MODEL NEIGHBORHOODS THROUGH MAYORS' EYES FIFTY YEARS AFTER THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT

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The Civil Rights Act of 1964 ushered in the elimination of Jim Crow-era restrictions and ensured that black and white Americans were permitted equal access to public transportation, schools, restrooms, parks, and restaurants. On the law's fiftieth anniversary, though, it is difficult to ignore continuing entrenched segregation in America's neighborhoods. This Article explores one understudied facet of residential segregation: the kinds of neighborhoods preferred by those with the power to shape them. We begin to answer this question using an original survey of U.S. mayors. Our data set comprises responses from mayors in a wide range of cities, with widely varying demographics and levels of segregation. In this paper, we primarily rely on a question we asked them about the current "model" neighborhood in the city they lead. We matched the neighborhoods they named to zip code-level demographic traits to profile what mayors' ideal neighborhoods look like. We find that these "model" neighborhoods are slightly whiter and have higher property values than the cities they are in overall. We interpret these patterns as mixed news for racial integration and equality and discuss their potential sources and implications.

INTRODUCTION

One of the central tenets—and most lauded aspects—of the Civil Rights Act

of 1964 was its prohibition of segregation in public spaces.[1] The official elimination of Jim Crow-era restrictions ensured that black and white Americans were permitted equal access to public transportation, schools, restrooms, parks, and restaurants. Yet, on the fiftieth anniversary of the Civil Rights Act, it is difficult to ignore the persistence of racial separation in residential life, especially in urban neighborhoods. Indeed, while racial segregation has declined in recent years,[2] blacks largely live in different areas than whites. In the nation's largest metropolitan areas (populations over 500,000), fifty-eight percent of blacks, on average, would need to move to other parts of the metro area to be evenly spread across their region of residence.[3]

A vast scholarship in economics, sociology, and history, and public policy comprises explanations and debates about the sources of contemporary residential segregation. Researchers have highlighted an array of factors, including deindustrialization, black migration, federal policy, and housing market discrimination,[4] that help explain America's racial geography. While some of these drivers of racial segregation are rooted in economic factors,

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[1] Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000a(a) (2012).

[2] Edward Glaeser & Jacob Vigdor, *The End of the Segregated Century: Racial Separation in America's Neighborhoods, 1890-2010* (Manhattan Inst. Ctr. For Civic Innovation, Civic Report No. 66, 2012) ("The most standard segregation measure shows that American cities are now more integrated than they've been since 1910. Segregation rose dramatically with black migration to cities in the mid-twentieth century. On average, this rise has been entirely erased by integration since the 1960s.").

[3] *See* William H. Frey, *Census Data: Blacks and Hispanics Take Different Segregation Paths*, BROOKINGS INST. (Dec. 16, 2010), *available at* http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/%202010/12/16-census-frey, *archived at* http://perma.cc/6BCL-3H27. Using Frey's data, we averaged the metropolitan black-white dissimilarity indices, yielding a figure of 58.

[4] PETER DREIER, JOHN MOLLENKOPF & TODD SWANSTROM, PLACE MATTERS: METROPOLITICS FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY 112 (2d ed. 2004) ("Those rendered immobile by discrimination and low incomes, especially the minority poor, [are] constrained to live in expanding urban, and sometimes suburban, ghettos."); PAUL A. JARGOWSKY, POVERTY AND PLACE: GHETTOS, BARRIOS, AND THE AMERICAN CITY 208 (1997) (explaining that federal housing policies—such as the home-mortgage interest deduction— tend to "artificially segregate the poor"); DOUGLAS S. MASSEY & NANCY A. DENTON, AMERICAN APARTHEID: SEGREGATION AND THE MAKING OF THE UNDERCLASS 117 (1993) ("[T]he expansion of civil rights generated new opportunities for middle- and working-class blacks, who moved out of the ghetto in large numbers, leaving behind an isolated and truly disadvantaged black community . . . ."); ROBERT J. SAMPSON, GREAT AMERICAN CITY: CHICAGO AND THE ENDURING NEIGHBORHOOD EFFECT 20-22 (2012) ("[A] durable spatial logic organizes or mediates much of social life."); WILLIAM JULIUS WILSON, THE TRULY DISADVANTAGED: THE INNER CITY, THE UNDERCLASS, AND PUBLIC POLICY 135 (1987) (highlighting that minorities, particularly poor and working-class minorities, were disproportionately vulnerable to "structural economic changes" because of their concentration in industries most impacted by deindustrialization).

varied preferences, and/or prejudice within the mass public, others follow from political elites' conscious policy decisions that directly or indirectly, intentionally or accidentally, prioritize particular kinds of development and neighborhoods.[5] At a minimum, policy choices, particularly in cities, can put a thumb on the scale for particular types of urban living.[6] Moreover, the questions of racial and socioeconomic demographics that we focus on fifty years after the Civil Rights Act are inexorably tied to wider thorny issues related to gentrification in cities.[7]

Because it is so tightly coupled with concentrated poverty, racial segregation has a critical impact on life outcomes. Indeed, racially segregated places disproportionately experience the clustering of poverty, which spurs what sociologists term "cumulative disadvantages."[8] High levels of concentrated poverty are negatively associated with a variety of important outcomes and resources, including crime, transit access, housing stock, and the quality of public services.[9]

Despite the importance of neighborhoods to people's lives, and urban elites' importance in shaping neighborhoods, we know virtually nothing about the kinds of neighborhoods that those with the power to shape them prefer. These preferences are critical, because city leaders weighing different housing, zoning, transportation, and other policies are likely influenced by their own visions of "ideal" residential areas. Understanding what city leaders value in neighborhoods can help reveal both where current residential patterns come from, and more importantly, where they are going.

We begin to answer these questions using the responses to questions from an original survey of U.S. mayors. Our data set comprises answers from current mayors who lead a wide range of cities featuring widely varying demographics and levels of segregation. In this paper, we primarily rely on a question we asked each about the current neighborhood in his/her own city that he/she considers the "model" neighborhood. We matched the neighborhoods they named to zip code-level demographic traits to profile what mayors' model

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[5] *See* DREIER, MOLLENKOPF & SWANSTROM, *supra* note 4, at 295 (describing the need for those wishing to mobilize political support for policy change to develop a particularized "political rhetoric" to appeal to the policy goals of individual Congressional representatives).

[6] *See id.* at 296 (offering as an example the "devastating impact" of New York's Sixteenth Congressional District as a result of urban renewal and freeway construction policies).

[7] Michael Barton, *An Exploration of the Importance of the Strategy Used to Identify Gentrification*, URBAN STUDIES ONLINEFIRST (2014).

[8] *See* SAMPSON, *supra* note 4, at 154; WILSON, *supra* note 4, at 58.

[9] DREIER, MOLLENKOPF & SWANSTROM, *supra* note 4, at 92-95; JARGOWSKY, *supra* note 4, at 208-09; MASSEY & DENTON, *supra* note 4, at 235 ("Along with housing, residential markets also allocate schooling, peer groups, safety, jobs, insurance costs, public services, home equity, and, ultimately, wealth."); SAMPSON, *supra* note 4, at 154; WILSON, *supra* note 4, at 20.

neighborhoods look like, and how they compare to the overall traits of cities they are in. We supplement these comparisons with qualitative evidence based on mayors' elaborations and information from a closed-ended question about the tradeoffs inherent in gentrification.

We find that mayors are both nuanced and conflicted over neighborhood preferences. On the one hand, nearly all of them listed neighborhoods that are whiter and have higher property values than the cities they are in as "model" neighborhoods. On the other hand, the magnitude of the differences between the model neighborhoods' and the cities' racial and economic traits tends to be fairly small. The model neighborhoods are not overwhelmingly rich and white, but they are almost never poor and black. Moreover, qualitative comments suggest that many mayors are thinking about a model neighborhood's offerings and attributes, and not necessarily explicitly choosing based on basic demographics. Additionally, the in-depth responses to a question about gentrification reveal that they genuinely struggle with the tradeoffs inherent in increasing property values.

I.   MAYORS AS A CASE STUDY IN ELITE PREFERENCES

Before further exploring neighborhood preferences, we elaborate on our focus on mayors' views. In some ways, it is an unusual approach. Many of the policies highlighted in prior scholarship as central to forging America's contemporary racial geography—pieces of legislation like the GI Bill[10] and the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956[11]—were promulgated at the federal level. In the context of the federal government's devolution and constrained state and federal resources, however, local governments have become increasingly influential in shaping the fortunes of America's urban neighborhoods.[12] Indeed, localities now play a critical role in implementing federal housing and transportation policy and have the independent capacity to promote important land use and economic development policies.[13] While local governments are

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[10] Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, Pub. L. No. 346, 58 Stat. 284.

[11] Pub. L. No. 84-627, 70 Stat. 374.

[12] *See* EDWARD G. GOETZ, SHELTER BURDEN: LOCAL POLITICS AND PROGRESSIVE HOUSING POLICY 1 (1993) (explaining that cutbacks in federal housing programs during the Reagan administration were met with an array of innovative housing programs at the state and local level); Peter Eisinger, *City Politics in an Era of Federal Devolution*, 33 URBAN AFF. REV. 308, 309-10 (1998) ("As the New Federal Order of the 1990s have taken shape, it is clear the implications for urban government are manifold . . . both parties seem to agree today not only that the era of big government is over but that the proper locus of policy invention and administration is at the state and local level.").

[13] Janet L. Smith, *The Space of Local Control in the Devolution of US Public Housing Policy*, 82 GEOGRAFISKA ANNALER. SERIES B, HUM. GEOGRAPHY 221, 221-23 (2000); *see also* DREIER, MOLLENKOPF & SWANSTROM, *supra* note 4, at 104; GOETZ, *supra* note 12, at 49-52; Eisinger, *supra* note 12, at 309-15; Michael J. Rich, *UDAG, Economic Development, and the Death and Life of American Cities*, 6 ECON. DEV. Q. 150, 151 (1992) ("[T]he

creatures of the state[14] and are often constrained in the implementation of their preferred policies,[15] they are increasingly important, independent players in driving the composition and appearance of local communities.[16]

In partnership with Boston University's Initiative on Cities ("IOC"), we were able to conduct a novel survey of over seventy mayors. We discuss these data in greater depth below. These data are especially novel and important because data on political elites' opinions are extraordinarily difficult to obtain. To our knowledge, our survey represents the only systematic collection of such data concerning neighborhoods and other issues.

II.   MAYORAL NEIGHBORHOOD PREFERENCES

A large body of urban politics scholarship at least implies that mayors will largely prioritize wealthier neighborhoods.[17] As a consequence of economic competition from surrounding cities and state and federal government regulations, city leaders are constrained by economic imperatives that require them to maintain and grow their tax bases.[18] According to this logic, these horizontal and vertical factors induce mayors to implement "developmental," rather than "redistributive," initiatives to bolster the local tax base.[19] Central to these initiatives are actions that produce economic growth and increasing property values.[20] Thus, the economic imperatives approach to city governance implies that model neighborhoods will tend to be affluent and expensive areas that contribute more to the tax base.

Moreover, because of income and wealth disparities that correlate with race and patterns of racial segregation, preferences for tax-base-enhancing wealthy neighborhoods would likely coincide with an incidental inclination for whiter

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program's principal focus concerned the problems of disinvestment and employment and population decline that many of the nation's central cities were experiencing.").

[14] Gerald E. Frug, *The City as a Legal Concept*, 93 HARV. L. REV. 1057, 1059 (1979).

[15] PAUL E. PETERSON, CITY LIMITS 4 (1981).

[16] *See supra* notes 12-13 and accompanying text.

[17] *See, e.g.*, DREIER, MOLLENKOPF & SWANSTROM, *supra* note 4, at 111 ("In the competition for favored residents and investments, each jurisdiction has a strong incentive to adopt zoning and development policies that exclude potential residents with below-median incomes or who require more costly services.").

[18] *See* PETERSON, *supra* note 15, at 22-38 (describing the different factors—such as land use, capital growth, labor, and tax policy—that local governments must consider in order to gain an advantageous market position relative to other localities); Charles M. Tiebout, *A Pure Theory of Local Expenditures*, 64 J. POL. ECON. 416, 417 (1956).

[19] PETERSON, *supra* note 15, at 41-65.

[20] STEPHEN L. ELKIN, CITY REGIME IN THE AMERICAN PUBLIC 37-51 (1987) (explaining that, in order to get elected and maintain office, public officials must appeal to the local business community and place particular emphasis on policies that produce economic growth); JOHN R. LOGAN & HARVEY L. MOLOTOCH, URBAN FORTUNES: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF PLACE 13 (2007).

communities. Over one quarter of blacks and Hispanics have incomes below the federal poverty line, compared with just ten percent of whites.[21] These two racial groups—particularly blacks—tend to live in separate residential areas from whites.[22] As noted above, among the nation's 100 largest metropolises, an average of fifty-eight percent of blacks would need to move to be evenly spread across their metropolitan area.[23] That figure is lower, but still substantial, for Hispanics at forty-six percent.[24]

Because of these high levels of poverty and residential segregation among blacks and Hispanics, neighborhoods of concentrated poverty—that is, communities where the poverty rate is greater than forty percent—are disproportionately black and Hispanic. Among America's 100 largest metropolitan areas, blacks comprise almost half of those living in communities of concentrated poverty.[25] Hispanics represent an additional third of these high-poverty neighborhood residents.[26] In short, even if a mayor never considered preferences about a neighborhood's racial demographics, an emphasis on developing the tax base would indirectly lead to preferences for whiter neighborhoods.

A contrasting school of urban politics research implies a focus on more diverse and representative neighborhoods as models. This literature is less concerned with the economic incentives facing cities and mayors, and more focused on a broader set of goals and constituents.[27] These concerns may stem from electoral considerations and reelection pressures[28] and/or genuine

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[21] *Poverty Fact Sheet*, STATE WORKING AM., http://www.stateofworkingamerica.org/fact-sheets/poverty/ (last visited Feb. 7, 2015), *archived at* http://perma.cc/H4LF-NPEC.

[22] Frey, *supra* note 3.

[23] *Id.*

[24] *Id.*

[25] ELIZABETH KNEEBONE ET AL., BROOKINGS INST., THE RE-EMERGENCE OF CONCENTRATED POVERTY: METROPOLITAN TRENDS IN THE 2000S 16 (2001), *available at* http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/research/files/papers/2011/11/03%20poverty%20kneebone%20nadeau%20berube/1103_poverty_kneebone_nadeau_berube.pdf, *archived at* http://perma.cc/8PCH-RFZR. These communities are defined as census tracts in which the poverty rate is greater than forty percent. *See id.* at 4.

[26] *Id.*

[27] *See* Zoltan L. Hajnal & Jessica Trounstine, *Who or What Governs?: The Effects of Economics, Politics, Institutions, and Needs on Local Spending*, 38 AM. POL. RES. 1130, 1154 (2010); *see also* RUFUS P. BROWNING, DALE R. MARSHALL & DAVID H. TABB, PROTEST IS NOT ENOUGH: THE STRUGGLE OF BLACKS AND HISPANICS FOR EQUALITY IN URBAN POLITICS (1984); ROBERT A. DAHL, WHO GOVERNS? DEMOCRACY AND POWER IN AN AMERICAN CITY (1961).

[28] Katherine L. Einstein & Vladimir Kogan, *Pushing City Limits: Policy Responsiveness in Municipal Governments*, URB. AFF. REV. ONLINEFIRST (2015); Chris Tausanovitch & Christopher Warshaw, *Representation in Municipal Government*, 108 AM. POL. SCI. REV. 605, 606 (2015).

concern for less privileged community members.[29] While our analysis below is purely descriptive, we are attentive to both of these theoretical perspectives that imply different expectations for the traits of mayors' ideal neighborhoods.

III. DATA

The neighborhood data we utilize in this paper come from a comprehensive survey of mayors that we conducted in the summer of 2014 in partnership with the IOC. The general goals of the survey included understanding mayors' policy priorities, the challenges they face, how they think about important tradeoffs, where they get their policy information, and how they cooperate with various constituencies. We attempted to obtain responses that covered the range of cities in America (including fairly small ones) while ensuring that we over-recruited mayors from the large cities that may have unique policy priorities and powers.[30] We invited all mayors in the U.S. Conference of Mayors database (most of whom are from small or very small communities) via email. We also more thoroughly recruited big city mayors. We timed the survey around the U.S. Conference of Mayors summer meetings and reached out to mayors of the fifty largest cities and fifteen other large city mayors who were registered for the conference. These mayors received an email invitation that included a scanned, personally addressed letter from Thomas M. Menino, the former Mayor of Boston and then the Co-Director of the Initiative on Cities. Many of these mayors participated in-person at the conference, and others did so over the phone. More elaborate discussions of the sampling and recruitment procedures are available in the public report we produced with the IOC[31] and in our other research using these data.[32]

The data we rely on in this study primarily come from one question we asked, which we then combined with data from the U.S Census Bureau. The key question was an open-ended one in which we asked, "What do you consider to be your city's model neighborhood or geographic area?" While some mayors refused to identify a particular area, many provided the name of a neighborhood. Moreover, some elaborated on why they chose it.

To match the names of neighborhoods (e.g., "east side" or "river district"[33]) to observable traits, we used Google Maps to identify a zip code corresponding to each neighborhood. Specifically, we entered the neighborhood name as

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[29] *See generally* BROWNING, MARSHALL & TABB, *supra* note 27.

[30] *See* DENNIS R. JUDD & TODD SWANSTROM, CITY POLITICS: PRIVATE POWER AND PUBLIC POLICY 324-40 (2d ed. 1998).

[31] *Initiative on Cities Releases First National Survey of Mayoral Priorities*, BOSTON UNIVERSITY, http://www.bu.edu/ioc/initiative-on-cities-releases-first-national-survey-of-mayoral-priorities/, *archived at* http://perma.cc/GP5J-W97N (last visited Feb. 7, 2015).

[32] *E.g.*, Katherine Einstein & David Glick, Cities, Inequality, and Redistribution: Evidence from a Survey of Mayors (March 6, 2015) (unpublished manuscript).

[33] These neighborhood names are entirely made-up examples. To protect survey respondent anonymity, we never refer to actual neighborhood names in this paper.

provided by each mayor into Google Maps. In some cities, the names corresponded to areas Google Maps explicitly delineates or at least recognizes as neighborhoods. In these cases, we picked an address (by clicking on a shop or building near the center of the zone) and recorded its zip code. In others, Google Maps did not clearly identify a recognizable and delineated region. In these cases, we changed the search to "pharmacy near (neighborhood) (city)." We chose pharmacies because they are so common, and their distribution is less likely to be associated with relevant demographic criteria than other common establishments, such as coffee shops.[34] Once we mapped each named neighborhood to a zip code, we used census data to measure demographic traits. In this paper, we only analyze responses from cities with over 100,000 people for which we were able to match a neighborhood name to a zip code. We do so because we believe that the concept of a neighborhood with unique traits makes more sense in larger cities. Moreover, in smaller cities, a given zip code may correspond with a large chunk of the city (or even all of it) rather than a particular neighborhood. This means we are analyzing a small sample (twenty-three cities and neighborhoods). In much of the analysis below we compare the neighborhoods to the cities in which they are located. While our concern is not identifying "gentrified" neighborhoods, our use of census data (especially income) to compare neighborhoods to the cities they are in parallels the work in the quantitative gentrification literature.[35]

Table 1. Comparison of cities with over 100,000 people in our sample with model neighborhoods to all cities over 100,000 people

Variable	In Sample	All Cities
Population Density	4,500	4,200
Percent White	48%	49%
Percent Black	21%	17%
Percent Hispanic	22%	24%
Median Household Income	$46,500	$53,000
Poverty Rate	21%	18%
Unemployment Rate	7%	7%
Number of Responses	23	

Note: Some numbers are rounded. All data are from the 2012 American Community Survey, the Office of Management and Budget's 2013 list of principal cities.[36]

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[34] A few mayors listed more than one neighborhood. We simply coded the first they mentioned assuming it best captures their top-of-the-head views.

[35] For a recent summary and application, see Barton, *supra* note 7 (applying and comparing census-based strategies for identifying gentrified neighborhoods).

[36] OFFICE OF MGMT. & BUDGET, EXEC. OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT, OMB BULL. NO. 13-01, REVISED DELINEATIONS OF METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREAS, MICROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREAS, AND COMBINED STATISTICAL AREAS, AND GUIDANCE ON USES OF THE DELINEATIONS

While we have a small number of observations, the attributes of the cities in our sample are generally consistent with cities more broadly. In Table 1, we compare the cities over 100,000 people that were in our sample and the provided neighborhood information (the data we analyze below) to all cities over 100,000 people in the United States. We compare them by racial and socioeconomic variables that are particularly pertinent to this paper's primary questions. This comparison shows that our cities' key traits essential mirror those of the broader universe of cities.

IV. RESULTS

We begin our summary of mayors' views on neighborhood issues with their responses to one of our survey's questions about tradeoffs before we turn to analyzing the specific neighborhoods the mayors highlighted. This tradeoff question asked mayors to report their agreement (on a scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree) with this statement: "It is good for a neighborhood when it experiences rising property values, even if it means that some current residents might have to move out."

We summarize the responses to this question from the twenty-three mayors in our sub-sample in Figure 1. These results suggest that the subset of mayors that provided neighborhood names tend toward the economic growth side of this tradeoff with nearly sixty percent either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement. As we show in other work in which we analyze this question for our broader sample of mayors, this gentrification tradeoff is an especially sticky one for mayors.[37] Mayors are evenly divided on the issue, and a substantial share placed themselves in the "neither agree nor disagree" category, indicating a reluctance to take a stance. Their more qualitative responses were similarly conflicted. We believe these results demonstrate that mayors struggle with these tradeoffs and with the direction in which they should be pushing their neighborhoods more generally. Linking these findings with theoretical expectations from prior scholarship,[38] they preliminarily suggest that mayors likely both worry about economic growth imperatives and the needs of their less wealthy constituents.

OF THESE AREAS (2013); *American Community Survey: 2012 Data Release*, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU,   (Dec.   17,   2013) http://www.census.gov/acs/www/data_documentation/2012_release/,   *archived   at* http://perma.cc/QP8E-R8JQ.

[37] Einstein & Glick, *supra* note 32.

[38] *See supra* note 27 and accompanying text.

Figure 1: "It is good for a neighborhood when it experiences rising property values, even if it means that some current residents might have to move out."[39]

Rising Property Values Tradeoffs
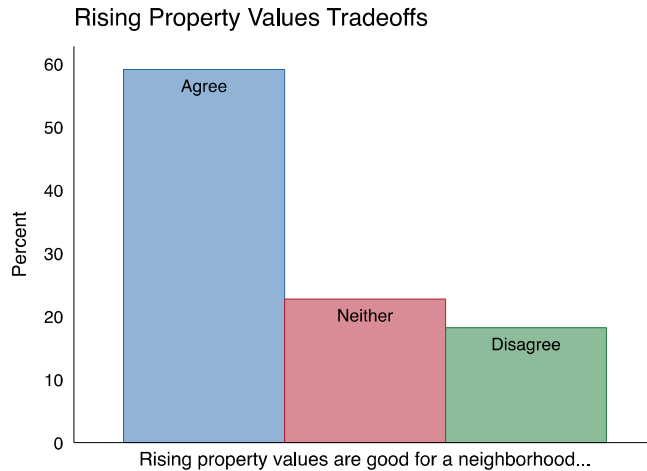
   Turning to the characteristics of the named model neighborhoods, we start by exploring the composition of the average model neighborhood. We do this by contrasting the average of the traits of the mayors' model neighborhoods with their cities as a whole. We compare compositional variables (e.g., percent black) in Figure 2 and financial variables (e.g., housing prices) in Figure 3. In both figures we report means for the twenty-three cities over 100,000 and for a subset of eleven cities with over 400,000 people. We include the latter cut because these cities over 400,000 may better capture what many think of as "major cities," and because they are the places where neighborhoods are most likely to have distinct and meaningful identities and characteristics. They are also places in which our zip code approach is most likely to correspond to the neighborhoods mayors had in mind.
   The averages in Figures 2 and 3 suggest that the mayors' model neighborhoods are whiter and wealthier than the cities in which they are located, but only by small amounts. The average model zip code has a slightly higher percentage of white residents and correspondingly fewer black and Hispanic residents than the city in which it is located. They also had slightly higher incomes, and, more notably, substantially higher real estate prices. Perhaps it is not surprising that mayors tended to mention neighborhoods that

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   [39] Figure only includes responses the 23 mayors with over 100,000 residents that provided neighborhood names. Compared to the broader sample, these mayors were more likely to fall into the "agree" category. "Strongly agree" and "strongly disagree" collapsed into "agree" and "disagree."

were considered desirable by the real estate markets.

On the one hand, the data show that model neighborhoods are wealthier and whiter than the cities they are part of. On the other hand, they also suggest that the differences are fairly muted. In many of these cities, the mayors could have named much richer and whiter neighborhoods. Instead, they opted for areas that are largely representative of the city as a whole. As with the gentrification tradeoff question, these results suggest mixed support for both the economic growth and constituent needs perspectives on cities. The fact that these neighborhoods have higher property values is consistent with the idea that mayors focus on tax base growth and thus wealthier areas. On the other hand, the fact that they are only slightly whither and wealthier microcosms is consistent with prioritizing a broader set of goals and constituents and with the idea that mayors play more than lip-service to residential diversity.

Another, and perhaps better, way to look at these data is as individual responses rather than as averages. These more informative distributions are plotted in Figures 4 and 5. These histograms show the percentage of cities that fall into each category, where the categories capture the difference between the neighborhood and the city for each mayor's model neighborhood. Positive numbers indicate that the neighborhood was higher on a particular variable (e.g., whiter, wealthier, etc.) than the city in which it was located. For example, a mayor that listed a neighborhood 7 percentage points whiter than the city as a whole would fall into the 0-10% category on the x-axis. These figures show that, while the differences in means are fairly small, the patterns are strong. Almost every mayor named a neighborhood that was whiter than the city as a whole. For example, the upper left panel of Figure 4 shows that about 50% of the model neighborhoods are either 0-10 or 10-20 percentage points whiter than their cities. Similarly, the lower left panel shows that about half of the model neighborhoods are between 0-10 percentage points less black than their corresponding cities. The regularity of these findings is striking. Similarly, almost no mayors mentioned neighborhoods with higher poverty rates than the cities in which they are located. Most of the model neighborhoods also had higher housing prices. Perhaps most notably, these data also show that virtually no mayors highlighted areas that were significantly less white than the city. The only neighborhood that was less white than the city differed by only a few percentage points.

Thus far, we have focused on neighborhoods' current traits. We now turn to how the model neighborhoods are trending. In many cases, mayors (and other observers more generally) may think in terms of which areas are going in the "right" direction at least as much as they think about current traits. To assess these issues, we combine 2000 and 2012 data to focus on demographic changes.

Figure 2: Average of "model" neighborhoods compared to average of the cities they are in: Demographics

Cities Over 100,000 People   **Cities over 400,000 People**

Figure 3: Average of "model" neighborhoods compared to average of the cities they are in: Economics[40]

Cities Over 100,000 People   **Cities over 400,000 People**

In Figure 6 we plot the distributions of changes between 2000 and 2012 in the neighborhoods. Unlike above, this plot is not relative to the city baseline. Positive numbers indicate that the neighborhood has become more of a particular demographic trait (e.g., whiter, wealthier, etc.) than it was in 2012. Perhaps more strongly than the data above, these results suggest that model neighborhoods are not stereotypically gentrifying ones. While the model neighborhoods are whiter than the cities they are in, many have become less white in the last twelve years. On the other hand, even more are becoming less black as Hispanic populations grow. Moreover, approximately equal numbers have seen increasing and decreasing poverty rates. This further suggests that

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[40] Excludes one outlier in which the mayor named "downtown" (difficult to match to a zip code), which had a median price over $500,000 more than the city as a whole.

these model neighborhoods are fairly diverse places and that they are not becoming dramatically less so. Generally, few mayors appear to have named neighborhoods that are becoming much richer and whiter as their model communities.

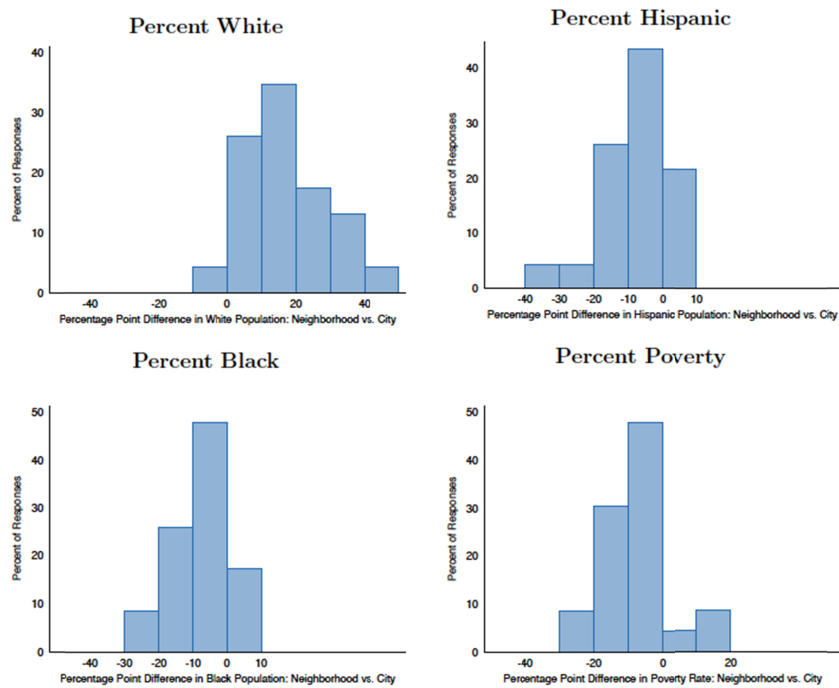*Figure 4: Distribution of percentage point differences between "model" neighborhoods and the cities they are in*
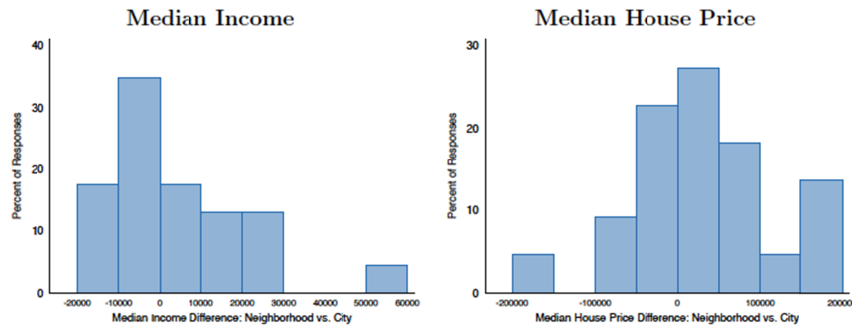
Figure 5: Distribution of differences in economic variables between "model" neighborhoods and the cities they are in[41]

In Figure 7 we plot the (2000-2012) changes in neighborhood economic figures relative to the corresponding city-wide change figures. We bring back the city baseline here because housing prices in particular are so variable by city and whether a neighborhood is expensive or affordable depends on prices in the city as a whole. The data show that the mayors' model neighborhoods are doing well, economically, relative to the city. A small majority of these neighborhoods are seeing income grow faster than the cities they are in, but only by ten or twenty percent. Nearly as many have seen slower growth. Unsurprisingly, mayors do appear to favor property value growth. Most, but not all, model neighborhoods have seen real estate prices increase relative to prices in the cities as a whole.

V.   DISCUSSION

These results suggest a complex picture. While mayors generally and consistently name whiter and relatively wealthier areas (or at least more expensive ones) as model neighborhoods, the deviations from city base levels are small in magnitude. Our qualitative evidence from the mayors' elaborations on the model neighborhoods survey question confirms this finding. Among other things, it shows that at least some mayors were not primarily thinking about demographics when thinking about neighborhoods. Indeed, several mayors cited attributes such as diverse housing stock and strong (and dense) commerce as important traits in ideal neighborhood. One mayor described his ideal community as a "walkable community" with "diversity of housing" and a "tree canopy," while another emphasized his preferred neighborhood as "pedestrian" and "bike friendly" with a "mix of housing." A third mayor emphasized similar characteristics. His model neighborhood "has a diverse housing stock, doesn't have big business, but it has business, retail, schools,

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[41] Excludes one outlier in which the mayor named "downtown" (difficult to match to a zip code), which had a median price over $500,000 more than the city as a whole.

non-profits, [and] universities." Thus, it is likely that at least some of the racial and economic demographics of the named model neighborhoods are incidental to the more tangible and non-human traits on which the mayors focus.

Figure 6: Distribution of percentage point changes (2000-2012) of "model" neighborhoods' demographics[42]
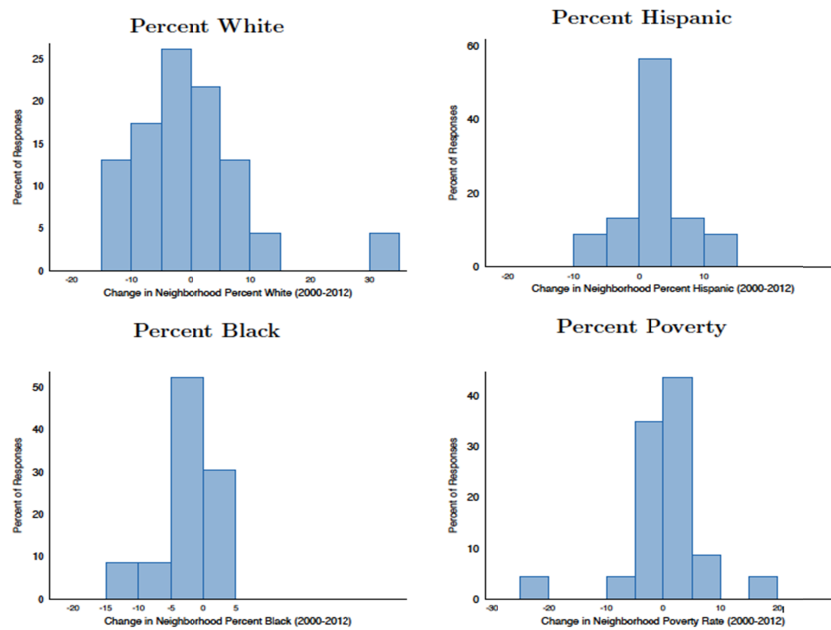
Figure 7: Distribution of 2000-2012 changes (percentage point changes) in economic variables: "Model" neighborhoods and the cities they are in[43]
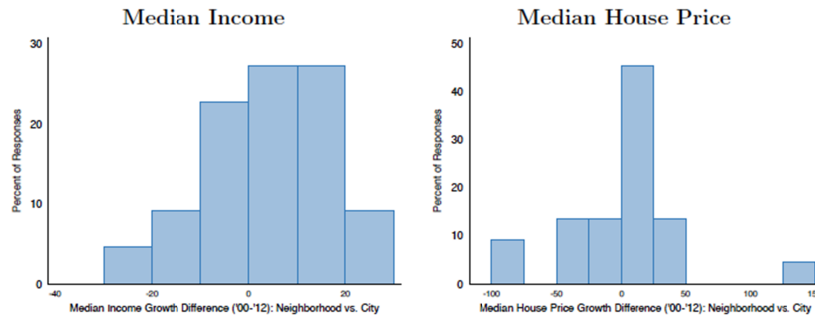
That said, whether or not they intentionally thought about demographics, the mayors in our sample did consistently identify neighborhoods that were whiter and had higher property values as the models. In some cases, this may reflect a correlation between other neighborhood attributes they value and which demographic groups live in areas featuring those attributes. In others, mayors did explicitly think about demographics, and especially socioeconomic ones. One extended response to the model neighborhoods question illustrates this point. This mayor explicitly cited the desirability of higher housing values. His ideal neighborhoods are "older areas that have maintained housing values." (Unsurprisingly, no mayors directly expressed a preference for whiter neighborhoods.)

Thus far we have highlighted two (non-mutually exclusive) possible explanations for these small but consistent deviations in model neighborhood's demographics relative to the cities they are in. The first, outlined earlier, derives from the economic imperatives theoretical analysis of cities. By this logic, mayors must prioritize economic growth and their tax bases and thus tend to view wealthier (and by association whiter) areas as model neighborhoods.

The second possibility, as we just noted, is that the demographic patterns could reflect correlations between non-demographic attributes mayors value, such as transit, parks, and commerce, and the demographics of the people and real estate that tend to comprise those neighborhoods. However, there is a third possible explanation that is a bit different and follows from the stark realities of the racial segregation featured at the beginning of the paper. Blacks are disproportionately concentrated in communities of clustered disadvantage. Because of this type of residential segregation, there may simply be no

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[43] These figures are the neighborhood change (2000-2012) relative to the city change (2000-2012).

demographically representative neighborhoods from which mayors can choose. That is, even if a mayor wanted to name a neighborhood that was a true microcosm of his/her city, he/she may literally be unable to do so because such areas are rare. If, for example, one or two neighborhoods are eighty or ninety percent black, then the rest may all have below-average black populations. Moreover, mayors may be unlikely to select a highly black neighborhood— which is more likely to suffer from the negative effects of concentrated poverty—as their city's model community. Because of the realities of racial geography, then, mayors may name whiter, wealthier neighborhoods when contemplating their ideal community without believing that their richest and whitest area is the model in the city. As troubling as it would be if mayors were intentionally thinking about wealthy white neighborhoods as their cities' models, it is equally concerning that the current realities of residential segregation may preclude some mayors from even having an option to choose a racially representative middle-class neighborhood as his/her city's model.

CONCLUSION

The demographic attributes of mayors' model neighborhoods fifty years after the Civil Rights Act have important implications regarding current and future residential segregation. If the average mayor allocates extra resources to his/her model neighborhood, relatively white and wealthy areas will benefit and almost no poor and black areas will. More importantly (and probably more likely than shifting resources to model areas), mayors' views on model neighborhoods likely reflect the kinds of communities they hope to replicate across their cities. For communities of color, this could potentially mean a push for gentrification and its ensuing displacement of low-income residents. On the other hand, the mayors' stated preferences for diverse communities could mean a renewed effort towards the integration of urban environments. Our results provide fodder for both optimistic and pessimistic interpretations on these points and for the future of the Civil Rights Act's central aims.