



Do Maps Make Geography? Part 2: Post-Katrina New Orleans, Post-Foreclosure Cleveland and Neoliberal Urbanism

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Abstract

A map indicating declining or shrinking neighborhoods may lead to the withholding of not only city services, but also mortgage loans. Maps used in these strategies have a performative function: they are either used to prescribe decline or they have the effect of furthering decline by marking neighborhoods as places “where houses have little or no value”, that are “dying”, “to be depopulated” or “distressed”. In addition to the two cases discussed in the first part of this paper, this second part discusses, first, the post-Katrina planning and rebuilding of New Orleans and how these processes are imagined in maps, and second, mortgage foreclosures and the mapping of “distressed” and “shrinking” places in the City of Cleveland. Planning for shrinkage often turns into a policy to keep real estate prices and city services up in some neighborhoods at the expense of others. The mapping of deserving and undeserving neighborhoods excludes and impoverishes those places deemed racially infiltrated, declining, and dying. At times, the federal government and cities around the U.S. want to get rid of what they see as declining



neighborhoods, but what they really get rid of is affordable housing. It could be argued that this is a form of “neoliberal urbanism”, but these policies had a precursor in the 1930s and late 1960s and 1970s. The “old urban right” had already won several significant victories in the war of ideologies, hinting at a neoliberalism *avant la lettre*.

Key words: Cleveland, Ohio; New Orleans, Louisiana; foreclosure crisis; social exclusion; neighborhood decline; shrinking cities; neoliberal urbanism

Introduction to the Sequel

This is the second part of a two-part paper that focuses on the role of neighborhood typologies and mapping in the management of urban decline. Part 1 of this paper (Aalbers, 2014) has argued that neighborhood decline is not a natural thing but a result of the actions of abstract space makers such as governments, lenders, brokers, landlords and developers (see also Aalbers, 2006). Neighborhood decline can be furthered by the mapping of un/deserving places, as these maps do not only *describe* existing patterns of decline, but may also *prescribe* the withholding of city services and mortgage loans, thereby actively contributing to neighborhood decline, or more generally speaking, to the social production of space. Together the two parts of the paper do not only contribute to the literature on neighborhood typologies, change and decline, but also to the literatures on: mapping and critical cartography; the historical and geographical roots of neoliberalism and the “new urban right”; the foreclosure crisis, redlining and mortgage lending; and finally, shrinking cities and planned shrinkage.

Firstly, in part 1 of this paper I have argued that the idea of maps as *performance* (à la Judith Butler) could be taken one step further, by looking at the *performativity* (à la Donald MacKenzie) of maps, suggesting that maps are not only a performance of power/knowledge but also shape and format geography because the very act of mapping places in abstract space becomes part of the production of social space. Indeed maps, like other technical objects, may naturalize and depoliticize social relations: ‘After the event, the processes involved in building up technical objects are concealed. The causal links they established are naturalized. There was, or so it seems, never any possibility that it could have been otherwise’ (Akrich, 1992, 222). Mapping then becomes not only a way to objectify and de-ideologize the social world, but also a way to exclude the local knowledge of social space makers and to colonize that social space or life-world.

Secondly, in the last two decades critical urban studies has paid a great deal of attention to “neoliberal urbanism” (e.g. Smith, 1998; Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Wilson, 2004; Peck, 2006; Hackworth, 2007), the beginnings of which in the U.S. are often marked by the post-1975 restructuring of bankrupt New York City and the 1980s presidency of Ronald Reagan. Now that we are a few decades into neoliberal urbanism, it is time to take a step back and re-think the roots of this ideology and practice of the “new urban right”, and focus on the *moyenne durée*

instead. In this paper I only begin opening Pandora's Box by questioning the novelty of *neoliberal* urbanism and by suggesting that the roots of the neoliberal urban thinking go much deeper and can be found in the theories of the Chicago School of urban ecology/sociology, in particular Burgess's concentric zone model and the concepts of succession and infiltration; Babcock's and Hoyt's work for the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) and the Federal Housing Association (FHA); Hoover and Vernon's, and Downs sr. and jr.'s work on neighborhood typologies for the Regional Plan Association of New York (RPA), the Chicago Real Estate Board, the Real Estate Research Corporation (RERC) and the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); Starr's ideas of "planned shrinkage", the RAND Institute's prescription of both military and business logics to urban policies, Moynihan's "benign neglect", and their influence on federal and urban policies. All of this suggests that we need to rethink what it means to say that a policy is "neoliberal", what the roots of such policies are, and what is really different in urban policies post-1975.

Thirdly, subprime lending was widely presented as the great tool to provide mortgage loans to low-income and minority neighborhoods, often referred to as "emerging markets", akin the language used for growing economies in the Global South and post-socialist Central and Eastern Europe. Subprime lending was supposed to end the era of redlining in which such neighborhoods were labeled as declining, decaying and racially infiltrated – and therefore undeserving and excluded. But subprime lending did not end the existence of a dual housing market; it reproduced that market by overcharging borrowers in low-income and minority neighborhoods. Moreover, the foreclosure crisis, which to a large degree is caused by the spread of subprime and predatory lending, gave cause to a renewed production of labeling and mapping places of decline, thereby increasing the likeliness of redlining. As in the 1930s, the mapping of places of decline in recent years prescribes or inspires the withdrawal of public services and private loans.

Finally, at times, the literature on shrinking cities seems to echo the idea of planned shrinkage. Planned shrinkage, like redlining, acts as a self-fulfilling prophecy because the perceived places of decline will be excluded from investments, making sure these places will actually decline. In the third take on the performativity of neighborhood typologies and maps, it is argued that the reconstruction of post-Katrina New Orleans has selectively excluded low-income and minority neighborhoods by, often incorrectly, mapping them as flood-prone and unlikely to be repopulated. State agencies and think tanks prescribed shrinkage to many of these neighborhoods and were partly successful in performing decline, but were also challenged by community action in favor of rebuilding some of those communities. In the fourth take it is shown how cities like Cleveland and Memphis map "distressed" neighborhoods and come close to reinventing "planned shrinkage" and "urban triage" policies by implementing geographically selective strategies to deal with shrinkage and decline.

Third Take: Urban Triage Revisited in Post-Katrina New Orleans

Although the immediate cause of the displacement of 100,000s of New Orleans residents might have been hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the disaster was in fact not so much “natural” as it was “man-made” and therefore socially constructed (Hartman and Squires, 2006; Shiffman, 2005). Before we can begin to address the role of maps in re/imagining New Orleans, we need to understand what happened before, during and after hurricanes Katrina and Rita hit the city, and how this disproportionately affected low-income and non-white neighborhoods. What follows is a summary of the practices of exclusion in 13 unfortunate steps:

1. Pre-Katrina New Orleans was a poor city with many people living below the poverty line. Welfare and housing policy restructuring, and welfare state roll-back more generally speaking, have hit the city’s poor hard (Hartman and Squires, 2006). Foster (2007) argues that the cutbacks in housing policy of the 15 years before Katrina have arguably displaced more people than the hurricanes and floods did.
2. The levees that should protect the city were not sufficiently maintained (Baxter, 2014) and the areas at risk included many low-income and black neighborhoods. The floods that followed Katrina hit these neighborhoods, that were mostly in lower parts of the city, more, thereby effectively erasing a large share of relatively affordable housing (Hartman and Squires, 2006; Logan, 2006; Bates and Swan, 2007; Brunsma et al., 2007; Nelson et al., 2007; Gardner et al., 2011; Arena, 2012), including more than 50,000 affordable rental units (Chen, 2008), or 73 percent of all rental units affordable to low-income households (NLIHC, 2005).
3. The evacuation was poorly organized and many residents, in particular those in low-income and black neighborhoods received help very late. The government’s failure to respond adequately to the crisis effectively constituted a second disaster (Hartman and Squires, 2006). Furthermore, the evacuees were labeled “refugees” as if they were extraterritorial (Rhodes, 2010), i.e. as if they had not only lost their home but also their right to a home and their citizenship. They were also treated accordingly in highly-securitized, privately-patrolled, visitor-restricted, out-of-the-way evacuee trailer camps (Klein, 2007, 421). The floods thereby facilitated the repression and “micromanagement of the poor” (Peck, 2001).
4. These neighborhoods were also closed-off for much longer than other neighborhoods, making it impossible for people to return to their homes, even if they had little or no water damage. The damage and risk in these low-income and minority areas was exaggerated while it was

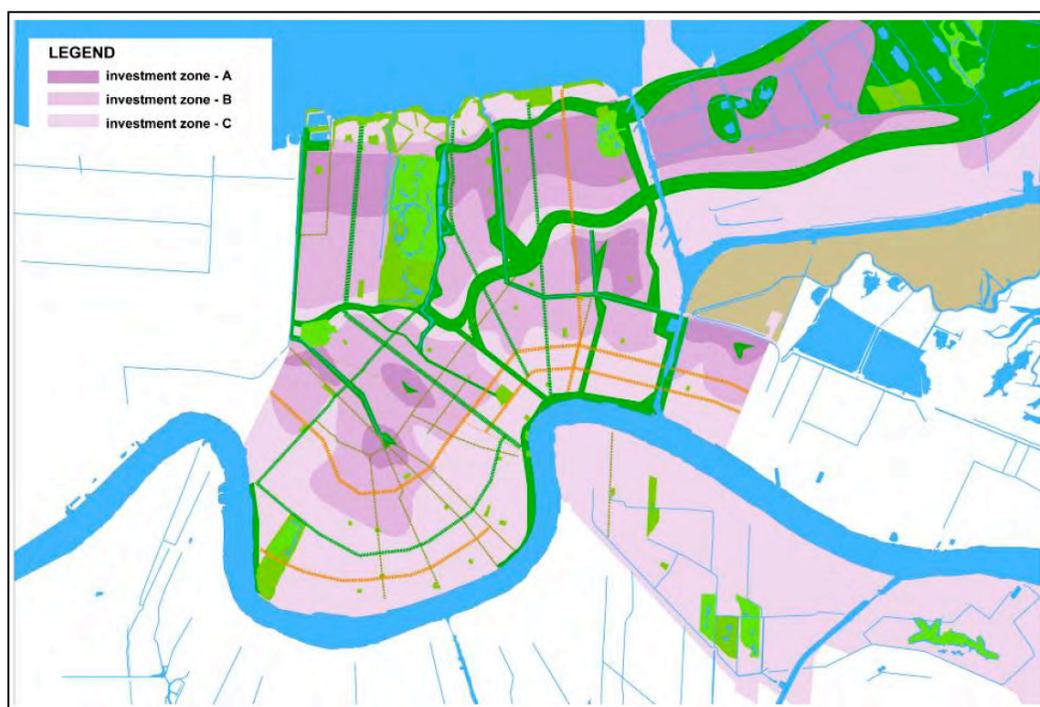
- downplayed in some other areas, again making it more difficult for black people to return and rebuild their neighborhoods. In some areas, buildings without any sign of mold infestation were dying out (Hartman and Squires, 2006; Logan, 2006; Shiffman, 2005; Arena, 2012).
5. The media and many politicians alike represented poor black people as criminals, parasites and members of the looter class (Klein, 2007; Berger, 2009; Flaherty, 2010), portraying a black man as someone 'looting a grocery store' and two white people in similar poses as 'finding the items' (Gotham, 2007a, 91). A month after the flood, it turned out there had been no mass looting or massive increases in other crimes.
 6. Only four days after the flood started, the Bush Administration had been able to open a makeshift jail. The state was unable to offer many people help and once it did so it was far from efficient. Yet, by efficiently involving all layers of government, it was able to get a prison up and running in only four days. Camp Greyhound, as the prison is known, became a holding spot from where people were sent to other jails (Berger, 2009). It was a panopticon-like, bed-less, outdoor, no-privacy prison that was even less pleasant than those run by Joe Arpaio, the infamous sheriff from Maricopa County, Arizona. Berger (2009, 500) argues that the moral panic 'served to bolster the hegemony of police, prisons and property on the backs of already marginalized populations.' The prisoners included three people who would later be sentenced to 15 years each for stealing alcohol.
 7. Help was available for homeowners but not for renters. In addition, many tenants who had not yet returned to their homes were evicted. Federal funds for house rebuilding assistance flowed in very slowly and it was easier and faster for homeowners in less damaged areas to receive financial compensation than it was for people in more damaged areas. Furthermore, help was not available for small landlords, who are the ones that often own properties in low-income and non-white communities (Quigley, 2007a; 2007b; Gardner et al., 2011).
 8. People were not allowed to return. Quigley (2007a) summarizes the government's strategy as: 'Whatever you do, keep people away from their city for as long as possible. This is the key to long-term success in destroying the African-American city. Do not permit people to come home.' Eighteen months after the flood, more than 300,000 people had not yet returned to the New Orleans metro area, usually because they were unable to do so (Quigley, 2007b).
 9. A great deal of power was not in the hands of the City of New Orleans, but in those of the Louisiana Recovery Administration (LRA), which is

- not a democratically controlled but a state-appointed board. LRA used tax incentives and HUD block grants to support the private sector. Federal funding that was designed to support jobs for low-income people was used for tourist marketing activities instead (see also Gotham and Greenberg, 2008). Furthermore, there were many cases of significant overcharges, wasteful spending, and mismanagement (Klein, 2007 provides several examples).
10. Congress member Richard Baker (Republican, Louisiana) is quoted as saying: ‘We finally cleaned up public housing in New Orleans. We couldn’t do it, but God did’ (cited in DeRienzo, 2007, 16; Quigley, 2007b, 403; Flaherty, 2010, 61). Even though there was a waiting list of 17,000 people pre-Katrina, HUD and the New Orleans Housing Authority decided to demolish thousands of public housing units, many of them with little or no flood damage, leading Wolf-Powers (2007, 89) to argue that the shrinking city agenda looks more like a purge.
 11. Multi-family housing got classified as commercial and commercial businesses only got funding if they were profitable, which implies that affordable housing, whether multi-family rental or owner-occupied buildings, was excluded from funding. In this way, affordable housing was stolen from the poor and the hurricane was used to further neoliberalism with the use of federal funding (Kamel and Pijawka, 2011).
 12. Public services were scaled down even further. Infrastructure in some parts of the city is not or insufficiently reconstructed, city workers were laid off, and public space in many parts of the city is maintained by residents and their organizations rather than by the city government (Klein, 2007; Nelson et al., 2007).
 13. Rents went up. To cite Quigley’s (2007a) summary of the government’s response once more: ‘When rents go up 70%, say there is nothing we can do about it. This will have two great results. It will keep many former residents away from the city and it will make landlords happy.’ By 2010 an estimated 11,000 people, almost 5% of the population, were homeless (Flaherty, 2010). Of the former public housing residents, more than 20% was homeless (Gardner et al., 2011). Little new affordable housing has been constructed in the City of New Orleans, while its surrounding suburbs have also actively tried to keep poor people out of their communities, e.g. by making it hard to rent out housing, or by opposing all low-income tax credit multi-family housing (Quigley, 2007b).

Not only critics but also “recovery czar” Edward Blakely (2012) has noted the desire of not only white residents but also of black elites to keep low-income residents, who were predominantly black, from returning. In 2006 Logan feared

that New Orleans might be losing more than 80% of its black population. Although the 13 unfortunate steps suggest that a lot was done to enable this, the fall in black population appears to be somewhat smaller, but it not unlikely that the combined long-term effects of Katrina, poor planning and rebuilding, and the demolishing of affordable housing, will result in halving New Orleans' black population, while the white population, after a few years of decline, will climb back to, or even grow beyond, pre-Katrina levels (see also Gardner et al, 2011). Notwithstanding the fact that five years after Katrina almost 90% of the metropolitan population has returned (Kamel, 2012), New Orleans is now 'a much smaller, older, whiter, and more affluent city' (Quigley, 2007b, 417).

Figure 1. Neighborhood Investment Zones and Strategic Open Space. (Source: ULI, 2005)²



While rescue operations were still in place, people were suggesting half of the city's population might not return, making them wonder if planned shrinkage might be a good strategy for post-Katrina New Orleans (see Reardon, 2006; Wolf-Powers, 2007). Influential reports by the Urban Land Institute (ULI) and the Bring New Orleans Back Commission also included plans to limit rebuilding to high ground and to terminate the re-urbanization of heavily flooded parts of the city. ULI was hired by the Mayor of New Orleans. The Institute proposed a selective

² All maps are in the public domain and are mostly developed by public organizations.

rebuilding plan that reads like urban triage all-over again: neighborhoods that have been heavily damaged should be depopulated and will not be rebuilt (Category or Investment Zone A), neighborhoods that have intermediate damage would have to demonstrate the viability of their neighborhoods to be eligible for funding (Category or Investment Zone B), and neighborhoods that have only limited damage are eligible for immediate funding (Category or Investment Zone C). Figure 1 shows the location of the different Investment Zones as well as the location of “Strategic Open Space”. Since the worst damage was concentrated in poor and minority communities, most low-income and ethnic groups would not be allowed to return in the ULI plan or only if they would be to demonstrate the viability of their neighborhoods, thereby creating a catch-22 situation in which funds needed for rehabilitation are withheld until a critical mass moves back without receiving much needed aid quickly. Residents of more well-off areas in terms of both income and relatively limited damage, however, would not only be allowed to return but would also be able to get immediate funding. ULI also argued for “fair compensation”, at pre-Katrina levels, of homeowners who cannot return to their homes. The problem is that many of these homeowners come from the poorest neighborhoods where pre-Katrina property values were low, and since little or no new affordable is being built in other parts of the city, these people would effectively be displaced.

Figure 2. Park and Open Space Plan. (Source: Bring New Orleans Back Commission, 2006)

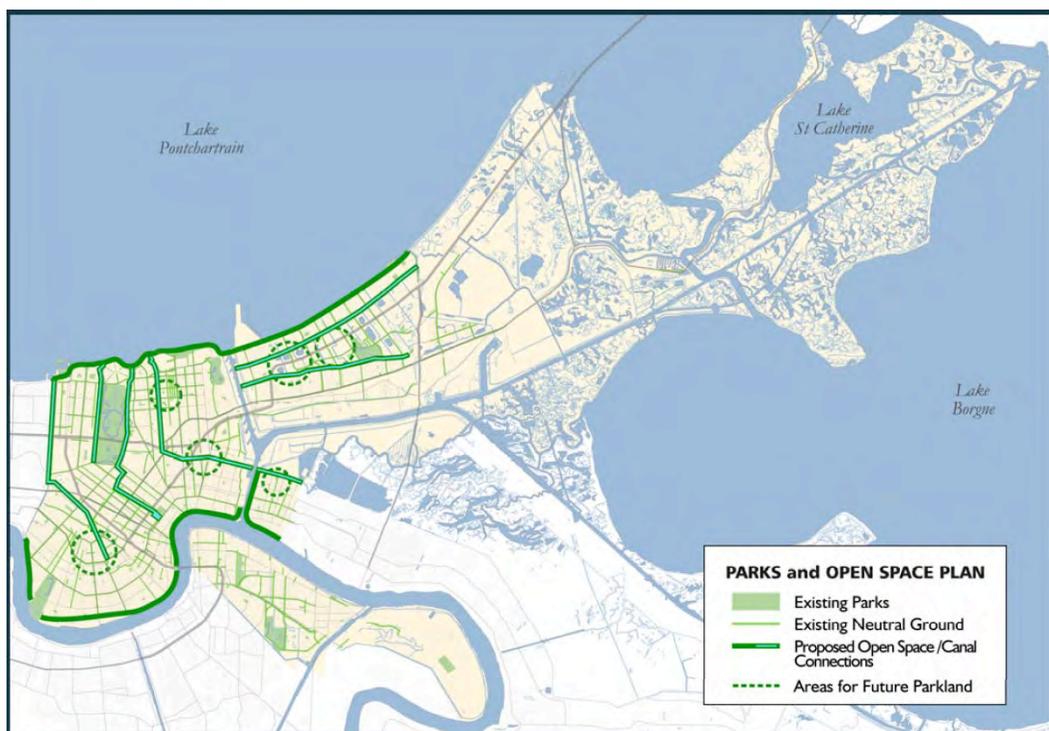
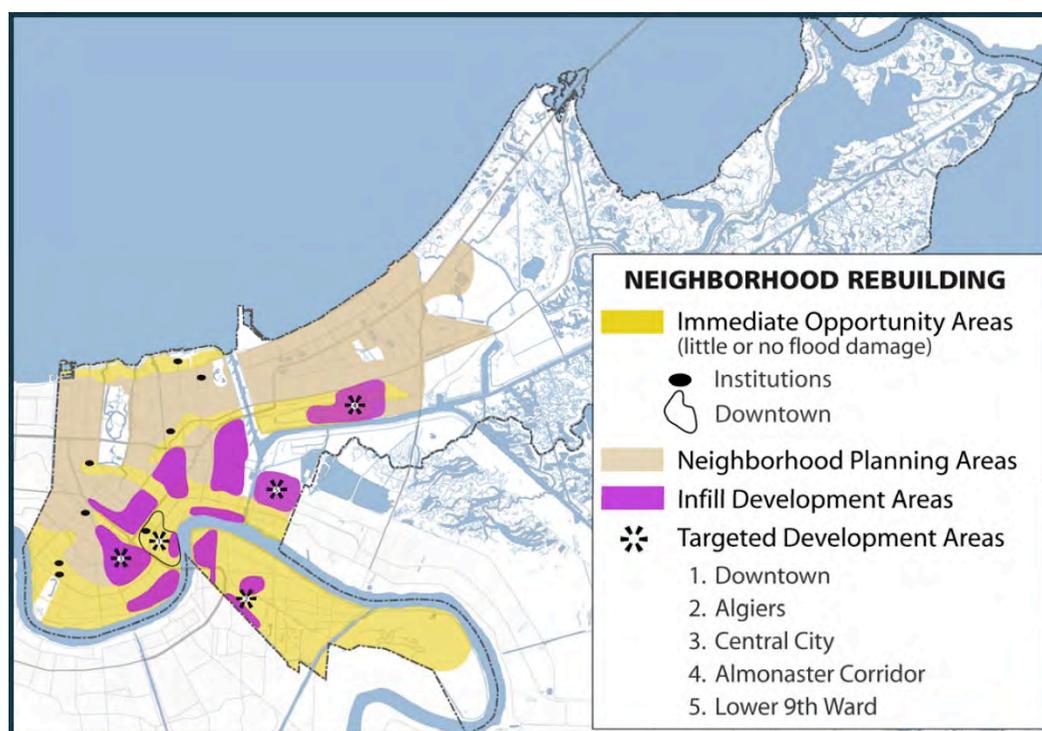


Figure 3. Neighborhood Rebuilding Strategy. (Source: Bring New Orleans Back Commission, 2006)



The Bring New Orleans Back report that was commissioned by the Mayor of the city is less explicit than the ULI plan, but also mentions that flood-prone areas and neighborhoods that fail to attract a critical mass of returning residents may also be given up. The remaining residents would be rehoused, city services terminated and remaining housing demolished. The report fails to address how remaining and former residents of such areas would be able to afford housing in other, higher priced, neighborhoods. Although the plan is not very clear about the neighborhoods deemed to be depopulated, the plan does include maps of future “parkland and open space” (Figure 2) as well of those of “immediate opportunity areas” that have little or no flood damage, “infill development areas” and “targeted development areas” (Figure 3). The green dots on the map, indicated parkland and open space, became the new redlining or new benign neglect, and the immediate opportunity, infill development and targeted development areas the new ‘hot spots in demand as residential locations in good times and bad [sic] times’ (see Take 1).

Although it may seem reasonable or even rational to protect people by not allowing them to live in flood-prone areas, it is surprising that both the ULI and the Bring New Orleans Back plans do not call for better land use regulation in suburbs up the Mississippi River to avoid flooding in New Orleans (Reardon, 2006) and that damage is exaggerated in low-income and minority areas (see step 4 above). It

is also telling that both plans essentially propose to abandon the poorest neighborhoods of the city without offering its former and current residents a decent and affordable alternative. It is therefore not very surprising that many African-Americans viewed the ULI and BNOB plans as strategies to keep them from returning: “shrinking the footprint”, a term from ULI’s report, has been criticized for being an attempt to prevent African-Americans from returning and allowing developers access to well-situated sites (Nelson et al., 2007).

C. Ray Nagin, the Mayor of New Orleans, has been a supporter of rebuilding all neighborhoods. In particular in the first months after hurricanes Katrina and Rita had flooded his city, he often proclaimed that New Orleans would come back ‘bigger and better’. The City Council also unanimously passed a resolution emphasizing that all neighborhoods could be rebuilt. Plans were nevertheless developed for a much smaller city and the City Council – which was significantly whiter after its reelection when many minorities had not yet returned to the city – opposed multi-family housing developments and voted unanimously to demolish public housing (Chen, 2008; Ehrenfeucht and Nelson, 2011).

Community organization ACORN argued for the right to return for all residents (ACORN, 2006). If it would not be possible to move back to their original neighborhood, they should be assisted to acquire affordable housing, preferably in a nearby area. ACORN also helped people in the relatively poor Plum Orchard neighborhood of New Orleans East to renovate and rebuild their houses. Finally, ACORN worked with urban planners at Cornell University to research the effects of Katrina on the Ninth Ward area of New Orleans (reported in Reardon et al., 2008). Some of their findings include:

- Eight of ten of the Ninth Ward’s standing residential structures were structurally sound.
- The vast majority of these structurally sound structures were excellent candidates for cost-effective rehabilitation.
- The area where building demolition appeared justified was limited to a relatively small portion of the northwestern quadrant of the Lower Ninth Ward.
- A higher percentage of residents that had previously been reported appeared to have returned to the area to stay. (Reardon et al., 2008, 67)

In January 2007 ACORN, the Cornell faculty members and their students presented *The People’s Plan*, which took these lessons and translated them into strategies for rebuilding the Ninth Ward rather than letting it die out. In the end, the urban triage plans of the ULI and those of the Bring New Orleans Back Commission were discarded and replaced by the *Unified New Orleans Plan* (UNOP) and *Office of Recovery Management* (ORM) plans. Only one month after the ACORN/Cornell/residents team had presented their alternative plan, the New Orleans City Council passed a resolution to incorporate the main elements of the

plan into UNOP, the city's comprehensive plan. UNOP includes a strategy of targeting, which is 'a compromise between forcibly shrinking the city's footprint to restrict redevelopment in the most flood-prone areas and permitting redevelopment to continue throughout the city in a haphazard or unplanned manner' (Nelson et al., 2007, 33). The targeting focuses on 17 so-called "rebuild zones", including two in the Ninth Ward and several in other low-income and minority neighborhoods, allowing more poor and minority residents to return to their neighborhoods than had hitherto been the case. Yet, many private investors, including prime lenders, did not support the move back to the Ninth Ward and refused financial support, making it hard for residents to fix up and move into their houses. Moreover, it remained unclear what would happen to residents in non-targeted areas: 'With few tools and inadequate resources, the answer was the constant repetition that the whole city would come back' (Ehrenfeucht and Nelson, 2011, 138).

In ORM's plan, UNOP's target areas were designated as "rebuild", "redevelop" and "renew" zones based on the amount of damage they had sustained. Although the clustering idea is less exclusive of low-income and minority neighborhoods, opposition to these plans has not completely vanished and some residents that had become distrustful of the whole post-Katrina planning process argued that clustering is simply another attempt to deny them the right to return to their neighborhoods (Nelson et al., 2007). Furthermore, residents in higher ground neighborhoods opposed infill development while the direction for several low-density neighborhoods remains unclear, as they are not mentioned in the plans. In addition, the City and State agencies did not propose any land swap mechanism that would enable residents from non-targeted neighborhoods to return to near-by areas where not everyone chose to return, suggesting that in practice the plans had elements of both planned shrinkage/Starr-style (see Take 2) and right-sizing/smart decline style (see Take 4). In short, the actions and strategies of federal, state and municipal institutions as well as think tanks, supported by numerous maps, to further the decline in low-income and minority neighborhoods had parallels to public redlining maps as well as to planned shrinkage, urban triage and benign neglect. Fortunately, community protest scaled-down some of these efforts, as was the case in the Bronx in the 1970s and beyond.

Fourth Take: Planned Shrinkage after the Perfect Storm (Cleveland)

In Cleveland, Ohio, it did not take hurricane Katrina; it took another devastating "perfect storm" also known as "hurricane Wall Street" (Lind, 2008). Cleveland is one of the cities hit hardest by the foreclosure crisis. On the 2007 list of most foreclosed zip codes, four were in Detroit, but the Slavic Village in Cleveland had the most foreclosure filings. The Slavic Village is widely talked about as foreclosure's ground zero. Cleveland is one of the many U.S. Rustbelt cities that suffered from a loss of manufacturing jobs and a consequent population decline starting in the 1950s. In the beginning of that decade Cleveland had 914,000 residents; 60 years later it had only 397,000. In several predominately

African-American neighborhoods, population declined by 70-85% (Dillman, 2010). Where the population of many other Rustbelt cities started to stabilize, Cleveland's merely slowed down in the 1990s when the city was known as "The Comeback City", only to speed up again in the first decade of the 21st century, when the city lost 17% of its population, second only to Katrina-hit New Orleans.

In 2007, about 7,500 foreclosures took place in Cleveland. In Cuyahoga County – which includes Cleveland and surrounding suburbs and has an estimated population of 1.28 million – this number was around 15,000 in 2007 (Schiller and Hirsh, 2008) and over 100,000 for the first nine years of this century, amounting to one in five properties. In the County about 30% of subprime mortgages were either delinquent or in foreclosure by the summer of 2007 (Schwartz, 2007), a share that has only increased since then. Subprime lending in Cleveland grew from 3% in 1995 to 19% in 1998, and 45% in 2004 (Dillman, 2010). With many so-called 2/28 and 3/27 loans (two or three years of low teaser rates and 28 or 27 years of high, predatory interest rates), it is not hard to see why the foreclosure crisis hit Cleveland and other cities around the country in 2007. High-cost sub-prime, i.e. predatory, loans are responsible for 84% of all foreclosures in Cuyahoga County; African-American borrowers are disproportionately hit and so are minority and low-income neighborhoods (Coulton et al., 2008). In all of Ohio, 45% of all mortgages are now underwater, meaning that the outstanding loan is larger than the estimated value; in Cleveland this is 55% and likely much higher in the Slavic Village and other low-income areas.

As is well-known from the literature, predatory loans, and in particular refinance loans, are targeted at low-income, minority homeowners and the neighborhoods they inhabit (Pennington-Cross, 2002; Squires, 2004; Aalbers, 2012). This should come as no surprise if you realize that racial disparities in prime mortgage markets are huge. In Cleveland, the denial rates for African-Americans were not only twice as high as those of whites, upper income African-Americans were denied prime loans more often than low-income whites (Dillman, 2010). Many of those that were denied prime loans, resorted to subprime loans, often of the predatory kind. Since African-Americans were heavily concentrated in Cleveland's East Side, the combined effects of place-based and race-based targeting of predatory loans was a heavy concentration of predatory loans – and not much later of foreclosures – in that part of the city.

House prices in Cleveland have fallen dramatically. In 2005 the median sales price of a house was around \$100,000; in early 2007 it was \$62,000; a year later it was \$15,500, a decrease of 75% in only one year (Mallach, 2009). The fall in prices is, at least in part, so dramatic, because foreclosure sales now make up a large share of all sales and that brings down the median house prices considerably. Mikelbank and Post (2011) show how in the years 2007-2009 the share of single-family home sales that is identified as affected by the crisis (i.e., foreclosure sales or foreclosure filings in the last two years) was around 80% (and around 60% for Cuyahoga County). Coulton et al. (2010) show how foreclosed properties used to

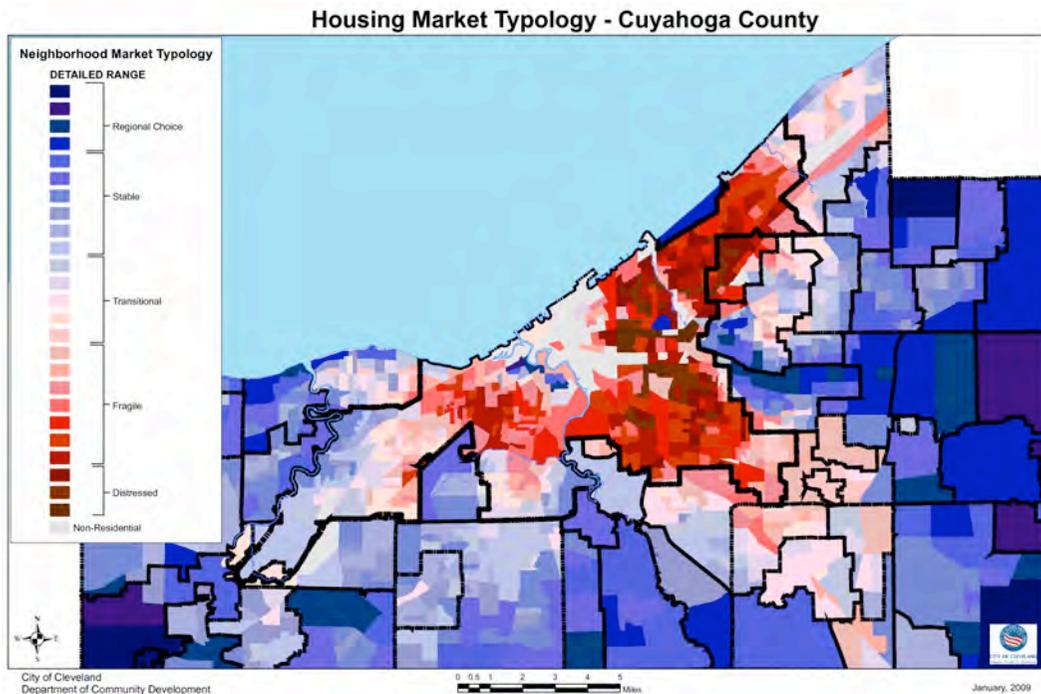
sell for 60-80% of the previously estimated market value in 2004, but for only 10-40% of that value in 2009. Houses on Cleveland's East Side, that includes the Slavic Village, were selling for an average of 13% of their previously estimated market value. In the Slavic Village the median price of houses affected by the crisis dropped from around \$30,000 in 2003-2006 to around \$10,000 in 2008-2010. Median prices for non-affected houses dropped from \$65,000-90,000 in the years 2003-2007 to \$18,000 in late 2008, up again to \$75,000 in 2009 and down to \$15,000 late 2010. The extreme drops in prices of so-called "non-affected" houses are a result of these sales actually becoming affected by the flood of foreclosures sales... so much for "non-affected". For 2008-2010 prices in the non-affected market are quite erratic as the number of sales is extremely low (Mikelbank and Post, 2010). In the larger East Side, almost 80% of the foreclosed properties sold for less than \$10,000 in 2008 and 2009, up from only 4% in 2004. This was the case for 65% of the foreclosed properties in the City of Cleveland and just over 40% in Cuyahoga County for foreclosure sales in 2008 and 2009 (Coulton et al. 2010). On eBay you can even buy houses in the Slavic Village and elsewhere in Cleveland starting at about \$500.

The City of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County have to deal with an oversupply of housing and an undersupply of funds to demolish or renovate housing. \$50 to 80 million may be needed to demolish only the worst 10,000 houses. It has been argued that it is impossible to save all neighborhoods that have been hit by the predatory and foreclosure crisis. As Weinstein (2008, 275) argues: 'Limited resources should be deployed strategically, paying close attention to which neighborhoods have the existing housing stock and community amenities to compete for a pool of purchasers that had been shrinking even before credit standards tightened. Inevitably, this strategy will leave significant areas where parcels are abandoned or vacant.'

Cleveland is one of the many cities benefitting from the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) that was launched in 2008. Ohio, together with other Rustbelt states, had successfully lobbied to make sure NSP funds could also be used for demolition, which was not possible in the originally presented NSP. Subsequently, the city developed a neighborhood typology (Figure 4)

to help determine where to target new investment, distinguishing between neighborhoods that could support new market activity from those where the residential market was so weak that investment would merely be "thrown down the drain". Using indicators of housing market strength, the typology classified the neighborhoods within Cuyahoga County along a continuum of neighborhood types, including "Regional Choice", "Stable", "Transitional", "Fragile", and "Distressed". (Reid, 2011, 26)

Figure 4. Housing Market Typology of Cuyahoga County (Source: City of Cleveland Department of Community Development, 2009)



This neighborhood typology seems to be, at least in part, based on Mallach's report on housing policies in so-called "weak market cities" in which he suggests to map neighborhoods ranging along a continuum from

those that are regionally competitive and largely insulated from the cycle of decline affecting the rest of the city, to those at the opposite end of the spectrum that have been heavily disinvested, with widespread population loss and abandonment, and where the real estate market is functioning poorly, if at all. Each of these neighborhoods requires a different mix of strategies, financial incentives, and investment to rebuild its market and preserve or restore neighborhood vitality. (Mallach, 2005, 23)

Although Mallach (2005, 24) warns that 'the development of neighborhood typologies is not a basis for rationing attention and resources, but for focusing those resources most constructively', he also asserts that governments have to choose between different declining neighborhoods and that investment should be targeted based on a 'careful assessment of the opportunities and benefits the project offers, as well as the opportunity costs of using scarce resources which could be used elsewhere' (27). Mallach himself does nowhere speak of ending services and investment in declining neighborhoods, but it is easy to see how the mapping of

distressed neighborhoods, in combination with the language of ‘targeting’, ‘scarce resources’, and ‘assessment of the opportunities’ could result in a new form of planned shrinkage.

The practice of “creative shrinkage” means that federal and local investment only takes part in certain parts of the city, a policy initially rejected by Cleveland Mayor Frank D. Jackson (Perkins and Breckenridge, 2007), but slowly becoming more dominant as Cleveland’s sources of funding to tackle decline dry up. (Cleveland is also considering replacing the Forgotten Triangle, a depopulated neighborhood not from the city center with a tree nursery.) It did not help either that when President Obama launched a new \$11.5 billion plan to help the states hit most heavily by the housing crisis, Ohio was excluded because it was not in the list of the most declining house prices as house prices had comparatively speaking been low for a long time. The Obama plan excludes most Rustbelt cities with high foreclosure rates and generally low housing prices, but includes several cities and suburbs in the Sunbelt where extreme price inflation was followed by extreme price declines, i.e. more extreme in dollar amounts because the average prices were so much higher at their peak level.

In the 1990s, the Slavic Village, like the Comeback City at large, seemed to be a very resilient place, in part a result of the work of Slavic Village Development, a local community development corporation. But at the end of that decade predatory lenders became increasingly active in the neighborhood and by 2005, 68% of the loan originations in the area were predatory (Cohen, 2009). The result was a foreclosure epidemic. The Slavic Village was once a vibrant neighborhood but parts of it are now turning into a ghost town. Over the last few years, an average of two families per day were evicted, mostly as a result of foreclosures. About one in four houses has been in a foreclosure procedure over the last five years. In some streets a third of the houses are abandoned. As Barbara Anderson, a local homeowner, said: ‘People come to strip the neighborhood, to use it and abuse it and leave it’ (cited in Katz, 2009, 81).

The Slavic Village and other neighborhoods hit hard by the foreclosure crisis are given up by some think tanks and government institutions, while at the same time other organizations focus on rebuilding these areas. The foreseen shrinkage and proposed withdrawal of services from low-income neighborhoods happens alongside new investments in some of these areas, not unlike the targeting comprise reached in New Orleans where urban triage and clustering also exist in a marriage of in/convenience. In the Slavic Village, there are two factors that should help the Slavic Village to stabilize. Firstly, it has an active community development sector including the non-profit Slavic Village Development that has been fighting to improve the neighborhood for years and continues to renovate housing, partly because the City targets parts of the neighborhood for reinvestment. Secondly the Third Federal Savings and Loan, a \$11 billion thrift that was started in 1938 by the grandfather of the current chief executive, supports the neighborhood where it is headquartered. Since Third Federal continued only

providing “old-fashioned” prime loans, it lost a lot of market share to subprime and predatory lenders in the 1990s and early 2000s, but it is back in business in neighborhoods like the Slavic Village where it has its roots. This lender’s loans also have a foreclosure rate that is not only far below the Cleveland average, but even much lower than the national average (Schwartz, 2007), demonstrating that foreclosures are not simply a result of a faltering economy or of spendthrift homeowners, but mostly of bad, overpriced loans. Other neighborhoods in Cleveland’s East Side may be in a thornier situation as they miss one or even both of the Slavic Village’s two possible stabilization factors. Without a local thrift and a local community development fund, and without the funds to target local investment, these neighborhoods may become the victims of benign neglect and urban triage.

I am not arguing that cities should ignore shrinkage and decline. A typical strategy for declining cities is to simply ignore decline and plan for growth as cities and the urban planners who work for them have a bias towards growth (Popper and Popper, 2002). The problem is that shrinking cities need to ‘reject the growth-based paradigm that feeds much of urban planning in North America’ (Hollander, 2011, 2) and come up with strategies that deal with actually shrinking cities. Attracting new businesses is limitedly successful and extremely expensive at best, and useless and a waste of money that could have been used to manage decline at worst, as Bradbury, Downs (!) and Small already demonstrated for the case of Cleveland in 1981, and as new studies continue to demonstrate (see the review of the literature by Hollander, 2011). Moreover, as long as municipalities within an urban region continue to build new housing in a region that is shrinking, they are basically causing vacancies in the least popular parts of the regional housing market (Aalbers, 2003) and those will typically be the neighborhoods marked as declining. Yet it is important to realize that part of the reason for vacancies in “declining neighborhoods” is often the continued construction of new housing elsewhere in the urban region.

Advocated concepts to deal with shrinkage and decline include “right-sizing” or “downsizing” (Rybczynski, 1995), “creative decline” (Swope, 2006), “creative shrinkage” (Lanks, 2006; Oswalt, 2006), “controlled shrinkage” (Aepfel, 2007), and “smart decline” (Popper and Popper, 2002; Swope, 2006; Axel-Lute, 2007; Hollander, 2001). The concepts all call for ‘planning proactively for the possible or likely population shrinkage of a city by adjusting its infrastructure, development patterns and governmental services to its reduced population’ (Alligood, 2008, 3). There are some important differences between these concepts. At the risk of over-generalizing a bit, right-sizing, downsizing and to some degree creative shrinkage are susceptible to the same critique as planned shrinkage and urban triage, while smart decline seems to focus more on declining housing density through instruments such as “relaxed zoning” and the “reverse land use allocation model”. Yet, even the reverse land use allocation model is not without problems, as one of it advocates suggests: ‘Of course, nobody wants to live in an area predicted to

become a decline node, especially because the model will be able to predict that no one will be living there at a certain point in the future' (Hollander, 2011, 15).

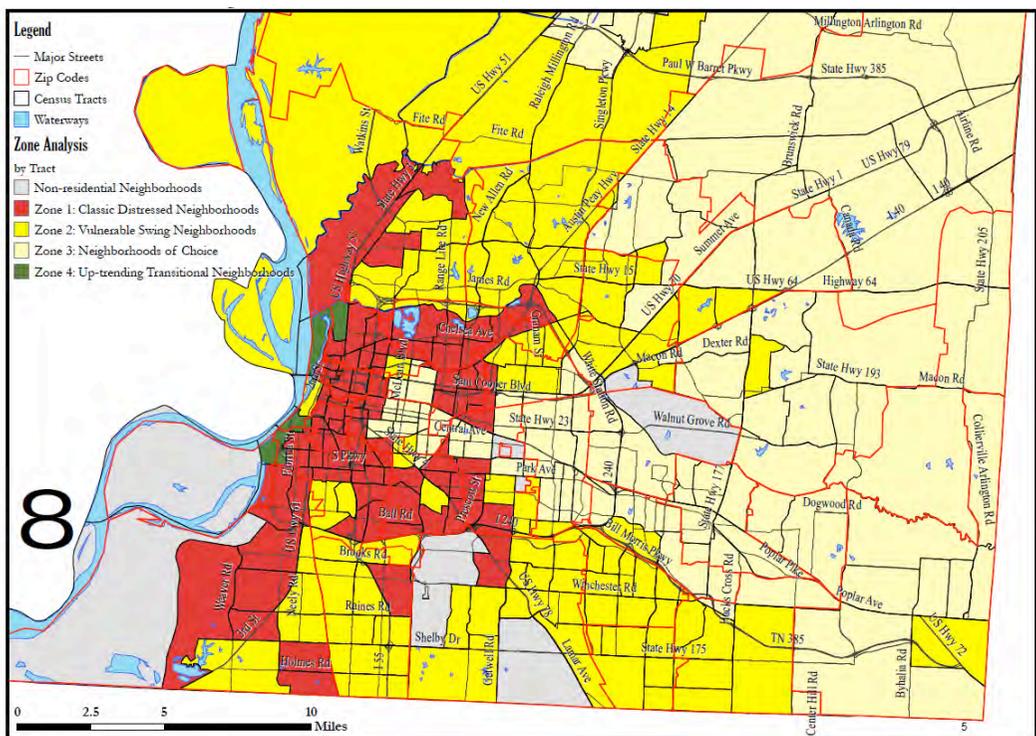
Hollander, however, fails to see that his model can either be wrong in its prediction, or can turn out to be right because it may work as a self-fulfilling prophecy: if a neighborhood is labeled as declining and predicted to become completely depopulated, this may effect actual depopulation, not just because it may act as a 'wake-up call to local residents', as Hollander argues, but also because it may re/direct strategies and actions of public and private organizations. I agree that "doing nothing" or "waiting for growth against all odds" is not a very productive strategy, but urban planners, demographers, and the state apparatus they often work for, should also see that population projections are on the one hand often off, and on the other, have a performative function. The Bronx did decline, as projections predicted, and it did so in part because public and private actors acted upon such projections – but the Bronx also climbed back up and its population increased again. The Bronx may be an exception to the rule, but what the Bronx teaches us, is how projections of decline can be both performative *and* wrong.

The question of how to deal with shrinking populations and declining neighborhoods is of course an interesting question, but another important question is: when do strategies and policies that deal with shrinkage and decline become geographically exclusionary? When do they cease to be *smart* and become just another name for "planned shrinkage" and "urban triage"? Rybczynski (1995), for example, like Starr, calls for consolidating services in denser areas, and removing unused and underused buildings and infrastructure from less attractive areas. Like "urban triage", "right-sizing" is a military term that is applied to cities in a corporate or business-like fashion and that strives to make things more lucrative, efficient, and competitive. Neoliberal urbanism comes in its purest form when it borrows military terms and applies them to places and governments with a corporate twist: cities are seen as businesses that need to be made more competitive and military concepts are employed to do so. Cleveland's marriage of in/convenience, not unlike New Orleans' more recent plans, effectively comes down to a "creative shrinkage" strategy, i.e. "planned shrinkage" Starr-style + "downsizing" Rybczynski-style + selective targeting + community involvement. It can be criticized on the same grounds as Starr's and Rybczynski's ideas as the practice of creative shrinkage means that significant parts of the city will be neglected.

Cleveland is not the only city implementing geographically selective strategies to deal with shrinkage and decline. Sixty miles to the southeast, Youngstown, Ohio went from 168,000 residents in 1950 to 67,000 in 2010. In 2005 the city adopted the Youngstown 2010 Plan in which they use the term "guided urban shrinkage" to implement a policy that could be described as a tuned down version of urban triage and planned shrinkage. Part of the strategy of Fresno, California is to use federal NSP funds to leverage most resources on a single neighborhood with a high foreclosure rate, thereby making a real difference there

but ignoring foreclosures in other neighborhoods (Hollander, 2011, 67). Memphis, Tennessee has developed a neighborhood typology for Shelby County somewhat similar to Cleveland’s but the map depicting the neighborhoods looks exactly like a classic redlining map (Figure 5) and is explicitly based on Alan Mallach’s neighborhood typology work (e.g. Mallach, 2005). It characterizes most of the central city as “Zone 1: Classic Distressed Neighborhoods”, colored red on the map. The other three types of zones that the city distinguishes between are “Zone 2: Vulnerable Swing Neighborhoods” (dark yellow), “Zone 3: Neighborhoods of Choice” (light yellow), and “Zone 4: Up-trending Transitional Neighborhoods” (green). The biggest difference with a classic redlining map appears to be the addition of “Up-trending transitional”, otherwise known as gentrifying, neighborhoods. Yet there is evidence, albeit so far mostly anecdotal, that with the arrival of the foreclosure crisis, redlining is back (Kane, 2008; Markey, 2010; Aalbers, 2011) and that the neighborhoods at risk of being redlined are, again, predominately low-income and minority. The neighborhood typologies developed in Cleveland, Memphis and other cities will surely “help” lenders in deciding which neighborhoods to redline. The dual housing market in the U.S. did not end with the so-called discovery of “emerging markets” of low-income and minority neighborhoods and it also did not end with the fall of subprime lending in the wake of the foreclosure and financial crisis.

Figure 5. Zone Analysis of Shelby County. (Source: Greater Memphis Partnership Strategic Planning for Community Development, 2008)



Conclusion: The Unwritten History of Neoliberal Urbanism

Maps do not *make* the physical geography of the land, but they do *remake* the physical and social urban landscape of housing, investment and exclusion. People are not passive recipients of the presented categorizations inherent to maps; they are actively involved in the de/construction and re/production of these maps, allowing for new meanings and applications, some of which were unforeseen by the initial producers of these maps. Users may take the map beyond its original purpose, they may reproduce the map, or act based upon it, but they may also resist its categorizations and prescriptions. By mapping places as “distressed” or “flood-prone”, these places are perceived that way and acted upon. A map indicating shrinking neighborhoods may not only result in the withholding of city services, but also in community protest and resistance, i.e. to challenging the maps foundations and prescriptions. Furthermore, it may also be used as a shorthand by mortgage lenders, who may reason that they should not invest where state institutions have predicted or prescribed decline.

The decline of cities and neighborhoods did not start with the construction of city maps and the implementation of redlining or planned shrinkage policies. It starts with an ideology of deserving and undeserving neighborhoods. That ideology shapes the actions of public and private actors. Maps and neighborhood typologies were mobilized to further decline, even though this was not by definition intentional. There is a whole chain of connections between the state, academics, think tanks and private companies that has resulted in HOLC’s redlining maps, NYC’s planned shrinkage, DC’s benign neglect, and New Orleans’, Cleveland’s and other cities’ reinvention of such strategies. The maps used in these strategies have a performative function: they are either used to prescribe decline or they have the effect of furthering decline by marking neighborhoods as places “where houses have little or no value” (HOLC), that are “dying” (New York), “to be depopulated” (New Orleans), or “distressed” (Cleveland). Indeed, the use of these maps and neighborhood typologies alters the world they seek to describe.

As in New York in the 1970s, several state institutions, businesses and think tanks in New Orleans advocated a much smaller city. In both cases, poor residential areas have also been earmarked for commercial development rather than residential rehabilitation. In the years and decades before Katrina, poor black people were increasingly perceived as redundant within the labor market, further impoverished by a scaled down welfare system and the services it was supposed to offer, and controlled by a penal state (see Hartman and Squires, 2006; Gotham, 2007b; Rhodes, 2010 for New Orleans; and Peck, 2003; Wacquant, 2008 more generally speaking). The hurricanes and floods were abused to remove poor and black people. Then plans, strategies and maps were used to remove them, first, from the imaginary of the city (see also Rhodes 2010), and second, from the physical city. Geography, both physical and socio-economic, was employed to displace people. It is an extreme case of “revanchist renewal” and “neoliberal urbanism” (Smith, 1996; Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Wilson, 2004; Hackworth,

2007), concepts originally inspired by New York City's policies under Mayor Giuliani, but implemented in many U.S. cities in the following years. As Peck (2006, 682, 704) has convincingly argued, the "new urban right" has won

some significant victories in the war of ideas – along the way, reframing the debate around America's cities, their alleged pathologies, and their putative salvation. ... Fundamentally, the agenda of the new urban right is about setting the "ground rules" for appropriate behavior in cities, largely modeled on middle-class norms; establishing the preconditions for economic growth, largely through the kinds of minimalist supply-side interventions ... and maintaining social order through ruthless application of the force of law, facilitated by zero-tolerance policing. This, clearly, is anything but a noninterventionist program, but its interventions are profoundly selective.

Peck makes a connection between New York under Giuliani and post-Katrina New Orleans and goes on to argue that such policies are both neoliberal; Gotham and Greenberg (2008) make a similar connection, but I would like to question the *neoliberal* element in this debate. I do not want to argue neoliberal ideas and practices are copies of earlier right-wing thinking and practice, or that there is nothing neoliberal about these policies, but if we go back to the 1930s and late 1960s and 1970s, it appears that the "old urban right" already won several significant victories in the war of ideologies, whether they were advanced by Babcock, Hoyt, HOLC and FHA; by Hoover and Vernon, Downs sr. and jr., RPA and RERC; or by Starr, democrats like Moynihan and Shalala, the RAND Institute, and HUD.

The so-called "new urban right" in the U.S. has a long history of right-wing urban thinking to rely and build upon, and it could be questioned what is so "new" or "neo" about their thinking and policies. In a sense, these policies are traditional right-wing urban thinking that seeks to claim cities as sites for capital accumulation and define low-income and poor communities as undeserving. We need to be more specific about what is new about these ideas. If the exclusion of minorities and low-income citizens is not, perhaps the use of public funding for better off citizens and big firms is? Or is it something in the way that low-income and minority neighborhoods get targeted for depopulation that is different from earlier policies? Again, I am not arguing against the concept of neoliberalism *per se*, and have employed it elsewhere myself (e.g. Aalbers, 2013), but I would like to see more precision in the debate and clearer explanations of perceived historical disjunctures and discontinuities. In short, when and how did right-wing urban thinking become new?

We also need to focus on the pre-histories of neoliberalism: not only its roots in liberalism or in the work of Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman, but also the role of *urban* thinking and practice in government institutions, real estate organizations and think tanks. Neoliberal urbanism does not only have its roots in

neoliberal thinking but also in urban thinking; neoliberal urbanism is not simply the urban translation of general neoliberal thinking but also has urban pre-histories and those need to be told. If neoliberalism is intrinsically spatialized as geographers and urban scholars have argued, we should take the urban roots of neoliberalism seriously. We should start thinking more about the *moyenne durée* of neoliberal urbanism and uncover its roots in the ideologies and practices of the “old urban right”. Neoliberalism à la Hayek and Friedman as well as Reaganomics are important ingredients in the roll-out of neoliberalism, but since urban neoliberalism is more than neoliberalism applied to cities, we need to dig into its urban pre-histories. The 1970s restructuring of bankrupt New York City is an important starting point in going back in history, but we need to study other places and other decades, to be able to understand both the longevity and the temporality of neoliberal urbanism. The analysis presented here, in the partial history and geography of neighborhood typologies and of mapping declining places, is no more than a small step in beginning to write the history of neoliberal urbanism.

Beauregard (2003, 242) has argued that U.S.-style capitalism requires decline and that ‘urban decline will endure as long as society’s tensions and conflicts are unresolved’ and the state continues to ‘geographically concentrate the sources of alienation and the consequences of exploitation.’ The recent – and at the time of writing, ongoing – foreclosure and financial “twin crises” (Aalbers, 2012) suggest that society’s tensions and conflicts are far from resolved, and the consequences of exploitation continue to be located geographically in certain parts of cities, but also in certain parts of the country – and that all of this is reproduced by neighborhood typologies and maps of declining places. The state does not know how to deal with decline and shrinkage, as not only historical but also more recent examples illustrate. At times, the federal government and cities around the U.S. want to get rid of what they see as declining neighborhoods, but what they really get rid of is affordable housing. Generally, they also fail to address the underlying structures and mechanisms that cause decline and uneven development. Planning for shrinkage often turns into a policy to keep real estate prices and city services up in some neighborhoods at the expense of others. Planning *with* shrinkage may be better than ignoring shrinkage and desperately hoping for growth, but why should this disadvantage low-income and minority communities? The only way to address decline and shrinkage adequately is to address the underlying socio-economic structures and institutions, and the resulting patterns of uneven development.

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