley”, 2011

Headline from Newpaper, “Hudson N.Y., Makes for a Perfect Weekend Getaway”, 2018

Kite’s Nest’s Rally for Housing Justice

Kite’s Nest’s Rally for Housing Justice

Headline from travel blog, “Hudson N.Y., The Coolest Small Town in America”

Headline from travel blog, “13 Best Airbnbs in Hudson, N.Y.”, 2020

“Riverfront” Antiques and Design Center

Document of commercialized prostitution laws; 1950

Business card for a sex worker in Hudson

Business card for a sex worker in Hudson

for a sex worker in Hudson

through

“The Knickerbocker”
The timeline reveals the persistence of Hudson’s local government in guaranteeing the city’s proliferation over time. We see the emergence and eventual retreat of a handful of powerful investors and industries that have been lured in by government officials and provided brief moments of renewed investment and growth. Towards the left-hand side of the timeline, we see the city’s first substantial moment of investment by Dutch colonizers, who had built new roads, churches, business, and other public structures, and had organized the city with a principle series of ordinances. These improvements were allowed for by the systems that had commodified land during the 1600s; land for sale was advertised and incentivized in newspapers, as means of luring new residents and workers. Also during this time, Hudson had seen the emergence of the whaling industry, which effectively pushed forward Hudson’s growth via increased trade, allowing for further efforts to be made around city beautification, resulting in yet another influx of new residents and visitors. After the downfall of the whaling industry, yet another attempt to secure economic growth was ensured by steamboats and railroads, a major transition to industry. These new mass-modes of transportation had brought new visitors from New York City, Massachusetts, and other surrounding cities, and worked to invite and attract new and financially-desired residents and visitors. Yet during this time of expansion and “city growth,” there was also an emergence of anti-rent protests led by tenants who weren’t benefitting from these new modes of investment. The combination of investment in infrastructure and the increased military presence bore great burden on non-property owners. This era was next followed by an interjection from the cement industry as well as a handful of brothels. Hudson’s main street “thrived again;” the new industry provided a means of economic perseverance, and the presence of prostitution and

gambling became a well-known tourist attraction. What lies beneath this glimmering facade are the hardships faced by those who were struggling to access public services and public safety resources. A subsect of the city’s population - sex workers who were ultimately driving the city’s growth - was further criminalized and institutionalized, and this was a key component to the city’s so-called “success” at the time. Hudson’s most recent stage of revival - represented on the right-most side of the timeline - is defined by a proliferation of antique shops and the alluring “creative culture” that we are familiar with today. Yet, we are still presented with the same struggles that some of Hudson’s residents were facing early on in the city’s history - specifically pertaining to housing and an overall lack of community resources and prioritization.

Hudson has survived these various periods of investment and disinvestment, due to strategic efforts made by those with an interest to secure profit from the land and its people - namely Hudson’s local government and those with property-related interests. The emergence of each of these major periods of growth were means of enacting advancement, both economically and socially, for those who have held power from the onset of Hudson’s colonization. This timeline broadly establishes the continuities in the practices tapped into by Hudson’s government and elite individuals in order to maintain a particular power hierarchy. A revitalization and investment of the formerly debilitated city seeks to “better” the community and provide means of economic and socially-oriented benefits, to be obtained by all. But this is not the reality; what is not yet provided by this timeline are the specific legislative moves and decisions that have worked behind the scenes to ensure the accumulation of capital for Hudson’s elites, at the expense of the community which it claims to work for.
The thesis of persistent accumulation and gatekeeping of capital by Hudson’s elites is broadly accepted by the continuities displayed in this timeline. The visual analysis broadly demonstrates the persistence of Hudson’s colonial systems, as they have maintained their presence in legislation pertaining to property, public services, policing, and so on. Furthermore, the continuous struggle for social justice on behalf of the city’s marginalized populations, even in the face of great economic growth, reveals the disparities that are embedded within and inherent to city investment, growth, and improvement.

What the following chapters will next examine are the ways in which these power imbalances have been assured throughout the city’s history. Power hierarchies established by Hudson’s colonizers have historically determined the extent to which one has had access to property ownership, public services, and protection by public safety measures; these together guarantee one’s chances for individual betterment and improvement. Furthermore, it will be expanded upon that those who were inhibited from access to these resources were effectively determined during Hudson’s colonization. Those who were barred from entry during the region’s early history - the poor, enslaved, and indigenous - are still negatively impacted by these colonial legacies today. The various systems and legislative efforts established by Hudson’s colonizers had institutionalized a system of power that benefits those who, historically, have had the “correct” financial and social standing, i.e., white and wealthy landowners. By means of acquiring land, Hudson’s colonizers had secured access to financial (property ownership) and social betterment (access to public services and protection by public safety measures). By means of stealing and holding land, the area’s colonizers and gentrifiers have effectively assured their
own financial and social security, by theft of land and the creation of property, and by having themselves guaranteed protection by public safety efforts and access to public services.

1.4 Project Overview

In order to assess whether gentrification is a systemic issue, this study will broadly examine the continuities in systemic inequities that have defined Hudson’s longer history, then more closely, comparatively analyze two major eras of the region’s growth. This study is not meant to be a full and comprehensive history of Hudson. Rather, it aims to shed light on the resemblance of various developmental changes that the area has historically undergone and reveal the still present functioning of colonial legacies in contemporary times.

The next three chapters closely analyze the systemic mechanisms which colonizers and gentrifiers have utilized to ensure their own status and power. Chapter 2 looks at the role of property ownership, comparatively analyzing the tactics used by Hudson’s Proprietors and recent gentrifiers that have attracted tenants and ensured an unbalanced power dynamic between property owners and property-renters. This chapter argues that the emphasis placed on property ownership has effectively established a particular power hierarchy that renders lower-class individuals immobile, dependent, and barred from ownership. Utilizing various legislative measures to ensure that land stays in the hands of the wealthy, the prospect of property ownership has historically ensured that land can be used for self-betterment and improvement and capitalistic growth - both financially and socially. This chapter in particular analyzes the ways in which property has been utilized as a tool by which to ensure financial profitability and power.
Chapter 3 assesses the role of public services, namely education, in ensuring the social betterment of both colonizers and gentrifiers. Given that public services were established by the government to provide people with necessities - such as education, transportation, healthcare, etc. - rather than making a profit, they should therefore, in theory, work in the best interest of the community, not falling prey to profit-driven motives. This chapter instead points out the continual failure of educational services in Hudson to fulfill the needs of the local community. The resulting inadequacies are made up for by private actors working for-profit and catering to wealthier residents, which have effectively barred poor and Black residents from access and entry. Public services have historically failed the city’s local residents, prioritizing prospective residents, who have been more affluent and able to afford the alternatives presented by for-profit, private actors.

Chapter 4 evaluates the role of public safety as a social service, which ultimately functions as a financial service, that works in the interests of property owners. As this section argues, public safety is a product of legislation, enacted by individuals who are in a position of power, and therefore, often serves the interests of those in power. The legislative case studies in this chapter reveal that those who are not property owners are not protected and prioritized by public safety laws. Many of the safety measures that were set in place by early colonizers of the Hudson Valley were meant to ensure the profitability of held land and property, thereby criminalizing, enslaving, and dehumanizing the Indigenous population to whom the land belongs. The lives and wellbeing of Indigenous tribes, and low-income communities of color living in the city of Hudson, in both the city’s colonization and more recent efforts of gentrification, have been illegalized and inferiorized in the name of property protection and
“public safety.” Furthermore, public safety is called on as a compensatory tool, to offset the city’s lack of public resources - such as stable and affordable housing or educational tools. When these services, which should provide one with means of betterment, are lacking, those without access are penalized; criminalization compensates for the lack of community resources.

In Chapter 5, the findings from the timeline and corresponding comparative analyses will determine whether gentrification in Hudson can be accredited to the systemic structures that are largely the result of lasting colonial legacies and capitalistic growth strategies. The study will be concluded by suggesting potential solutions or mitigators that have been proposed by activists to provide relief to those facing displacement in Hudson and other areas facing gentrification.
Chapter 2: Property Ownership

2.1 Defining Property Ownership

Owning property, which can include land, housing, or real estate, has been a highly coveted title from the onset of Hudson’s colonization and still holds great status today. The definition of property ownership is rather straight-forward; however, owning any form of property has rather serious implications. As will be discussed in the following sections, the relationship between those who own property and those who rent is imbalanced; owners tend to reap greater benefits than those who don’t possess the correct amount and forms of capital to do so. Whether an individual or family owns land, a home, or some other form of real estate, determines the extent to which they have access to other valuable amenities that can provide betterment and improvement. During Hudson’s colonization, elite and powerful individuals had specifically chosen who had access to property ownership and who did not. Those who were barred from access during this time - the poor, enslaved, and Indigenous population - are still hindered from opportunities to own their own property today. As this chapter will discuss, the chances to own property are often exclusive to more affluent and powerful classes, omitting lower-class individuals and families from the corresponding means of betterment.

2.1.1 Dictionary Definitions

To first establish what exactly is meant when discussing property ownership, commonly regarded definitions of the term have been provided. According to the New York City Bar’s Website, property is defined as “land plus anything growing on it, attached to it or erected on it,
including man-made objects, such as buildings, structures, roads, sewers, and fences." The Legal Dictionary expands this definition, adding that property is of a “permanent, immovable nature, and the owner has an estate therein at least for life... It descends from the ancestor to the heir.” This rendition of the term points to the often inaccessible nature of owning property, given that it is frequently inherited by one’s ancestors. This has the potential to create a cycle of property ownership, whereby individuals whose ancestors were unable to attain land, housing, or real estate, thereby frequently struggle themselves to do the same. While these definitions seem quite straightforward, what the following section will expand upon are the implications and effects that come along with property ownership.

2.1.2 Theory

This chapter will analyze the role of property ownership in maintaining a particular power dynamic that has historically worked in the interest of property owners, at the expense of renters. As this chapter and relating theories surrounding ownership argue, whether an individual or family has the ability to own property - land, a home, or some other form of real estate - severely affects the degree to which they are able to access other valuable amenities and services that can provide betterment. Furthermore, this section will reveal the class and race-based nature of the disparities that come out of one’s access to, or lack of, property ownership.

Lawrence Yun and Nadia Evangelou’s thesis titled, “Social Benefits of Homeownership and Stable Housing” reveals the tangible financial benefits, as well as the equally important social benefits of homeownership and housing stability. As it stands today, the financial interests

32 New York City Bar: Legal Referral Service, “Definition of Real Property.”
33 The Free Dictionary (Farlex), “Real Property.”
of owning property are well established and understood, for both the individual household and economy at large. Yun and Evangelou note, “The housing sector directly accounted for approximately 15.6 percent of total economic activity in 2015. Household real estate holdings totaled $22.5 trillion in the last quarter of 2015. After subtracting mortgage liabilities, net real estate household equity totaled $13.0 trillion.”

However, what has been largely left out of the narrative are the immense social benefits that come along with home ownership and stable housing. The outcomes that they had chosen to measure include educational achievement, civic participation, health benefits, crime, public assistance, and property maintenance and improvement. Their study had concluded that homeownership, “boosts the educational performance of children, induces higher participation in civic and volunteering activity, improves health care outcomes, lowers crime rates and lessens welfare dependency.” Their research works to confirm the positive correlation between homeownership and housing stability, and better social outcomes.

However, equally important to address are the barriers that have existed and continue to prevent certain groups of people from gaining homeowner status. As their study also explains, “household circumstances by race and ethnicity - including wealth, income, and marital status - that account for a large majority of observed differences in homeownership rates.” They argue that one of the primary determinants of homeownership is income. Households with higher incomes are more likely to own a home, given that possessing a greater degree of financial capital “widens the choice of available homes” and also “increases the likelihood that a

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35 Yun and Evangelou, 1.
37 Ibid, 3.
household will qualify for a mortgage.”38 Therefore, households or individuals with lower incomes are less likely to own a home for those same reasons. In the section of their thesis pertaining to health benefits, they had additionally found that “White homeowners have an almost four percent higher probability of good health than comparable white renters. However, the impact of homeownership on the health condition of Black homeowners, while positive, is smaller than among whites,”39 which effectively confirms that “homeownership’s significance as a health resource is stratified by race and ethnicity”40 as well.

This study is useful to this chapter in that it reveals the financial and social significance of homeownership, as it allows individuals or households to “accumulate wealth and social status, and is the basis for a number of positive social, economic, family and civic outcomes.”41 While this is now recognized, what is equally important to understand are the disparities between the social outcomes of owners versus renters, a handful of property-owning individuals versus the community at large, as well as the barriers faced by low-income households and people of color to gain ownership status. This chapter will historically situate the phenomenon found in Yun and Evangelou’s thesis, and reveal the class and race based disparities that exist in the world of property ownership in Hudson today.

2.2 The Patroon System: Establishing an Elite Class via Property Ownership

As was explained in Lawrence Yun and Nadia Evangelou’s thesis, property owners effectively accumulate both financial and social capital, by means of ownership and renting their

39 Ibid, 10.
40 Ibid, 11.
41 Ibid, 15.
properties to tenants. Legislation surrounding property ownership, that was established upon Hudson’s colonization, has influenced the extent to which individuals and households are able to access ownership, and has established an unbalanced power dynamic between landowners and their tenants, both of which we still see today. The protocols that were established during Hudson’s colonization surrounding the luring-in of new tenants, and the resulting dependencies and power hierarchies that were established, reveal much about who has had access to property ownership and who, rather intentionally, has been barred from this status; disparities in ownership rates, which correspond to demographics such as race and income, in Hudson today have been largely predetermined by colonial practices. With ownership comes power and opportunity for betterment; by withholding property ownership from lower-class citizens, elites and landowners have effectively gatekept the financial and social benefits of property ownership, and established hierarchy over their tenants. Furthermore, the theft of Mahican lands and genocide of Mahican people had begun the erasure of community-oriented values and prioritization. The establishment of an elite class was defined largely on one’s property holdings, thereby initiating class distinction and the precedence of neoliberal growth.

2.2.1 *Attracting Tenants to Rensselaerswijck*

Hudson’s colonizers’ means of establishing protocols related to property ownership had effectively begun the process of accumulation, inaugurated the oppressive landowner-renter relationship that we are familiar with today and the erasure of community values. The Patroon System, which was set in place by the Dutch West India Company in 1629, was organized with
the goal of promoting settlement in the newly colonized land. “Patroons” or “patrons” were wealthy, white Dutchmen who were given, “extensive tracts of land, powers of local government, and some participation in the fur trade in exchange for settling fifty colonists.” The West India Company had debated on how to best attract new settlers to populate the colony, and had decided on opening it up to private entrepreneurs. The establishment of the Patroon System had commodified land and invented “property.” Property was utilized as a tool by white and wealthy colonizers to advance self-advancement and profit, dissimilar to the ways land was regarded in the hands of the Mahicans. The creation of “property” had initiated the dismantling of the “public” or “community;” property owners had effectively distanced themselves from their subordinate classes, which were of their own making.

Rensselaerswijck serves as an interesting case study by which we can discern the role of these “patroons” and the power which they were granted by owning land. Rensselaerswijck was one of the first estates to be deeded by the Dutch West India Company in the year 1630; the territory was stolen by a man named Killiaen Van Rensselaer, one of the region’s principal investors. It was said that he had “bought” the land from the Mahicans, who were indigenous to the area, and he had proceeded to establish one of the area’s first patroonships, otherwise known as a “private farming community.” Van Rensselaer’s patroonship was one of the first, and also one of the only successful endeavors, as it remained intact up until the nineteenth century and was passed down through multiple generations of his family. Upon his death, Killiaen’s son had taken control of the estate; Stephen Van Rensselaer III was the eighth and final patroon of
Rensselaerswijck. Under his control, the population of the estate had rapidly increased, mostly due to an influx of settlers coming from New England.\textsuperscript{46} When Stephen was born in 1764, the manor was predominantly “uninhabited wilderness” - in actuality, the region was inhabited by the Mahicans - but by 1840, it was estimated that there were approximately 50,000 new settlers.\textsuperscript{47}

The Patroon System was extremely successful in its stated goal of attracting new tenants and residents, using land as a financial commodity and a means of social distancing.

However, this prosperity and growth was only successful due to the profit-based incentives of private investors, and the theft of Mahican lands. Private investors, or “patroons,” weren’t even profiting off of the land and community in which they themselves had resided in. The land was both stolen and foreign to them; the patroon’s lack of care and actual interest in improving the community for those who were native, or actually lived and worked in the region, displays the uneven power dynamic that exists between property owners and their tenants.

Interestingly enough, it has been observed that Kiliaen Van Rensselaer hadn’t even visited his own estate. Yet, “he devoted a considerable portion of his attention and energy to his domain, which he fully intended to see turn a profit.”\textsuperscript{48} The property owner’s relationship with the land in which they own is quite interesting to analyze. Van Rensselaer, a private land investor, had seen this territory as a means of profit and gaining power and status, but remained wholly distant from the actual community. The invention of property allowed white and wealthy patroons to advance and heighten their social standing, through their financial earnings.

\textsuperscript{46} “Rensselaerswijck.”
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid.
2.2.2 The Durable Lease: Power Dynamics in Property Ownership

As was discussed in the previous section, white and wealthy patroons were granted large estates, which they had used to attract settlers as a means of gaining profit. These landowners had essentially established a feudal system, where patroons owned land and rented it to farmers who needed a job and a place to live. Tenant farmers paid annual rents to the patroons; although they weren’t ever granted the opportunity or power to purchase the land in which they had worked on and lived. Stephen Van Rensselaer, with Alexander Hamilton, had established what was known as “the durable lease” that, “would bind his tenants and their heirs to the manor in perpetuity.” The contract was regarded as an “incomplete sale,” which had allowed Van Rensselar and Hamilton to sidestep the issue of feudalism, which was outlawed in the state of New York in 1787. Therefore, according to the lease, tenants were required to (1) “Pay the patroon an annual rent of ten to twenty bushels of wheat per one-hundred acres, ‘four fat fowl,’ and a day’s labor with a team of horses and wagon,” (2) Pay all taxes, and (3) Use the land solely for agricultural purposes. The lease had included that the patroon would keep all timber, mineral, and rights to water, and therefore, the rights to exploit all of these natural resources. And lastly, the lease had provided that when a tenant had chosen to sell his farm, they were required to pay a “quarter-scale” - one fourth of the sale price - to the patroon in order for them to lease the property to another tenant.

49 “Rensselaerswijck.”
50 “New York State Library.”
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid.
53 William G. Pomeroy Foundation, “ANTI-RENT.”
54 “New York State Library.”
The dynamic that was created with the establishment of the Patroon System and durable lease had effectively systematized an imbalanced power hierarchy between land owner and tenant and eliminated chances for a community-oriented culture to exist in years to come. In addition to the annual rent payments, taxpaying, and upkeep of land which they could not themselves own, patroons held additional power over their tenants, including their right to move or relocate, establish businesses, or remarry. The power that landowners had held at this time was quite significant. By possessing a great degree of control over their tenants, these families were effectively able to further accumulate land, wealth, status, and power; “By 1703, five families held approximately 1.75 million acres of New York. By 1750, these families had become among colonial America's wealthiest landed elite.” The Patroon System had effectively established the “elite class” during this period of colonization, and they had the ability to reap the benefits of owning this land without being entirely responsible for it. Tenants, on the other hand, were left with little control; they lacked mobility, capital, and other resources and services. Much like Yun and Evangelou’s homeownership theory, we see tenants lacking the social and financial benefits that their landowners were reaping. Furthermore, the establishment of an elite class, via property ownership, inaugurated the prioritization and continual advancement of a handful of upper-class individuals over the majority of the community. Patroons’ dominance had effectively established and institutionalized the very familiar, disparate power dynamic that we see today.

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56 Ibid.
2.2.3 The Anti-Rent Wars

In response to the oppressive nature of the feudal-like patroon system, tenant farmers had staged a series of “Anti-Rent Wars,” demanding title and ownership to the land which they worked and lived, and had therefore felt belonged to them.\(^57\) Ill-feelings toward the durable lease system came to a head upon the death of Stephen Van Rensselaer III in 1839.\(^58\) Supposedly, Stephen had been rather complaisant in collecting overdue payments while he was alive and well, giving him the title “Good Patroon.” However, his will had contradicted this, and it instead stated that he wanted all of the overdue rents to be collected immediately upon his death. His sons who had inherited the estate from him, Stephen Van Rensselaer IV and William Paterson Van Rensselaer, got straight to work to see this through.\(^59\) They were said to be rather aggressive in their interaction with tenants, “noting that they ‘refused to renegotiate leases or sell lands.’”\(^60\) As Stephen III’s sons had worked to either “collect the debts or evict non-compliant tenants, tensions escalated to the point of violence and eventually led to the Anti-Rent Wars.”\(^61\)

In this example, we see an initial intersection of property ownership and protection from public safety efforts. Hudson’s military companies were quite prominent in the face of the Anti-Rent Wars. In this event we see the merging of Hudson’s public safety elites and property owners; elite forces had come together in order to protect their property interests. It was even said that the Anti-Rent Wars in 1844 were the “most important military display ever witnessed in Hudson.”\(^62\) Tenants had organized in opposition to their patroons and unfair lease system; they

\(^{57}\) Digital History, “The Middle Colonies: New York.”
\(^{58}\) William G. Pomeroy Foundation, “ANTI-RENT.”
\(^{59}\) Ibid.
\(^{60}\) Ibid.
\(^{61}\) Ibid.
\(^{62}\) Miller, *Historical Sketches of Hudson, Embracing the Settlement of the City*, 54.
had mobilized under the direction of Chiefs ‘Big Thunder’ and ‘Little Thunder.’ On December 12, 1844, the first wave of force from the tenants struck against Sheriff Henry Miller, “They were met by a force of three hundred ‘Indians’ and a concourse of about fifteen hundred people not in disguise... Swords were drawn, pistols placed at his breast, his papers demanded and given to them, which were subsequently burned in the presence of the crowd.”

Consequently, both Big and Little Thunder were arrested and sent to jail, along with other tenants who had participated in the protests. Military and police forces had ramped up security efforts in response, “Arms and ammunition were procured from Albany, and the fullest preparation made to meet any attempt at rescue.” With the protest leaders in custody, quiet and “safe” Hudson was restored and Hudson’s military forces had eventually withdrawn.

Pro-property and pro-neoliberal values truly revealed themselves in the face of the Anti-Rent Wars. Tenants, who had expressed their struggle to pay rent, were punished as a means to protect property values and interests. A handful of well-off property owners were given precedence over the majority of community members.

The Patroon System and the resulting Anti-Rent Wars serve as a prime case study as to analyze the financial and social benefits of ownership, the power hierarchy that was created between landowners and their tenants, and the de-prioritization of community that was largely a result of legislation crafted by the region’s colonizers. Rensselaerswijck’s patroons hadn’t resided in the community in which they were investing, yet they were still able to reap the benefits that come along with property ownership. In this case we see that, financially, they accumulated great amounts of land and profit from their tenants. And socially, they had

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63 Miller, Historical Sketches of Hudson, Embracing the Settlement of the City, 55-60.
64 Ibid, 60.
65 Ibid.
protection provided by public safety officials and access to other public services, such as education, as will be discussed in later chapters. Their respective tenants, on the other hand, were left without these modes of protection and chances for betterment. This had effectively established systematic mechanisms which had prevented their subordinate tenants from gaining ownership status themselves, thereby gatekeeping the financial and social benefits that come with owning property. As the next section will explain, these legislative power-moves, set in place by the area’s colonizers, have persisted to current-day Hudson through the short-term rental app, Airbnb.

2.3 Short-Term Rentals: Maintaining Class Distinction

Early in the Hudson Valley’s history, the area’s colonizers had effectively established their elite status, by means of property ownership. As will be revealed in this next section and the following chapters, their property holdings had guaranteed their financial and social security, as personal opportunities for betterment. This section will therefore discuss the contemporary role of “absentee landlords” and how they continue to maintain power over tenants and obstruct communal values today. The barriers to ownership and negative externalities that come along with renting, that began during the patroonship, reveal themselves in a similar fashion today, primarily through the presence of Airbnb in Hudson.

2.3.1 Attracting Tenants: City Beautification

Hudson’s elites and local government have continued to employ an array of tactics to attract new, desirable residents to the area in recent decades. We see this most prominently in
various beautification efforts the city has undergone, originating from the city’s Comprehensive Plan of 2003. Plan Goals 1, 2, and 3 of this operation, titled “ Protecting the Traditional Character of Hudson’s Downtown and Neighborhoods,” “ Protect and Strengthen Hudson’s Sense of Community,” and “ Promote Economic and Cultural Vitality” respectively, each outline steps to “ Strengthen and Maintain the Integrity of Gateways,” “ Promote the Image of the City,” and “ Develop a Housing Strategy.” In effect, these efforts serve to please and attract prospective residents and visitors, who drive economic growth and profit for property owners. Additionally, the implementation of these revitalization plans continue to deploy tactics that prioritize the property-owning individual that had been initiated by colonizers. Beautifying the city in order to increase property values gatekeeps any resulting benefits from community members.

Firstly, the plan’s aim to improve the city’s gateways reveals the extent to which Hudson’s government prioritizes and caters to its own reputation and exterior appearance, as that holds weight in the city’s ability to attract newcomers and increase property values. Plan Goal 1: Strengthen and Maintain the Integrity of Gateways, outlines the role of gateways and why they feel they should be so heavily prioritized, “Gateways play an important role in forming first impressions and welcoming visitors and residents alike. Both the form and the character of a gateway can influence the overall experience of a particular area.” Gateways here serve as a tool by which to beautify the city and attract new tenants, thereby providing property owners with means of financial growth.

Similarly, the city’s efforts to promote its image, specifically through the use of festivals, creates an image of the city that is safe while also being lively and culturally-rich, somewhere

66 “City of Hudson Comprehensive Plan,” iv.
where people would want to live. Plan Goal 2: Promote the Image of the City Through Festivals, states that,

Many regional residents never visit downtown Hudson, assuming the City is unsafe and unpleasant. For Hudson to continue to renew itself, it must overcome these stereotypes and encourage people to visit and explore the city. Hudson should build on its efforts to attract visitors with well-organized events like the Winter Walk, Firemen’s Parade, Flag Day, the Fourth Down Block Party and the Art Walk. Others the City might consider include a Garden Walk, Community Clean-Up Day, an Antiques Festival, and ethnic festivals that celebrate the diversity of Hudson... When these visitors come to the City and experience a safe environment, they are more likely to let go of their negative images and come back for other reasons.67

While this initiative may seem quite subtle in nature, the festivals seem to be working to appeal to prospective, not current community members. Those who city officials are looking to attract are able to increase the profit of property owners, in that the attendees of these events have the means to afford increased costs of living. Here we are also seeing the convergence of property ownership and public safety, much like that of the Anti-Rent Wars. Utilizing the type of rhetoric that promotes the city as a “safe environment,” “free from crime” prioritizes the protection of property. It is a means of attracting economically-valuable residents and tenants, that protects the outward reputation of the city. These beautification efforts are tools to attract economically-significant residents, similar to strategies utilized by patroons. By curating the illusion of a culturally-diverse, well-kept, safe city, the local government is able to use culture to procure profit. The practice and methods of attracting new residents or tenants is largely a profit-driven endeavor that capitalizes off of a culture, that appeals to the middle-class.

Lastly, Plan Goal 3: Develop a Housing Strategy, addresses the resulting influx of middle-class residents that these initiatives will attract. Note that the city’s proposed housing

strategy is listed under the section titled, “Promote Economic and Cultural Vitality”; this
acknowledges the role of property ownership as an economic growth strategy. This section of the
plan states,

While many of New York State’s urban communities are struggling with strategies to
attract middle-class residents, Hudson has already started to attract this group. Hudson’s
continuing revitalization is likely to coincide with increases in the cost of housing
(including housing values and rents). For the most part, this increase in value will be a
very good thing for Hudson. However, the challenge for local decision-makers, the
business community and neighborhood residents will be to ensure the benefits of
Hudson’s resurgence are shared among all community members. Consequently, a
coordinated, multi-tiered approach must be developed involving the City, the private
sector and not-for-profit organizations such as Housing Resources. 68

While this initiative seems to acknowledge and work to serve the needs of Hudson’s already
existing community members, support communal-values, and counteract the effects of
gentrification, the plan’s “priority list” devalues this goal. The charts below rank each plan goal
based on priority, by the following three categories: “essential” being the most important,
followed by “important,” and lastly, “secondary importance,” which is where Hudson’s need to
provide affordable housing unfortunately sits.

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68 “City of Hudson Comprehensive Plan,” xi.
Here we explicitly see “community-based policing,” “promoting festivals,” “addressing gateway circulation patterns,” “improving the pedestrian landscape,” and other means of protecting property, reign power and prioritization over the needs of the community, such as “addressing the need to protect affordable housing” which sits at the very bottom of the list. This priority list is
quite direct in its efforts to devalue renters and community members in need of affordable housing, and instead promotes efforts that most directly affect property values, and therefore, property owners.

As this list and the supporting policies show, there exist two classes of residents in Hudson. One being the new, more affluent and white residents that the city is hoping to attract, as a means of reaping profit. Secondly, the plan acknowledges the already existing renters who are struggling to keep up with inflated housing costs but fails to provide a satisfactory solution and degree of prioritization. Much similarly to the Patroon System, this contemporary approach to attracting new tenants serves as a means to increase property values, given that middle-class residents are able to afford inflated living expenses. In each of these efforts, those with property interests - property owners and other elite officials - are able to secure their desired profit through the exploitation of poorer residents. Also like methods deployed in the patroonship, renters were restricted by their lack of ownership status. Recall that tenants under the Patroon System were unable to own the land which they tended to and lived on, weren’t able to move, or have access to the materials of the land, among other restrictions. This is similar to contemporary beautification efforts; beautifying the city is not for the benefit of the community at large, but to attract economically-viable residents. Furthermore, the inflation in the cost of living that is largely a result of these practices restricts renters in need of affordable housing.

2.3.2 The Absentee Landlord: Power Dynamics in Property Ownership

Homeownership rates in Hudson, relative to the amount of individuals and families who rent, reveals a great deal about who is reaping the benefits of owning property. In Hudson, only
32% of residents own the occupancy in which they reside, compared to the national average of 63%.\textsuperscript{69} While at the same time, the city’s land prices have skyrocketed in the last few years. Between the years of 2017 and 2018, the median property value had increased 14%, from $189,400 to $216,000. Additionally, as of 2021, the median listing price of land in Hudson sits at $439,000.\textsuperscript{70} This dictates which groups of people are benefiting from attracting new tenants and increased property and rent values. Renters - which in this scenario, are more likely to be Black and lower-income residents - and the community at large are not reaping the benefits from the government's initiatives to attract new residents and make the city appear more desirable. Alternatively, property owners effectively recognize the prospective value of land and that attracting new residents can fulfill this value by paying higher rents, thereby securing financial self-betterment.

We are continuing to see an imbalanced dynamic between landowners and tenants in Hudson today as a result of the area’s lasting colonial practices. The case of Kiliaen Van Rensselaer, who hadn’t even visited the land in which he owned and reaped the benefits of, renders a stark resemblance to the sort of absentee homeownership that we see in Hudson today. Airbnb has recently emerged as a popular means of renting a property to short-term tenants. Like the example of Van Rensselaer, one major concern that has emerged with the increasing popularity of Airbnb is the threat of absentee landlords. This term emerged from the increasing amount of property owners who had realized the potential for profit in purchasing property in a “booming” city such as Hudson, and renting it out to tourists and visitors who are able to afford it. The popularity surrounding this phenomenon is well recognized, “A 2016 study completed for

\textsuperscript{69} Data USA, “Hudson, NY.”
\textsuperscript{70} Ibid.
Airbnb by HR&A showed that the site’s activity outside New York City has increased 270 percent since 2014,” meaning that Hudson Valley’s short-term, Airbnb rentals are popping up with increasing frequency. It is widely recognized that Hudson Valley cities, Hudson included have,

Always drawn visitors looking to explore its state parks, enjoy its farm-to-table eateries and breweries, and take in all the beauty and recreational activities it has to offer. Short-term rentals are now boosting visitations by making it easier and cheaper for visitors to the study area, and helping homeowners make a few extra dollars by renting to guests.72

Airbnb, much like the beautification efforts enacted by local government, represents the attempts made by property owners to attract outside visitors and generate profit. In the year of 2018, it was reported that two hundred hosts had rented out their homes to nearly 23,000 visitors and from these rentals, have grossed $3.8 million.73 In an interview discussing the issue of absentee landlords and potential Airbnb regulations, Robert Stanley, town supervisor in the Catskill region, notes that,

Home sales in the area have picked up alongside the growth of Airbnb... We don’t want our neighborhoods to disappear to transient residency. That’s another challenge playing out upstate: how to regulate or prohibit buyers from purchasing properties specifically for short-term rentals. In some instances there [have been] individuals buying houses for renting on short-term rental sites… contributing to a housing availability shortage... Other issues raised by this disrupter include the fact that hosts may or may not live in the Mid-Hudson Valley so earnings do not stay in the area.74

This issue is regarded as a double-edged sword, in that it effectively contributes to the city’s tourism and the economic gains, but major concerns surrounding neighborhood preservation,

71 Nonko, “What Will Airbnb Regulation Look like in the Hudson Valley?”
72 Menist, “Airbnb: The New Place to Stay.”
73 Menist.
74 Nonko, “What Will Airbnb Regulation Look like in the Hudson Valley?”
specifically, affordable, accessible, and available housing are also a consequence that must be considered.

Again, quite similarly to the restrictive nature of the patroon and leasing system seen in the initial period of the region’s development, Airbnb highlights the disparity in power, control, and mobility that existing residents are dealing with today. For all of the benefits that short-term rentals bring to Hudson’s economy, Airbnb limits the availability of homes for primary residents, and further contributes to the unaffordability of housing in the region. Hudson’s lawmakers and property owners effectively work together to keep their properties profitable, and they recognize that a great deal of economic opportunity lies in the short-term rental and tourism industry. The elite status that was granted to white and wealthy patroons by means of owning property closely resembles the characteristics of property owners in Hudson today. According to census data from 2010, the area northeast of Warren Street - Hudson’s “main” road that runs down the city’s center - is 61.76% renter occupied, compared to the southwest region that is 50.3% renter occupied. Additionally, the same northeast region is 56.79% white, relative to the 73.27% of white residents in the southwest region. This shows a correlation between property ownership and race, in that a significantly whiter area has a significantly higher homeownership rate. In terms of income, 20.22% of those living in the same northeast region had a household income that sits below the poverty line, compared to the opposite, whiter area with an income below poverty-rate of 15.02%. This data, collected from 2010, highlights the correlations that exist between rates of homeownership, and race and class. It can be gleaned that it is more likely for a white, more

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75 Menist, “Airbnb: The New Place to Stay.”
76 Social Explorer, “Occupied Housing Units: Renter Occupied.”
affluent Hudson resident to be in possession of their home, as opposed to renting, which can be correlated and accredited to the colonial legacies left in place by Hudson’s Proprietors.

Due to the systemic and discriminatory nature of property ownership, these distant property owners have historically reaped and gatekept the financial and social benefits of ownership, on behalf of community members and existing tenants. Hudson’s renters are left with little mobility, due to increased costs of living and resources, given that investments to “improve” the city cater to a handful of wealthier residents and protect property-related interests. The power held by the patroons and current-day absentee landlords is made possible by the hierarchy and emphasis placed on property ownership that was birthed during Hudson’s colonization.

2.3.3 Regulating Short-Term Rentals

Similarly to the type of resistance that was met during the Anti-Rent Wars in the region’s early history, contemporary Hudson has been home to activists who are in opposition to the property and housing crisis going on in their city. The activist group Kite’s Nest actively works to “build the collective capacity of young people to bring about personal transformation, social connection, healing, and systemic change.”79 The group recognizes and fights against the lack of affordable and accessible spaces in Hudson. They make visible the experience of long-term renters in Hudson, who are “experiencing uncertainty, precarity, and displacement at an accelerating pace, which creates emotional and psychological challenges for people, including families and kids,”80 and they propose a set of changes that work against the interests of property

79 Kite’s Nest.
80 Ibid.
owners, specifically short-term rental owners. Among other things, the group pushes forward a set of demands that includes financial incentives to maintain affordable housing, increase support for tenants, and management of short-term rentals in their community. Many cities in the Hudson Valley who are facing similar issues have spoken up about drafting legislation that regulates the short-term rental industry. New Paltz’s Mayor, Tim Rodgers speaks, “The idea isn’t to prohibit, but to have a way to manage where [short-term rentals] end up... We want people to have the flexibility, we just don’t want investors to gobble up properties and have a concentration of mini-hotels in residential neighborhoods.”

Quite similarly to the Anti Rent Wars, Hudson’s current Airbnb crisis and accompanied resistance exemplifies the various benefits that come along with ownership and the power hierarchy that comes as a result. Legislation and plans to attract new tenants lure a wealthier set of prospective residents, and the Airbnb industry capitalizes on the presence of this demographic. Tourists and new wealthy residents are reaping both the financial and social benefits that are provided by the city’s government via the Comprehensive Plan. Furthermore, the extent to which short-term rentals promote “absentee landownership” strongly resembles the way in which Hudson’s patroons didn’t invest in property where they had resided, solely viewing property as a means of guaranteeing long-term economic gain for the individual. Financially speaking, these Airbnb owners have been able to accumulate property and profit from the area’s tourists, effectively minimizing the mobility of long term renters who live in the area, due to increased housing prices. Hudson’s rental-community members are left unable to enjoy the same benefits of the area’s property owners.

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81 Zissu, “Hudson Valley Towns Mull Airbnb Limits.”
2.4 The Role of Property Ownership

As has been analyzed in both Hudson’s colonization and current-day, property ownership was established and persists as a means of securing profit and, as the next two chapters will expand on, other socially-oriented benefits. The failure of Hudson’s government to adequately prioritize the betterment and wellbeing of tenants and the pre-existing community at large, unveils the disproportionate nature by which individuals glean the benefits of community investment initiatives. By enacting a series of measures that effectively exclude renters - who have historically been low-income, black, and Indigenous - from opportunities to own property holds serious implications related to self-betterment, improvement, and access to other resources and services. This chapter, which primarily discusses the financial benefits and power that comes with property ownership, will be complemented by the next two chapters on public services and safety, which exemplify the ways in which upper-class elites have historically enjoyed social services due to their standing, as compared to the city’s “lower class” citizens.
Chapter 3: Public Services

3.1 Defining Public Services

Public services refer to the resources and programs that are provided to a city’s residents on behalf of the government. Public services, in theory, should work in the best interest of the public, not catering to any sort of ulterior motives or profit-driven incentives. This chapter instead points out the frequent failure of public services to fulfill the needs of residents and the resulting inadequacies that are compensated by private actors who work for-profit. During both Hudson’s colonization and the city’s more recent era of gentrification, public services have proven themselves to be ineffective and insufficient, in that many are underfunded or not at all funded by the government. In both cases, this practice has resulted in private actors and individuals working to remedy the circumstances, which have effectively barred poor and Black residents from access and entry, given that these services and amenities were for-profit. The same group of property-owning elites that were discussed in the previous chapter are analogous to those who have the means to access well-funded social services, such as private educational institutions. Public services often inadequately serve local residents, prioritizing prospective residents, who are more affluent and can afford the alternatives presented by for-profit, private actors. This therefore gate-keeps opportunities for social betterment - in the form of education - from historically excluded demographics.

3.1.1 Dictionary Definitions

In order to establish a common language around public services and establish their role in ensuring the wellbeing of the general public, this section will review a handful of commonly
accepted definitions of the term. According to Collins Dictionary, public services are regarded as,

Something... which is organized by the government or an official body in order to benefit all the people in a particular society or community. Public service activities and types of work are concerned with helping people and providing them with what they need, rather than making a profit.82

Cambridge Dictionary expands this definition and provides examples of some of the services that are commonly supplied by a government, which often include, “hospitals, schools, or the police,” among other “essential commodities, as gas or electricity, or a service, as transportation.” What these definitions together establish is that public services should, in principle, serve the needs of the public, and it is a government’s responsibility to provide these services. In other terms, public services can be equated to a certain degree of public investment, public priority, or care. The extent to which a government prioritizes or funds public services can severely impact those who rely most heavily on publicly funded programs, while those with greater amounts of financial and social capital, are afforded the opportunity to pursue more expensive, privatized services, and access means of self-improvement.

3.1.2 Theory

This chapter will be analyzing the role of schools as a public service, and the extent to which they have been prioritized and adequately provided by the city of Hudson throughout history. As this chapter and distinguished theories relating to public services argue, public services often fail to serve local residents who are unable to afford or pursue better, but more

82 Collins English Dictionary, “Public Service Definition and Meaning: Collins English Dictionary.”
83 Cambridge English Dictionary, “Public Service.”
84 Dictionary.com, “Public Service.”
costly, private programs. Having a poorly funded school system, with a rather expensive, privatized alternative that most residents are unable to afford, leaves new and affluent residents with little stake in the quality of their city’s public services and schools. Therefore, local governments are able to get away with neglecting the value of publicly-funded programs and services, given that they are still able to attract middle and upper class residents who value education, guaranteeing local economic growth. Furthermore, the rhetoric of “community betterment and improvement” that has been promoted, historically by colonizers and gentrifiers alike, is proven false when public services fail, to provide means of educational betterment for the community at large.

Micere Keels’s thesis titled, “The Effects of Gentrification on Neighborhood Public Schools,” supports this logic, exemplifying the ways in which gentrification either doesn’t affect, or negatively affects, the improvement and quality of neighborhood public schools; public schools experience little to no academic benefit from the socioeconomic changes that are affecting the surrounding area. It may be expected that gentrification efforts would improve the accessibility and quality of public services, specifically resulting from “(1) The higher achievement of students from middle-income families, and (2) the increasing achievement of students from low-income families.” However, Keel’s study had found that low-income residents, specifically, don't get to share the benefits that come along with economic revitalization. What was instead found is that,

Many gentrifying families do not have school age children and those who do have non neighborhood public and private school options... in the majority of cases, gentrification is not associated with school improvement. This is because many of the artists, young professionals, empty nesters, and gay and lesbians credited with initiating gentrification

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86 Keels, Burdick–Will, and Keene, 239.
are childless households, and thus have little incentive to focus on improving schools. Furthermore, gentrifiers with children have a high likelihood of using their economic, political, and social resources to send their children to magnet or charter public schools, or private schools, oftentimes outside the neighborhood.\footnote{Keels, Burdick–Will, and Keene, “The Effects of Gentrification on Neighborhood Public Schools,” 240.}

Therefore, what was found is that children from low-income families continue to predominantly occupy public schools, even if they are of poor quality, due to the fact that they are unable to afford the other options. Gentrifiers, who possess a greater degree of financial mobility, therefore possess a greater degree of social mobility; they are unburdened by poor public schools, as they can pursue more expensive and privatized options if need be. This, in turn, reinforces socioeconomic inequalities and stratification in a community, given that wealthier residents are financially suited to seek out options that will guarantee the betterment of their children over the improvement of the services provided by the community in which they live.

3.2 The Proprietors’ Public Services: Establishing Public Erasure

As was outlined by Micere Keels’s thesis on the role of schools in gentrification and economic pursuit, local governments are able to neglect the priority of public services and the wellbeing of the residents who rely most heavily on these publicly-provided programs, in favor of an elite class whose members are not negatively affected by the quality of these programs; they have the financial means of accessing this form of betterment. The disrepair of Hudson’s public school districts, from the onset of the area’s colonization up until present day, reveals the extent to which public welfare is prioritized over that of more affluent residents who can afford better, private options for their children’s betterment, and enhance profitization and economic growth in the region. Additionally, families who are able to afford private modes of education
possess a greater degree of financial capital, and by allocating that capital to a community that is separate from that of which they reside, local community members don’t reap the same economic benefits as gentrifiers. By outsourcing public services, black children and families in poverty - similarly to those who were prohibited from owning property - are and have been further barred from educational achievement, deepening the severity of socioeconomic inequalities.

3.2.1 *The Common School System*

The Proprietors’ failure to establish an adequate public school upon colonizing the area determined the extent to which public services would suitably serve the needs of its current and future community residents. A local newspaper written in 1806 had described the failures and inadequacies of Hudson’s public schools,

> No public building for the education of youth had been built in the city of Hudson. No public encouragement was given to literary pursuits. The citizens of the most flourishing town in the state were compelled to send their children abroad for education or to leave them uneducated. If a teacher appeared among them, he had everything to discourage him. He had to procure his rooms, obtain his scholars, and collect his own subscriptions.\(^{88}\)

Although the city was in a state of rapid economic growth and development, the services that were provided to the local community were grossly inadequate. This underlines the extent to which Hudson’s government prioritized the wellbeing of its primary occupants; even in the face of profit, poor citizens were barred from the perceived benefits.

In 1803, the city’s Common Council first established the extent to which publicly-accessible education would be afforded, “The Common Council in 1803 appropriated the ‘money now in the hands of the treasurer’ for schools and reassigned it for an unspecified

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\(^{88}\) Fone, *Historic Hudson: an Architectural Portrait*, 42.
'contingent purpose.' There had been no provision made for free education in Hudson, and there would be none until 1841.** Hudson’s first educational systems were private due to a lack of funding; however, a public school was eventually created due to the demand for affordable education and public instruction. Citizens who were unable to afford the elite private educational options that were being offered had written in to the local newspaper demanding improvements be made to the public education system, “Defenders of the status quo consistently reported to the remarkable success of the community’s private academies; reformers responded by arguing that it was precisely the popularity of those elite institutions that siphoned off resources for the large majority of less affluent students.”** In response, Hudson’s first public school, “the Common School” was established in 1841.

Hudson’s Common School system, created in response to the lack of publicly accessible and affordable schooling options, was a major failure on behalf of serving the needs and demands of the city’s residents. Most schoolhouses in the city were in major disrepair, many lacked proper equipment and resources that were essential to teaching, including textbooks and slates, among other things. Few districts in the region were able to maintain a steady supply of qualified teachers and keep regular student attendance. Many families who relied on the public schooling system were in poverty and were therefore unable to pay rate bills or purchase other books and necessary school supplies.** In 1849, a news article from a local paper summarized the poor state of public education in the region, “Lamenting the ‘miserable’ state of common schools readily apparent to even the ‘most careless observer,’ the writer argued that incompetent teachers, irregular attendance, ‘improper textbooks,’ ‘ill-looking, ill-arranged, uncomfortable,

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**Fone, *Historic Hudson: an Architectural Portrait*, 42.
**Groth, 108.
and unhealthy rooms’ all contributed to a ‘miserable apathy’ among many parents and children.”

Additionally, Black students who had attended these common, integrated schools faced daily harassment. It was often the case that racial barriers completely prevented Black students from even entering the public school system.

The state superintendent acknowledged that the limited data reflected “extremely limited” attendance; as few as one-quarter of African American children were enrolled in local schools. The superintendent was candid in identifying the principal reason for such poor attendance rates; despite the civil rights guaranteed Black citizens by the State of New York, social conventions excluded Black New Yorkers “from all social intercourse, as equals.”

The initial attempt by the local government to provide a suitable common school was a failure on multiple fronts. Firstly, it failed black and poor students by barring them from entry and humane treatment, and secondly, it lacked proper instructional equipment and infrastructure. This effectively set the stage for Hudson’s subsequent public schools. The irony that the city’s economy was flourishing at the time where one of its most crucial public services was failing, reveals the nature of economic growth and who it serves to benefit. The Proprietors’ efforts to foster economic growth was not in the interest of the local community, given that capital generated was not fed back into public services and infrastructures.

3.2.2 Hudson’s First Private Schools

Private institutions in Hudson were established years before the first public school was ever founded. The city’s first ever school was built along the Hudson River in 1784, near the

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93 Ibid.
94 Ibid.
corner of current-day Partition and Ferry Street. It was attended by children of both the Proprietors and the Dutch, and it was instructed by James Burns. Records of the first private school in Hudson are quite limited, although the facility was said to be demolished when the roads were expanded and the city had made other infrastructural improvements. In response, the Proprietors had agreed to donate a 40-by-24-foot lot to anyone who would be willing to build a new school that supposedly wouldn’t discriminate based on “class or denomination.” Classes at this new school were taught by Joseph Marshall, and the curriculum had covered, “reading, writing, ciphering, composition, English grammar, geography, surveying, and the Latin and Greek languages.”

This institution, which effectively established the need for educational resources in the area, unfortunately didn’t adequately serve the majority of those who lived there, as was supposedly intended. The school was attended by children of both the Proprietors and the Dutch, in other words, those who had the means to afford it. The institution which had claimed to be “open to all,” in reality had, “made some of the exclusive Quakers fearful of the dangers attendant upon allowing their children to be taught in too-intimate-proximity with ‘people of the world.’” The exclusivity and privatization of the city’s first school had barred lower-income, Black residents from gaining entry upon its inception. The combination of an under-supported public system and an inaccessible private institution reinforced and systematized race and class-based inequalities.

96 Ibid.
97 Ibid.
98 Ibid.
99 Ibid.
In addition to the school that was mostly exclusive to white and affluent residents, the availability of education had relied on individual teachers who were willing and able to provide the space and resources for teaching. Many teachers had opened up their own homes, or other spaces that they were able to rent, to those who were able to pay,

Ambrose Liverpool, who had enterprisingly announced in the Hudson Weekly Gazette that he could teach... Major Fowler taught at his house on Parade Alley. Another in-home school was taught near the saddlery of Mr. Burns. Mr. Hedge had a school in the west chamber of city hall, while Mr. Palmer ran a school in the east chamber. None of these, of course, were free; teachers earned their keep from the payments made by students.100

Due to the individuality and lack of standardization of education in Hudson, there was no way to assess the quality of education that was given, or the nature of subjects taught by these independent teachers. Regardless, the need for individuals to provide educational tools for the city’s youth highlights the negligence on behalf of the city’s government to provide essential public services. Those who had the capital to improve their educational and social standing, namely colonizers and their children, were unmoved by the government’s failure to establish a proper public school, as they were afforded the flexibility to engage with other options.

Much like what was found in Micere Keels’ research on gentrification and public schools, the implications of having a poorly funded public education system were borne most heavily by black and lower-income residents. Given that upper-class families were able to afford and seek out higher-quality, private schooling options, Hudson’s colonizers were able to get away with disregarding the need for publicly-funded services. The city was able to retain upper-class families who ensured economic growth, regardless of the state of their public services. Furthermore, this effectively established the socioeconomic disparities that we see in

100 Fone, *Historic Hudson: an Architectural Portrait*, 41-42.
Hudson today; the availability of educational resources in the city’s early years set the stage for who would have access to these resources in the years to come.

3.3 The “New Proprietors’” Public Services: Outsourcing Community

In the city’s early history, Hudson’s colonizers had set the tone for public services and the extent to which they were prioritized. The failure to establish a public school, and the resulting reliance on private, for-profit alternatives to education, has contributed to and allowed for the continued inadequacy of Hudson’s public schools today. As this section will expand upon, the city’s local government continues to deprioritize public wellbeing, as they are still able to ensure economic growth even alongside the failure of their municipal services. Gentrifiers pursuing the area are able to ignore the poorly-funded and cared for services, schools specifically, as they possess the proper financial flexibility to take advantage of private options. This next section will analyze the continuities in Hudson’s education system that were established by the Proprietors and have persisted to present day.

3.3.1 The Hudson City School District

Similarly to the quality of the Proprietors’ public education, contemporary Hudson’s schooling system is plagued by a lack of funding and prioritization. The Hudson City School District is known to be an underperforming school, “The school receives a five out of ten rating on two school review websites, dropout rates are high and test scores are low;”\textsuperscript{101} 67% of the district's schools are reported to be “below average.”\textsuperscript{102} Regardless, this doesn’t pose negative

\textsuperscript{102} GreatSchools, “Hudson City School District.”
outcomes for prospective residents and gentrifiers. They have little stake in the quality of Hudson’s public schools, given that they are mobile enough to engage with alternative options that Hudson’s less-affluent residents are unable to afford, and this is actively recognized by the local government.

Compared to that of one of Hudson’s main private school-contenders, which will be discussed in the later section, and much like what was seen in Hudson’s early years, the publicly-funded Hudson City School District’s students come from families that are less white, less funded, and less wealthy. The district’s students are 44% white, 21% Black, 15% Hispanic, and 12% Asian. In terms of funding, Hudson's public school sustains itself with $47.6 million in funding, compared to the state average of $100.2 million. Additionally, 66% of the district's students come from low-income families. These demographics serve to show that the groups of people who rely most heavily and are most dependent on publicly-provided education in Hudson. Compared to the composition of the private school alternative, Hudson’s public schools serve a population that is less white and less wealthy.

Even in a city that is rather resource-rich and is in a state of rapid economic development, Hudson’s public schools remain underfunded and under prioritized. This phenomenon can be explained by the fact that the local government actively recognizes that they still have the ability to attract their desired residents and means of economic growth - affluent, white, highly-educated individuals and families - without having to spend a large portion of their budget on public schools and other services. Furthermore, it can be argued that the deprioritization and under-performing nature of Hudson’s original public schools, and the demographics that these

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103 GreatSchools, “Hudson City School District.”
schools served, carries a stark resemblance to the condition of Hudson’s public school district today. Incoming gentrifiers recognize the underperforming public school system, and they commonly seek out alternatives that lie outside of the local community, as will be discussed in the next section.

3.3.2 Berkshire Country Day School

It appears that the role of and reliance on private schools has not faltered much since Hudson’s colonization. Hudson’s affluent residents and gentrifiers frequently send their children to schools in communities outside of their own, due to the state of the city’s public schools, and the tuition is paid to the receiving district. Take the example of Berkshire Country Day School, a private institution in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, that actively works to compensate for Hudson’s lacking public schools. The school offers learning from preschool through 8th grade, but is rather small and exclusive. According to their website, the school prepares students for a “successful and prosperous” academic future,

Our graduates are sought out by the most prestigious independent schools in the country or they join honors programs at competitive area high schools, regularly serving in leadership roles, and possess an impressive list of post-secondary colleges and universities. Alumni regularly credit their BCD experience as laying the foundation for their future success.\textsuperscript{104}

The school’s website emphasizes the role of project-based learning, supporting strong relationships between teachers and students, and encouraging outdoor, hands-on learning experiences on their 27-acre campus, and boasts their 6:1 student to teacher ratio,\textsuperscript{105} compared to

\textsuperscript{104} Berkshire Country Day School, “Independent School PreK-9 - Busing and Transportation.”
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid.
Hudson City’s School District’s 10:1. Online review forums are filled with parents who have sent their children to Berkshire Country Day School, raving about the quality of education that the school has provided to their students. Interestingly, as of 2017, Berkshire began offering a bus service from Hudson to Stockbridge for students, effectively providing a superior alternative to the quality of education offered by Hudson’s public schools.

However, this opportunity is extremely exclusive and unattainable for many of Hudson’s residents, as Berkshire’s yearly tuition sits at $30,000 per student. As a result, many of the city’s less affluent residents are stuck with the under-funded public school system. Berkshire’s student population is 81% white, 6% Asian, 6% Black, and the rest is left unspecified. These demographics, when coupled with data provided by Hudson’s public schools, reveal the race and class-based, discriminatory nature that results from the failure of Hudson’s public school system, and public services at large. Residents who are living in the same community are not dealing with or receiving the same quality of public services; Hudson’s wealthier residents have the ability to outsource higher-quality schools whereas many of the city’s lower-class residents are stuck with what is provided by the local government. Even while the city is in a state of economic growth, due to incoming gentrifiers, the local government manages to neglect the quality of public services and the community members who need these services most.

3.4 The Role of Public Services

As it has been revealed during both Hudson’s colonization and present-day, failing to provide public services, namely education, is utilized as a tool by the city’s government,

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106 GreatSchools, “Hudson City School District.”
108 “Explore Berkshire Country Day School in Stockbridge, MA.”
colonizers, and gentrifiers alike, to ensure economic and social, personal growth. The failure of Hudson’s public schools from the onset of colonization has worked to reinforce systemic inequalities, in that poor residents and residents of color are continually excluded from access to capital, institutional resources, mobility, and other opportunities. By excluding marginalized groups from having access to public services, the government is thereby driven by the benefits of attracting social elites, who actually possess the capital and other means of ensuring the city’s profitability and economic growth. This, in effect, guarantees land profitability but at less of an expense to colonizers and gentrifiers. By being able to “pass” on the improvement of public services, they are still able to attract upper-class residents who can foster economic growth and pay increased housing and living costs, while remaining unaffected by the locale’s poor public services.
Chapter 4: Public Safety

4.1 Defining Public Safety

Public safety, as it is most commonly understood, refers to the welfare and protection of the general public from crime, disasters, and other possible sources of “danger.” Public safety is organized and enforced via the calculated combination of legislation and surveillance; the laws enacted in the name of “public safety” are ensured by public institutions such as the police, security agents, emergency response teams, etcetera. Public safety is frequently regarded as a social service provided by the government that, in theory, should work in the best interest of a city’s residents. This chapter instead argues that public safety protocols function as a means of protection primarily for a handful property owners, guarding their financial assets. Public safety, which in theory should function as a social means of betterment for a community, acts as a privatized, financial protector for those with property interests. Many public safety laws and ordinances enforce a state of policing and surveillance that serve to protect an elite group of individuals, their property interests, thereby criminalizing individuals who “interfere.”

4.1.1 Dictionary Definitions

In order to establish how public safety is most often regarded, this chapter will first provide commonly accepted dictionary definitions of the term. Public safety, according to Goodwin University, involves,

Protecting the public - safeguarding people from crimes, disaster, and other potential dangers and threats. In the United States, public safety is the dedicated responsibility of certain government organizations and local departments... police officers, security agents, emergency response teams, fire forces, parole officers, and more. No matter the role, the
primary goal of public safety professionals is to prevent danger and to protect the wellbeing of citizens, communities, and organizations.\textsuperscript{109}

This definition emphasizes public safety as a governmental responsibility that works to ensure the wellbeing and protection of the general public from crime. What still remains ambiguous in this definition is what is actually meant by “crime.” Simply defining public safety as “protection from crime” leaves ample room for interpolation and gives power to legislators to determine what activity is considered “criminal.” Law Insider expands this definition of public safety, claiming it to be, “the obviation of danger to the general public and to any public place or public property.”\textsuperscript{110} In this iteration of the term, the scope of protection is expanded to not only the general public, but also to public property. By establishing that public safety measures also work to protect public spaces and property, the extent to which the general public is protected becomes compromised. Following this definition of the term, the protection of property becomes equally as important as the protection of human lives and community. The inconclusive definition of “crime” as well as the expansion of public safety to protect property normalizes and advocates for the disciplining and illegalization of a particular subset of the urban population - namely, those who don’t own property.

4.1.2 \textit{Theory}

As this chapter and prominent theories relating to public safety argue, public safety is a product of legislation which is enacted by individuals in a position of power, and therefore, often serve the interests of those in power. Many public safety laws and ordinances have historically

\textsuperscript{109} Goodwin University, “What Is Public Safety?: Goodwin College.”
\textsuperscript{110} Law Insider, “Public Safety Definition.”
enforced a state of policing and surveillance that have served to protect an elite group of individuals and their economic interests; although it should ideally be functioning as a public service, protecting the wellbeing of the community at large. Also a contributing factor is the ambiguity that exists in many definitions of public safety, specifically in determining what qualifies as “criminal” and who or what is protected, gives lawmakers the power to determine the extent to which public safety actually serves the general public.

Neil Smith’s thesis, “The Revanchist City,” questions the role and intentions of public safety laws, ultimately arguing that these policies work to criminalize houseless individuals and others who have been deemed “societal outcasts” - individuals who threaten to stunt a region’s reputation and chances for economic growth. In defining “the revanchist city,” Smith writes,

> It [the revanchist city] is a divided city where the victors are increasingly defensive of their privilege, such as it is, and increasingly vicious defending it. The revanchist city is more than the dual city, in race and class terms. The benign neglect of “the other half,” so dominant in the liberal rhetoric of the 1950s and 1960s, has been superseded by a more active viciousness that attempts to criminalize a whole range of “behavior,” individually defined, and to blame the failure of post-1968 urban policy on the populations it was supposed to assist.\(^\text{111}\)

What Smith’s research suggests is that the extent to which public safety laws actually work to benefit “public people” and the community at large is simply insufficient. This argument rightfully asserts that public safety laws are ultimately a disservice to those who it claims to protect, as they effectively punish the public presence of a specific set of individuals and their behaviors, those with property interests have deemed “other.” Smith’s work cites the example of New York City in the 1990s, where an increased police presence effectively targeted and criminalized houseless people, prostitutes, squatters, reckless youth, and other “social

\(^{111}\) Austin, “Policing the Riverfront: Urban Revanchism as Sustainability,” 5.
parasites”\textsuperscript{112} who were not a part of the elite’s vision of the urban space. As we will see with the case of Hudson, it’s not at all uncommon for gentrifying cities to enact laws that actively work to incriminate and eliminate these individuals from public spaces,

Laws against begging, panhandling, sleeping or urinating on sidewalks and in other public spaces are increasingly used to cleanse the public spaces used by tourists, the middle-class and wealthy residents and visitors. As cities compete aggressively to make themselves attractive places to live in and in which to invest, they are more willing to impose harsh penalties on those people seen as “undesirable” by tourists, shoppers, commuters, and investors. Municipal ordinances have been mobilized to criminalize behavior that is offensive or unpleasant to the resident and visiting middle classes.\textsuperscript{113}

As it has been shown, those who support revanchist policies are said to reinforce bourgeois interests via stringent militarism, policing, and surveillance; in many cases, these revanchist policies make claims to restore “order,” in the name of “public safety.” In other terms, the revanchist city represents an effort by elites to protect their city and economic assets from undesirable urban dwellers, who threaten the idealized image of the city and the entry of prospective, wealthier residents who provide economic advancement.

Similarly to Neil Smith, Jared Austin’s thesis, “Policing the Riverfront: Urban Revanchism as Sustainability” argues that revanchist policy measures, which stress the policing of public spaces, effectively privatize and bar the use of public spaces from undesired individuals. Using the case study of Tampa, Texas, Austin argues that many cities have proven that public spaces are not always intended for all to enjoy and inhabit. Elites have specifically designated who can and cannot enjoy public spaces, and this is all enforced in the name of public

\textsuperscript{112} Smith, \textit{The New Urban Frontier Gentrification and the Revanchist City}, 6.

\textsuperscript{113} Slater, “Revanchist City,” 3.
safety. Austin explains the ways by which cities discipline and punish these “unwanted” populations,

Commodified access to its urban spaces, policing privileged access and soliciting the agency only of those classes with sufficient social and financial capital to enjoy the right to the city and all its associated resources and infrastructures. This is made possible through the strict codification and enforcement of anti-loitering and poverty-related bylaws and city ordinances which have led to the criminalization and the punitive policing of the urban poor.\footnote{Austin, “Policing the Riverfront: Urban Revanchism as Sustainability,” 6.}

As will be revealed in this chapter, public safety laws in the city of Hudson, and the broader Hudson Valley region, have also largely served to protect property owners and their property, not the wellbeing of the general public, through the use of various pro-policing, surveillance, and anti-loitering tactics. This chapter analyzes the various public safety protocols that were used both by colonizers and gentrifiers to “clean up” the city and thereby ensure property profitability, from the upper-class individuals that they had attracted as a result. This section ultimately concludes that public safety protocols, which were initially created by and reflect the values of colonizers, are still utilized by gentrifiers today. Pro-land and pro-property values are enforced by police, anti-loitering laws, and surveillance infrastructures, which work together to criminalize the existence of “unfavorable and undesirable” persons and behaviors, which in most cases are low-income individuals and people of color. These measures are taken in order to ensure that land can be used for profit and economic growth by making the city seem appealing to more affluent classes, as opposed to the idealized functioning of the city as a socially-oriented public institution. While many theories pertaining to the subject focus on more contemporary
case studies, the emphasis on militant surveillance as a blatantly class and race-based phenomenon can be quite seamlessly applied to Hudson’s colonization as well.

4.2 The Proprietors’ Public Safety Protocols

As analyzed in Neil Smith and Jared Austin’s theses on public safety, gentrification, and economic growth, property owners and lawmakers are able to effectively establish and define criminal behavior that will result in the maximum amount of profit and self-benefit from public safety legislation. This next section will analyze the protocols that were established as a result of colonial legacies and will assess the role of laws regarding policing, loitering, and surveillance in keeping land profitable and privatized, as a means of escalating self-benefit.

4.2.1 Criminalizing “Vagrants and Beggars”

The city of Hudson’s early anti-loitering legislation, for the first time in the city’s history, defined who and what kinds of behaviors were deemed “criminal.” They had effectively criminalized “vagrants, beggars” and other “disorderly persons” who threatened the city’s pristine image. The city of Hudson’s historic ordinance of 1841, specifically Article IV: Of Vagrants and Beggars, made it unlawful for, “any person to solicit, ask or receive from any residents in the city, any money, goods, or articles by way of donation or charity, unless such personal shall first obtain the written permission of the Mayor or Recorder so to do.”\textsuperscript{115} To be clear, the Oxford Dictionary defines “vagrant” as, “a person without a settled home or regular work who wanders from place to place and lives by begging.”\textsuperscript{116} Therefore, those who were

\textsuperscript{115} “Historic Ordinances of the City of Hudson,” 44.
\textsuperscript{116} Lexico Dictionaries, “Definition of Vagrant.”
houseless and relied on public spaces for shelter were criminalized and punished due to public safety protocols. Other “unwanted” persons were punished by public authorities if their house, person, or behavior was deemed “disorderly” or “denoted immoral or criminal activity.” Due to this ordinance, it was with increasing frequency that poorer neighborhoods were more likely to be associated with public disorder. Individuals who were found to be in violation of loitering or other nuisance orders could face a number of punishments. It was often the case that “criminals” were tied behind a horse-drawn carriage that proceeded up Hudson’s Main Street - current day Warren Street - were whipped at each street corner, and were then told to leave the city forever.

This early definition of crime illegalized houseless individuals, the existing indigenous population, and other “night lurkers” and beggars. Therefore, property-owning predecessors of the colonizers were able to mask their anti-houseless and anti-poverty rhetoric under the guise of public safety. Keeping in line with Smith and Austin’s theories, the city’s elites at the time - who were notably white and affluent - were able to use legislation as a primary tool by which to commodify and privatize public spaces and penalize those who were deemed unwanted in these spaces. Legislation, in conjunction with heavy policing and surveillance, has allowed for the enforcement of anti-houseless, pro-incarceration rhetoric in the city’s colonization and in current times as well.

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4.2.2 Hudson’s Night Watch and Military Companies

In establishing “order” to their newly colonized land, colonial legacies, left in place by the Proprietors, had enacted a series of legislative protocols to ensure that the city’s anti-loitering policies were met via policing and monitoring. Both the Hudson Night Watch and Hudson’s military companies authoritatively instituted a stringent police presence that succeeded in keeping Hudson’s streets “tidy and orderly,” thereby establishing a favorable reputation of the city and set the conditions ripe for future economic growth.

The Hudson Night Watch was established in 1788 by the city’s original Common Council. The “Watch” was essentially a group of individuals who volunteered to monitor the city’s streets and deter unwanted activity. The Watch consisted of four citizens each night who would receive a dollar for their labor; the surveilling began at 9 o’clock in the evening and continued until day-break the next morning. According to Article IV of Hudson’s historic ordinance, “Concerning the Night Watch, their Number, Power and Duty,” enacted in October of 1841, those who volunteered to monitor the streets of Hudson were encouraged to, “Take up and confine in the jail or watch house all suspicious persons who may be found walking the streets during the night and who cannot give a good account of themselves, and all persons who may be found rioting, quarreling and disturbing the peace or otherwise violating the law.”

For the most part, what was considered “criminal behavior” was left to be interpreted by the individual. And if one were to be deemed “criminal” or “dubious,” they were sent by the watchmen to the town watch house, which served as an informal jail, where they were presented before officers, to either be discharged or given more severe punishment. The Common Council deemed the Night

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119 “Historic Ordinances of the City of Hudson,” 48.
Watch to be a “salutary institution,”\textsuperscript{120} claiming that it would protect the city from “suspicious” individuals who could be lurking the streets at night. In reality, this form of policing was a mechanism by which to enforce a racial capitalist hierarchy that is deeply rooted in slavery and settler colonialism.

Another means by which Hudson’s Common Council established a pro-surveillance, police and military state was through the utilization of military companies. Marching soldiers were a prominent feature of Hudson’s image at the end of the eighteenth century, and they were employed as a scare tactic to maintain “peace and order.” Given that the city was “still close to a frontier” at this time, Hudsonian elites felt the need to “raise protective forces to meet any possible threat - Indians, perhaps.”\textsuperscript{121} Therefore, Hudson’s military companies had quite a large presence in the city’s early years; they served as a symbol of “civic pride” and they perpetuated “the patriotic spirit that had fueled the Revolutionary War.”\textsuperscript{122} The first organized company came about in the year of 1786; it was a company of artillery that was under the command of Captain Daniel Gano, formally known as Gano’s Artillery. After the first military group was effectively established in the city, many others quickly came about - Frothingham’s Artillery, Haxton’s Artillery, Wigton Artillery, Hudson Green, among others.\textsuperscript{123} Promenade Hill Park in particular, a seemingly “public” space, was a favorite spot for the city’s military companies to perform drills. By asserting militarized force in a public park, which was intended for the public to enjoy, the cities late-colonizers had effectively privatized this space. This instance serves as a prime example of how public safety prioritizes property.

\textsuperscript{120} Miller, \textit{Historical Sketches of Hudson, Embracing the Settlement of the City}, 22.
\textsuperscript{121} Fone, \textit{Historic Hudson: an Architectural Portrait}, 43.
\textsuperscript{122} Fone, 43.
\textsuperscript{123} Miller, \textit{Historical Sketches of Hudson, Embracing the Settlement of the City}, 46-48.
Both the Hudson Night Watch and the city’s military companies allowed the city to deter unwanted occupants that they felt would pose a threat to their agenda; at this time, this was the region’s Indigenous population - the Mahicans - as well as other “night lurkers.” This poses a striking resemblance to those who Neil Smith defines as the “social parasites” that elites look to eliminate - the houseless, prostitutes, squatters, reckless youth, among others. The behaviors and presence of these individuals, according to Smith, are offensive to prospective tourists, shoppers, commuters, investors, to those who present the option of expanding property owners’ economic capacities. Therefore, it’s not surprising that these colonially-inspired policies had encouraged a stringent police and military force as a tool to deter and keep these peoples off of the streets and other public places. By privileging access to public spaces to those with the appropriate social and economic standings, and policing those who did not fit these standards, the city was effectively able to preserve their image of the city. Policing as it was shown in the case of early Hudson, enforced the criminalization of a whole group of people and behaviors, eliminating the populations that they were supposed to assist and protect.

4.2.3 Surveillance Infrastructure: Street Lamps

In addition to the criminalization of “disorderly” individuals - which had been defined as Black and people of color, those of a lower economic class, and houseless individuals - and heavy policing of public spaces, Hudson’s surveillance infrastructure reinforced the tight monitoring of property. When making “improvements” to the city’s law and order, the city’s first Common Council had erected the town’s first prison and center for public punishment and harassment. Hudson’s first prison was known by locals as “the gaol,” and it was built right across
the street from the city hall. A stocks and whipping post was also built in the city’s Market Square where punishments for criminal behavior were brought before the public. Similarly to how the Proprietors used police and military forces to deter unwanted occupants, erecting a prison and whipping post in the heart of the city served as another scare-tactic and further undermined the use of public space for public enjoyment and service.

A much more subtle form of surveillance infrastructure utilized by the city was the extensive implementation of street-lamps. An ordinance passed in October of 1841, Article VIII: Concerning Lamps and their Preservation, effectively institutionalized the surveillance of public spaces at night via infrastructural additions. This ordinance simultaneously protected public property and punished individuals who alleged to have damaged or interfered with the city’s surveillance of said property, while also prioritizing the protection of these infrastructural tools. The ordinance deemed it unlawful “for any person to break, take down, carry away or otherwise injure any lamp or any part thereof, which may be hung or fixed in any street of the compact part, or extinguish the lights therein, or be aiding or abetting the same.” Furthermore, this article punished individuals who were found in violation of “night-walking” via the usage of the lamps,

In case that such trespasses or any of them are committed in the presence of the Marshall, Constables, Watchmen, Justices or other officers of the city, it shall be the duty of such officers to (1) If the offender is known to such officers, immediately to arrest such offender and give notice thereof to some one of the Lamp Committee, in order that such offender may be dealt with according to law; (2) If such offender is unknown to such officer and refuses to give his name to such officer, then immediately to make the arrest and give the notice aforesaid, and also detain such offender in his custody.

125 Fone, 39.
126 “Historic Ordinances of the City of Hudson,” 56.
127 Ibid, 57.
This specific ordinance, which may seem subtle in nature, effectively established a state of heightened surveillance. Lamps placed along the city’s streets allowed for the monitoring of public property, which in theory, anyone should have access to. However, due to the criminalization of a subsect of public peoples - houseless individuals, the existing indigenous population, and other “night lurkers” and beggars - these additions to Hudson’s infrastructure served as yet another tool by which to punish these unwelcomed individuals. When combined with the monitoring and patrolling by the Hudson Night Watch and military companies, and criminalization of loitering or other activities that were deemed “of nuisance,” the Common Council had successfully punished the public presence of a specific set of individuals and their behaviors, in favor of creating a city with an “orderly and safe” outward reputation.

4.3 The “New Proprietors’” Public Safety Protocols

In the city’s early years, Hudson’s elite politicians had established a series of laws regarding policing, loitering and other nuisance ordinances, as well as surveillance infrastructure. The measures that they had taken to ensure “order” and “safety,” which in actuality worked to protect property owned by elites, have been sustained and kept in practice throughout the city’s history. Furthermore, early definitions of crime illegalized a specific subset of unwanted groups of people, and these values have persisted to current day. As this chapter will unveil, the city’s gentrifiers continue to support and enact legislation that punishes the same groups of people and uses strikingly similar methods to do so. Property owners and local government officials in present-day Hudson continue to utilize corrupt public safety tactics to keep the city image “pristine” - in order to push economic growth, attract affluent residents, and ultimately gentrify
the city. This next section will analyze the continuity and resemblances in public safety protocols that were first established by Hudson’s colonizers and still burden the city’s “unwanted,” non-property owning population today.

4.3.1 *Anti-Loitering, Anti-Houseless*

It appears that Hudson’s stance on crime has not changed much since the post-colonization by the Proprietors. In Chapter 192 of Hudson’s City Charter, loitering is defined as “Remaining idle in essentially one location, including the concepts of spending time idly, loafing or walking about aimlessly, and also including the colloquial expression ‘hanging around.’”\(^\text{128}\) Furthermore, public places are defined as,

Any place to which the public has access, including any street, highway, road, alley or sidewalk. It shall also include the front or the neighborhood of any store, shop, restaurant, tavern or other place of business, and public grounds, areas and parks, as well as parking lots or other vacant private property not owned by or under the control of the person charged with violating this chapter or, in the case of a minor, not owned or under the control of his parent or guardian.\(^\text{129}\)

Laws against loitering are absolutely crucial in understanding the true nature of Hudson’s public safety protocols. Similarly to the Common Council’s laws against “vagrants and beggars,” the city’s current anti-loitering codes continue to penalize those who rely on the availability of public spaces day and night. Additionally and quite similarly to the powers that were given to the city’s watchmen, Hudson’s police department has the privilege to,

Decide that the presence of any person in any public place is causing or is likely to cause any of the conditions enumerated in § 192-2, he may, if he deems it necessary for the preservation of the public peace and safety, order that person to leave that place. Any

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\(^{128}\) “City of Hudson, Administrative Legislation.”

\(^{129}\) Ibid.
person who shall refuse to leave after being ordered to do so by a police officer shall be guilty of a violation of this chapter.\textsuperscript{130}

Hudson’s stance on loitering effectively prioritizes the protection of property, both private and public, and gives police personnel the power to erase those who they don’t wish to occupy said spaces. In case this anti-loitering protocol wasn’t clear enough, Chapter 225 in Hudson’s City’s Charter, which was amended in 2012, specifically prohibits homeless encampments, leaving nowhere for unhoused individuals to go. Chapter 225: Public Property of the city’s Charter states,

\begin{quote}
There shall be no camping and/or erection of tents or other structures on public property. Further, there shall be no lying down on the ground or lying down on benches, sitting areas or walkways comprising or located on public property which unreasonably interferes with the use of such private property or related benches, sitting areas or walkways by others; no placement of tarps or sleeping bags or other coverings and no storage or placement of personal property on the ground, benches, sitting areas or walkways which unreasonably interferes with the use of such public property by others.\textsuperscript{131}
\end{quote}

These policies are emblematic of the institutionalization of pro-property, pro-police sentiments that were instilled during the area’s colonization and genocide of the Mahicans. It seems that the ways in which the Proprietors had defined crime during the city’s colonization have persisted and continue to shape the ways in which public safety is enforced in Hudson today. Both Hudson’s colonizers and current lawmakers and gentrifiers’ definitions of crime illegalize the same members of the city’s population - houseless individuals, “vagrants,” low-income communities of color, and other individuals who primarily dwell in public spaces.

\textsuperscript{130} “City of Hudson, Administrative Legislation.”
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid.
Following Neil Smith and Jared Austin’s theses, utilizing legislative tools as a means of privatizing and commodifying public spaces simultaneously criminalizes unwanted persons and attracts wanted persons to the area. Masking these anti-houseless and anti-poverty sentiments under the guise of “order” and “safety” has allowed for this type of discriminatory and corrupt maneuver to persist. The area’s Proprietors have effectively institutionalized and created a systemic mechanism that punishes an undesired subsect of the urban population. As will be revealed, the exertion of a rigorous police force and surveillance infrastructures work to continue to enforce this definition of “crime,” and the punishment of those who it applies to.

4.3.2 “Community” Based Policing

According to the Columbia County Police Department’s website, the city of Hudson’s current police force is “unique” in that it provides five public safety functions - law enforcement, corrections, security services, emergency management, and civil enforcement. As it exists today, Hudson’s police department provides these services to keep the city, and its outward reputation, clean and safe from “crime.” In order to attract prospective residents, tourists, shoppers, investors, and other economically-valuable members of society, the city must present itself as a clean, safe, and pleasant place to live, and Hudson’s police force works to ensure this reality.

In Hudson’s Comprehensive Plan from 2003, which outlines various goals for the city’s redevelopment, Plan Goal 2 specifically reinforces what they call “community-based policing.” Plan Goal 2, titled “Protect and Strengthen Hudson’s Sense of Community,” hones in on

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132 Columbia County Sheriff's Office.
enforcing public safety and maintaining a strong police presence. A section in the plan titled “Public Safety - Maintaining Progress Toward Community-Based Policing” begins to define community-based policing as a public safety strategy that supposedly works in the interest of the city’s residents,

If Hudson is to reach its full potential as a successful, lively place, all people must feel safe in the streets... By being involved in policing efforts residents will begin to see the human side of Hudson’s police personnel and feel a part of the solution, thereby engendering an increased sense of ownership in their neighborhoods and the community as a whole. These interactions will also allow for Hudson’s police personnel to get to know community residents and to more comprehensively understand their needs, thereby making their environment a more satisfying and rewarding one to work within.\(^{133}\)

The plan continues to describe the sense of “alienation” that the police force feels from the general public, and how the plan hopes to reinstill a feeling of trust into the city’s police:

Although officers enter into constant contact with citizens, they increasingly do so without developing any degree of familiarity. Required to travel through the City in patrol cars, officers have little opportunity to develop positive relationships with community residents. This alienation has generated a perception of unfriendliness and distrust... As a consequence, officers not only perceive the environments in which they work to be dangerous, they also begin to attribute dangerous traits to the community residents. One of the most effective strategies being employed by many other communities is to put foot and bicycle patrols back on the street. For Hudson this will require a commitment from the City Council to redeploy and/or add more police personnel to effectively meet the needs of such a program.\(^{134}\)

Hudson’s version of “community-based policing”, which includes heavier surveillance and patrolling of the city’s streets and public spaces, effectively prioritizes the protection of property over those who occupy it. The plan proposes putting foot and bicycle patrols on the city’s streets, which would require the City Council to increase the presence of the police in the community.

\(^{133}\) Ibid, 28.
\(^{134}\) Ibid, 28.
While the idea of “community-based policing” seems like a version of public safety that may work in favor of the city’s residents and the community at large, what this plan reveals is that public safety, specifically policing, efforts are still actively working to deter and keep unwanted individuals off of the streets and out of public places.

These legislative efforts listed exist largely as a result of colonial legacies. Hudson’s - and more broadly, New York State’s - policing efforts work against non-property owners. The legislation outlined in the previous section results in the policing of the following subsect of the city’s population. The demographics of those who historically have not owned property are largely a result of class and race-based prejudices. As was discussed in the property ownership chapter, non-owners tend to be Black or people of color, and of a lower economic class. A tool used by localities, including Columbia County which Hudson is part of, as an attempt to accurately document unhoused individuals is the “Point in Time Count” (PIT). The PIT is admittedly an imperfect count of the unhoused people, given that it is based off of self-reported information, but still stands as the best tool currently available by which to tally individuals who are unhoused, live in public spaces, and in shelters. For this reason, data available pertaining to criminalization and houselessness for Hudson specifically is quite sparse. However, data from New York State as a whole is fairly representative of overarching trends that exist both locally and nationally. It was reported that as of 2015, 45% of New York State’s jail population was Black, 33% white, 19% Latinx, 1% Asian and Native American. And in state prisons, 48% are Black, 24% white, 24% Latinx, and 1% Asian and Native American. A large body of research also supports this data and points to the class and race-based disparities that policing efforts

135 CARES Inc.
136 Ibid.
largely enforce, “the racialization of incarceration is reflected most obviously in disparities: imprisonment rates are five to eight times higher for African Americans than whites, twice as high for Hispanics. Prison admissions and releases are also spatially concentrated in low-income, communities of color.”137 Another study led by the Prison Policy Initiative points to these systemic barriers to betterment, “New York’s criminal justice system has intentionally and systematically blocked low-income communities of color from realizing economic opportunity and exercising their human potential, and instead made poverty and imprisonment endemic to them.”138 “Criminal” activity was defined largely by determinants such as race and income in colonial times. The discriminatory systems and legislative moves that were established in the area’s early history persist and continue to reveal themselves today.

While this plan claims to prioritize the safety of the general public, their description of ensuring public safety seems to actually be protecting and reinforcing the presence and strength of the police in public spaces, identically to the methods employed by the city’s colonizers. Hudson’s current elites and gentrifiers have effectively increased the amount of police patrolling the community, under the guise of “community-based policing” and “public safety”. Similarly to the Proprietors’ version of the Hudson Police Department, the Hudson Night Watch and military companies, policing was used as a tool to ensure order and the image of the city that is favored by property owners. Even in current-day Hudson, the city is working to preserve a police-state that functions as a scare tactic to criminalize and erase “unideal” individuals from occupying public spaces.

137 Western and Sirois, “Racialized Re-Entry: Labor Market Inequality After Incarceration.”
4.3.3 Surveillance Infrastructure: Safe Path Lighting

Hudson’s Comprehensive Plan of 2003, similarly to colonial laws regarding street lamps, advocates for the surveillance of public spaces, via the implementation of a series of infrastructural changes. One example of this lies within Plan Goal 3: Promote Economic and Cultural Vitality, within which contains a section dedicated to curtailing the city’s “dead spaces.” Minimizing dead spaces, the plan claims, will reduce crime and make residents and visitors feel safer in publicly occupied areas. This section of the plan claims that dead spaces, “create eyesores and engender a sense of danger, as well as provide the opportunity for illegitimate activity to occur. The City should take proactive steps to minimize these spaces with public art, appropriate lighting and regular upkeep of these areas.”

“Dead spaces” in urban areas often provide a place to rest for unhoused individuals. Therefore, by eliminating dead zones, the city effectively condemns the presence of unhoused people in public spaces and the city at large. This is again supported by Smith and Austin, as we see Hudson’s government actively choosing who can and cannot enjoy public spaces and who is actually protected by public safety efforts. As we see in both periods in the city’s history, it is the case that these areas are often given to the enjoyment of a handful of property owners, over the community at large.

Identically to the colonizer’s plan to surveille public spaces with the use of oil lamps, Hudson’s Comprehensive Plan of 2003 again proposes and heavily emphasizes the use of lighting. The plan emphasizes the importance of this form of surveillance infrastructure in keeping the city “safe from crime.” “Strategies to reduce crime that involve the built environment should also be explored. For instance, strategically placed lighting (including “safe

139 “City of Hudson Comprehensive Plan,” ix.
path” lighting) will deter criminal activities.”

Much like the Proprietors’s city ordinance, “Concerning Lamps and their Preservation,” this part of the Comprehensive Plan again reinforces a state of increased surveillance. By lighting and eliminating the city’s dead zones, the government effectively displaces, criminalizes, and surveilles unhoused individuals. And again, when coupling surveillance infrastructures with the use of heavy policing, the city’s gentrifiers are able to realize their idealized image for the city, one that prioritizes property as well as prospective residents and tourists over those who most need and rely on public spaces.

4.4 The Role of Public Safety

As it has functioned both during Hudson’s colonization and present-day, public safety is utilized as a tool - by the local government, property owners, colonizers, and gentrifiers alike - to ensure the protection of private property and the interests of a handful of property owners. Public safety is a multipartite process that relies on various systemic instruments; the use of legislative tactics, and means of enforcement, namely policing and surveillance, to serve as mechanisms by which public safety is defined and fulfilled. As was established by the region’s colonizers, legislation was used to define crime; in doing so, it was effectively determined which groups of people had fit within their ideal image of the city and which did not. During the region’s colonization and also in contemporary times, these anti-loitering laws apply to those who Neil Smith considers “social parasites” - unhoused people, prostitutes, squatters, reckless youth, and others. Then, these laws were used as a basis by which discriminatory public safety ideals were enforced by the city’s Night Watch and military companies, and in present times, the Hudson

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140 “City of Hudson Comprehensive Plan,” 29.
Police Department. Surveillance infrastructures, such as street lights, contribute to discriminatory practices by deterring and detecting any “criminal” activity in public areas, as defined by anti-loitering laws. The successful combination of legislation, policing, and surveillance infrastructure effectively clears the city’s streets from unwanted individuals and establishes the elite’s idealized image of the city, one that makes it desirable for socially, culturally, and economically-rich individuals to inhabit at the expense of lower-class individuals.
Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Findings: Evaluating the Archival Perspective

As has been discussed, pro-gentrification rhetoric often makes promises of community betterment and improvement. In an ideal world, investments made towards gentrifying a city would serve the needs and wants of the community at large, prioritizing collective growth through improvements in infrastructure, public services, community resources, and other amenities. However, as demonstrated by the findings from both the timeline and comparative analyses - which survey histories of property ownership, public services, and public safety in Hudson - individual success has been given precedence over communal wellbeing time and time again, largely due to the capitalistic values that are embedded within both the processes of colonization and gentrification.

The timeline broadly confirms the original hypotheses that gentrification (1) Has historically allowed for disproportionate means of betterment, and (2) Is largely a result of the systems and institutions that had been set in place by the region’s colonizers. The visual analysis provided by the timeline broadly demonstrates the persistence of Hudson’s colonial legacies, as they continually infiltrate legislation pertaining to land and property, the lack of public services, stringent policing tactics, and so on. These are discriminatory systems. Yet they have persevered, despite Hudson’s multiple periods of rapid economic growth. Even during the most economically-significant time periods in the city’s history, communal betterment has not reigned priority over individual success. The corresponding comparative analyses take a closer look at these classist and racist colonial legacies and evaluate the extent to which various means of betterment - property ownership, public services, and public safety efforts - have continually
prioritized the individual over community and have further contributed to the erasure of the public.

Findings from the first comparative analysis disclose that property ownership was established first and foremost as a means of extracting and accumulating wealth and power. Furthermore, whether an individual has had access or the means to obtain ownership of their occupancy has also determined the extent to which they have had affordable and stable housing, and access to other means of social betterment - such as education and public safety. During Hudson’s colonization, attracting tenants and visitors via the Patroon System ensured the profitability of land for its owners. This system had also institutionalized a disproportionate power balance between property owners and tenants, effectively establishing an elite class. Given that many of the patroons hadn’t lived in the area which they owned and rented, there was a general lack of care or interest in improving the community for those who were native, lived, or worked in the area. Additionally, renters’ power was limited by the fact that there hadn’t existed the opportunity to own the land in which they resided on and tended to. This dynamic is similar to current-day efforts made by Airbnb and other short-term rentals in Hudson. Beautification efforts enacted by the local government, much similar to the incentivization provided by the Patroon System, attract visitors and potential residents. Efforts to enhance the appearance of the city are not for the enjoyment of the community, but rather, work to lure in wealthier residents who can increase property values. Airbnb profits off of this as well, as many property speculators purchase homes in the area to rent to short-term, wealthy, mobile, visitors, thereby limiting the stock of affordable housing for already existing residents. This form of absentee ownership functioning in Hudson today continues to limit tenants’ abilities to maintain
affordable and stable housing, allowing property owners to continue to procure wealth and power. Furthermore, those who were barred from ownership, and the stability that comes along with it, during Hudson’s colonization were most often low-income, Black, and Indigenous, and this still reigns true today. Being withheld from property ownership has also been proved to affect the degree to which one has access to other forms of self-betterment and improvement.

Public services, historically and contemporarily, have also provided a disproportionate means of betterment within Hudson’s community. The government’s continual failure to provide well-funded public services - namely education - has worked against the premise of community-flourishing, instead allowing affluent individuals to seek out better-funded, more expensive, private alternatives. Those with the proper financial means have historically had access to higher quality public services, and historically, this dynamic is correlated to the elite class that was established under the patroonship. Hudson’s Proprietors’ initial failure to provide public education, and adoption of private, for-profit educational institutions, has severely affected the degree to which today’s public services function in the best interest of the community. Hudson’s poorly-funded Common School System closely resembles the current state of the Hudson City School District, in that both are underfunded and are primarily utilized by the city’s lower-income residents. Additionally, Hudson’s original private schools - which served the city’s elite and wealthy residents, property owners and children of the Proprietors - serve a similar compensatory functioning to Berkshire Country Day School, in that they both provide a higher-quality, alternative means of education to those who can afford it. What these lacking public services demonstrate are the ways in which tools for community betterment continue to prioritize the well-off individual, even during periods when the city is rich in investment and
growth. Much like property ownership, those who have had the financial means to access well-funded social services have historically been white and affluent; we see that those who rely most heavily on publicly provided services have been lower-income residents and people of color.

Public safety - again, a tool that should ideally work towards community wellbeing - has proven to serve and protect property owner’s financial assets and interests throughout history. In both Hudson’s colonization and recent era of gentrification, public safety has functioned as a means of punishment and criminalization for those who don’t have access to property ownership or stable housing: people who primarily rely on public space. Public safety continues to function through the interplay of various legislative and infrastructural measures, such as anti-loitering legislation, policing, and surveillance. The combination of legislation - which is used to define crime - paired with policing and surveillance together have determined which groups of people have fit the elite class’s ideal image of the city and which did not. Historically, it has been the case that Hudson and the state of New York’s methods of punishment have disproportionately incarcerated low-income communities of color and restricted them from achieving economic success and other means of self-improvement. By punishing these groups of people simply for their presence in public space, public safety efforts go against a stated and idealized intention of community security and wellbeing, instead working to protect property, which has historically been held by white and more affluent individuals.

The timeline and comparative analyses reveal the intersection between the functions and intentions of property ownership, public services, and public safety. When one doesn’t have access to one of these means of self-betterment, they are less likely to have access to the others.
For example, if one doesn’t have stable or affordable housing - which is often secured via ownership - they are less likely to have access to well-funded, well-functioning public services or can depend on protection from public safety efforts, and vice versa. Furthermore, the same subsects of Hudson’s population, from the onset of colonization up until present day, who have been barred from access to these forms of financial and social capital, have been low-income communities of color. Yet, the city has continually relied on the culture of these same groups of people, as a means of promoting a “diverse” and “lively” city. This relationship has ultimately been allowed for by the creation of a class hierarchy upon Hudson’s colonization. The initial establishment of the patroonship allowed property owners to accumulate wealth and power, thereby distancing themselves from the lower-classes, which they themselves had largely created. The disconnect and dissociation between the interests of property owners - which were mainly focused on maintaining and continuing their accumulation of wealth - and their “subordinates” explains the deprioritization and ultimate erasure of the “community” or “public.” The concept of betterment, and its illusion to growth, cannot be separated from capitalism. Under this neoliberal economic model, the public simply doesn’t exist; Hudson’s colonization ensured the expunging of communal values. Hudson’s history is one of dispossession and gatekeeping of capital, on behalf of colonizers and gentrifiers alike. The analyses of property ownership, public services, and public safety are ultimately all looking at different facets of the same issue. Gatekeeping betterment and capital is a matter that encapsulates homelessness, incarceration, poverty, poor education, health, housing, etcetera. The prioritization of individual success over collective wellbeing is endemic to these groups of people, who the city has used as both a means of cultural exploitation and criminalization.
5.2 Call to Action

Activists, both local to Hudson and around the world, have actively recognized these class and race-based systemic barriers to communal wellbeing and have proposed clear sets of solutions to break this vicious and violent cycle. The movement to abolish the police has existed as a means of addressing these issues, and the policy proposal it provides simultaneously affects the worlds of housing justice, improvement of public services, and major changes to the functionings of public safety. It has been widely recognized that stringent police efforts - which ultimately protect property and perpetuate violence against low-income, communities of color - are simply an ineffective means of advancing community betterment. Therefore, abolishing the police and reallocating their funding to other community programs is a much more productive solution, while simultaneously de-centering the white and affluent individual and their property interests.

The abolitionist movement dates back to the eighteenth century, when an organized effort to end the practices of slavery started to gain momentum. Leaders of the abolitionist movement in the 1700s, William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Beecher Stowe, among others, worked in opposition to systemic violence and subordination. More recently, the movement to Abolish the Police has gained wide-spread support and popularity. The call to “Abolish” or “Defund the Police” functions largely as a policy proposal. Those who advocate for abolishing the police contend that reallocating funds from police departments to community-oriented social services function as a means of intervention to systemic patterns of race and class-based oppression. Police abolitionists,

141 National Geographic Society, “Abolition and the Abolitionists.”
May envision “community care workers” rather than police, and restorative justice models to respond to crime in ways that do not involve locking people into dehumanizing prison cells. Many of today’s “policing” tasks, abolitionists argue, could be better accomplished by trained professionals who could respond to prevent violence and then respond where necessary. And with dollars no longer going toward the police, more money could go toward health care, housing, education, employment – all of which would reduce the need for police in the first place.142

Better supporting and funding social programs is effective on multiple fronts. Firstly, this approach prevents problems from developing in the first place, by providing community members with the tools and resources they need. For example, “there is research showing that programs for kids in preschool, combined with family interventions, can reduce crime. It is in everyone’s interest to fix problems at the front end rather than waiting until they result in harm.”143 The prioritization of a form of a “community care network,” as opposed to a highly-violent and discriminatory police force, re-centers community wellbeing over individual success.

The Hudson BREATHE Act of 2020 supports and advocates the defunding of police, proposing specified reallocations of the police budget to well-serving social, community programs. Creators of the policy proposal highlight the systemic nature of policing and individual prioritization that it promotes,

The underlying problem of police brutality is not only related to individual police officers, but is a societal problem that centers on an American overdependence on an armed police, and the lasting influence of the institution’s origins as an all-white force for the express purpose of enforcing slavery.144

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142 Henry, “What 'Abolish' and 'Defund' the Police Really Mean.”
143 Illing, “The ‘Abolish the Police’ Movement, Explained by 7 Scholars and Activists.”
Promoting and supporting practices that instead invest in community programs gives historically marginalized groups a greater chance for success, both financially and socially, and re-establishes communal values.

Hudson’s 2020 police budget currently sits at $4.8 million, which encompasses more than a third of the overall city budget, far above all other spending categories; the next largest expense is utilities, $1.97 million less than that of the police budget. The policy proposal suggests that 10%, $490,000, of Hudson Police Department’s budget go towards the Hudson Community Development and Planning Agency (HCDPA). This effectively addresses systemic issues associated with property ownership, in that this newly-available funding would provide new subsidized housing units immediately available, “to offset houselessness needs, or for other purposes as determined by the management of the HCDPA. Additional funds may be added as needed to address the current affordable housing crisis.”

Next on the list, 5%, or $242,552, of the budget would be redirected to the Hudson Youth Department, effectively contributing to the enrichment of public services. The Hudson Youth Department’s website notes that they offer, “safe, caring, and enriching environment for children and serves hundred of kids in different ways over the course of a calendar year, many from families that are under resourced,” as well as other “recreational activities, computer access, educational programming, and a daily hot meal.”

The proposal next suggests that 3%, $145,000, of the budget be allocated to ReEntry Columbia, effectively addressing issues pertaining to Hudson’s discriminatory public safety practices, by “assisting formerly incarcerated individuals with re-entry and job placement of

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146 Ibid, 4.
147 Friends of Hudson Youth, “Hudson Youth Department.”
business development services.” Also within the realm of policing and public safety, the act suggests allocating 2% of the budget, $100,000, to the Citizen Response Team, which provides an alternative to a police force, and instead supports a community-oriented emergency response team; it would educate volunteers about disaster preparedness pertaining to “fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations.” And lastly, the BREATHE Act suggests reallocating another 2% of the police budget to the creation of a non-emergency phone service, allowing niche, trained professionals to respond to calls that police officers would traditionally attend to.

Acting in support of pro-abolition policy proposals actively addresses many of the issues that were initially institutionalized by colonization and continue to fuel the process of gentrification today. Barriers to property ownership, public services, and protection from public safety have each contributed to the unequivocal degrees of betterment that have been provided by supposed “community” investments, and have historically prioritized wealthy, white property owners over low-income communities of color. Furthermore, the onset of these systems had and continue to contribute to the erasure of the public, largely due to the processes of class polarization. These legislative mechanisms and demands are tools of intervention that seek to mitigate the ongoing struggles of those who have been hindered from opportunities to advance themselves financially and socially. This study confirms that the systems and institutions that had been set in place by Hudson’s colonizers have effectively persisted and actively contributed to the city’s current gentrification crisis. Furthermore, white and wealthy property owners have historically gatekept means of accumulating capital, creating the class and race-based disparities

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149 Community Emergency Response Team.
that plague the city today. Equally important to recognize are the far-reaching implications of these discriminatory tactics; although the case of Hudson may seem like an isolated series of events, these explicitly classist and racist mechanisms are employed by government officials and elites in other cities and locales as well. However, the institution of classism and racism, that has persisted due to colonial, growth-oriented practices, can be overcome by amplifying the voices of and actively supporting efforts and proposals made by activists from movements such as Black Lives Matter, that strongly advocate the Abolishment of the Police, and offer reparations to communities that the state’s methods of punishment have disproportionately illegalized and incarcerated.
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