

Recognizing One Another in Public:

Reconsidering the Role and Resources of an Enclave

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How might current public-spheres theory underestimate the rhetorical potential of an enclave public—portraying, as such theory does, an enclave as an acutely limited resource for rhetorical empowerment (Squires 458)? This is the question this study takes up. To do so, this study analyzes the digital paper trail of residents of the Cabrini-Green public-housing complex in Chicago, Illinois, as the complex fell siege to policy decisions to demolish it. My analysis shows that these residents' rhetoric defied limited conceptions of an enclave. Specifically, I argue that by building a network of interconnected coalitions and by using its enclave position as a point of publicity, this group's rhetorical work complicates scholarship on how groups with little citizenship status might vie for public accountability to them as agents recognized for their rhetorical leverage.

C current scholarship continues to grapple with the effects of urban housing policy on civic health, often emphasizing the voyeuristic and clinical approaches taken by outsiders and institutions when speaking of or dealing with public-housing communities (Fagan et al. 697-698; Lucio and Wolfersteig 477-478). Public debate about such sites stands to test and to refine

rhetorical theory, for such debate both abhors the material conditions that have rendered dilapidated public-housing unfit for habitation and recognizes residents as real people with real histories. In response to this predicament, this essay asks: once a dominant discourse renders a subordinate group “obsolete,” how can that group transform itself as a viable public recognized as capable of deliberating over the policies and institutional practices that affect its members’ lives? To take up this question, I begin with David Fleming’s studies of a housing project in Chicago, IL, called Cabrini-Green (City of Rhetoric and “Subjects of the Inner City”). In particular, I attend to the controversy following the 1993 public-housing decision ruling the Cabrini-Green public-housing area to be “obsolete,” thus forcibly removing residents from their homes.

DISCIPLINARY VERSIONS OF “GOING PUBLIC” AND THE CASE OF CABRINI-GREEN

How we, as scholars, define “going public” shapes how we anticipate and recognize certain kinds of rhetorical activity as publicly significant. Few would argue there’s only one way to go public; scholarship speaks to the exuberant ways people do so. That said, our disciplinary lenses do predispose us toward recognizing and valuing certain kinds of rhetorical activity as more publicly significant than others (Long 7). One prominent view prioritizes the representational work involved in going public. According to this view, a person goes public by circulating discourse to strangers—discourse that either represents him- or herself or represents the interests of the group to which he or she belongs (Warner 74–76). Textbooks such as *Having Your Say* that offer techniques for making one’s voice heard emphasize this version of going public, for instance (Charney and Neuwirth).

It is the representational view of going public that Fleming’s analysis makes available to readers. As Fleming explains, “[p]robably the most frequently used word to describe Cabrini Green is ‘notorious’” (*City* 152): “[These] projects have been described as ‘warehouses for the poor,’ brick towers built on treeless stretches of land, ‘isolated fortresses in a neighborhood mired in crime, joblessness, and dependence’” (152). Residents publicly exposed and rejected these representations when reporters for social advocacy agencies published

interviews with them. For example, a 1999 interview published on the Jewish Council on Urban Affairs website quotes Cabrini-Green resident, Barbara Moore: “Public housing residents are considered the lowest scum on earth.... It is wrong to stereotype, not everyone is on drugs, not every girl is pregnant or prostituting. Not all guys are carrying guns or stealing” (qtd. in Fleming, “Subjects” 233). Fleming makes clear that Cabrini-Green residents were well aware of public impressions of them, and as this quote suggests, residents refused falling victim to these representations. All the same, the discourses in which residents represented themselves were “marginal in the overall discussion” (238).

Representing self- or group interests is one among many ways to go public. I theorize here Cabrini-Green residents’ protracted public efforts to reclaim both their homes and their rights to public discourse about their lives. As my starting point, I take Fleming’s analysis of the more than 200 primary documents involved in the Cabrini-Green controversy. In these documents, residents were situated “as speakers, writers, arguers, and critics” (“Subjects” 234). However, within the documents concerning the fate of Cabrini-Green, residents were rendered “consumer[s] of government services” rather than as active, deliberative citizens (Fleming, “Subjects” 238). In these roles, Fleming’s analysis measures residents’ work primarily through two yardsticks: Hannah Arendt’s theory of statesmanship and Jürgen Habermas’s model of rational-critical public deliberation. Based on these measures, the rhetorical work of Cabrini-Green residents was certainly limited. To Fleming’s discussion, I add my own analysis of primary documents that circulate on the Internet concerning the Cabrini-Green case in which residents organized in response to the Chicago Housing Authorities’ (CHA) decision to tear down the housing project. Of the documents I collected, my analysis focuses on a legal document submitted by a Cabrini-Green public-housing resident and residents’ posts on an Internet site dedicated to Cabrini-Green. By extending Fleming’s analysis to include documents from the Internet that fell outside his study, and equipped with empirical studies of rhetors in predicaments similar to those of the Cabrini-Green residents, I consider how such public artifacts both complement and problematize contemporary public sphere theory, particularly Catherine Squire’s taxonomy distinguishing counterpublics and satellite publics from enclaves, the most marginalized of groups.

As I show below, Cabrini-Green residents accessed deliberation by forging institutional ties and using their own enclave position as a site of counterhegemonic resistance. These public-housing residents' rhetorical acumen offers scholars in public sphere theory and community literacy a nuanced case study dramatizing how even the most marginalized groups might vie for a public's accountability to them.

THE CREATION OF ENCLAVES AS GEOGRAPHICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL SPACES

A complex history shaped Cabrini-Green residents' relations to institutional policy and the wider public (Fleming, *City* 7). The very construction of Cabrini-Green was rooted in white privilege, the protection of property value, and the bracketing of citizenship standing. Construction of these public-housing units began in 1941 in response to the continual migration of African-Americans from the South and returning veterans after World War II (Fleming, *City* 3-4). Chicago's Near North Side had long been considered a slum (2-3); after the war, the Chicago City Council had institutional authority to shunt poor, African American newcomers to this part of town. As Fleming describes the situation: "Chicago aldermen from white neighborhoods essentially had veto power over CHA decisions" (*City* 79). By 1962, the continual construction of new apartment complexes would finally bring this area to total "more than 3,600 low-income housing units in seventy-eight buildings spread across seventy acres" (Fleming, *City* 5), creating a massive socio-economic enclave that for decades would shape notions of public-housing residents, connecting such notions with African-American urban poverty in both literal and ideological terms (Fleming, "Subjects" 209).

Whether the area be a prison, a closet, reservation, or a ghetto, policy that relegates a sector of society to an impacted area already suggests a degree of public obsolescence (cf. Branch; Brandt; Long, Jarvis and Raymond). For Cabrini-Green, this obsolescence intensified over the coming decades as hundreds of residents moved if they could. Fleming explains that by the 1980's, many African-Americans living in the inner-city left if they could afford to do so, "[...] making the area less crowded but ultimately more dangerous" (*City* 7). Soon, high

crime rates and negative media attention came to define this massive, isolated urban area.

Institutional assessments of the mid-late 1990s formally declared Cabrini-Green “obsolete” and therefore worthy of demolition. Depictions of Cabrini-Green as “obsolete” was typical at this time. For example, an article issued by the Open Society Institute described the housing project as “economically obsolete”:

In its recent history, Cabrini-Green itself became an economically *obsolete* development that symbolized the ills associated with public housing, including joblessness, crime, teenage pregnancy, single parent households, long-term dependency on public assistance, and minimal educational achievement. (Salama 107, emphasis added)

The same descriptor was used in the “CHA Defendants’ Memorandum,” a court case document supporting the demolition and revitalization of Cabrini-Green:

The case concerns a plan by the CHA and the City [of Chicago] to redevelop a portion of Cabrini under the federal Hope VI program [...]. The purpose of the statute is to provide housing authorities with grants to rehabilitate and modernize severely distressed or *obsolete* public housing projects, and to revitalize the neighborhoods [...]. (Jones 5-6, emphasis added)

In terms of its material conditions, Cabrini-Green certainly fit the identifying features of a “severely distressed” area, deserving public attention and resources. However, this portrayal neglected the long history of racist institutional practices that placed African-Americans in a cycle of poverty through the simultaneous geographical and social alienation that Cabrini-Green created, thereby subjugating its residents to “the worst neighborhoods, the worst jobs, the worst schools, and the worst government services” (Fleming, *City* 65). These conditions grew worse over time with the CHA’s continual “lax [...] maintenance and management” of the area (84). To be clear, then, on one hand, the decision to demolish Cabrini-Green

was about a material space—a decision to destroy units of high-rise apartment complexes that for decades had fallen into disrepair. On another hand, this was also a symbolic determination to (dis)place a whole community of urban poor deemed “severely distressed” (Fleming, *City* 7).

Capital and Public Access

The rhetoric that associated Cabrini-Green with obsolescence also conflated citizenship rights (the right to speak in public) with property ownership—a conflation at the heart of criticism leveled against public-sphere theory predicated on the Enlightenment-era bourgeoisie. In tension with concerns over Cabrini-Green’s material conditions is the residents’ implied standing as citizens. By implication, the policies that declared the housing complex obsolete also construed residents as no longer a viable public entity capable of civil standing within their own community. But I would argue that their status as citizens had long been compromised by the social contract of public housing—a social contract that casts residents of public housing more as consumers of social services than as citizens recognized with rights and responsibilities (Fleming “Subjects” 238).

Residents of Cabrini-Green had long voiced to the CHA their concerns about the area’s living conditions (Fleming, *City* 127-28). By the late 1980s, in light of residents’ growing concerns about their future housing, some residents and other community organizers sought an alternative redevelopment plan for Cabrini-Green as opposed to displacement. This plan would take the shape of “protect[ing] and grow[ing] the community already in the area” through the creation of a resident owned and managed “democratically governed, not-for-profit housing co-op” (Fleming, *City* 11). But these plans had little sway in light of the growing corporate interest in the land on which Cabrini-Green sat (9).

I am convinced that publicly subsidized housing, as opposed to privately owned or rented dwellings, creates a grey area regarding access to public discourse. Historically, property ownership has been tied to citizenship and attendant rights. This is Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge’s point in their analysis of the bourgeois public sphere model. Negt and Kluge explain how the critical-

rational model of public deliberation links property rights to the right to speak in public. Specifically, the critical-rational model of deliberation “excludes from politics and the public sphere all those sections of the population that do not participate in bourgeois politics because they cannot afford to” (Negt and Kluge 10). While theoretically the emergent public sphere might have intended an all-inclusive deliberative democracy, in practice it was created by and for bourgeoisie property owners and their capitalist enterprises (10). Although Negt and Kluge’s project critiques Jürgen Habermas’s portrait of Enlightenment era coffee shops, such complications apply to the contemporary situation of public policy and public-housing as evinced in policy decisions concerning Cabrini-Green. As residents of public-housing, as opposed to private homeowners or even renters, Cabrini-Green residents’ voices had little weight in wider public discussions concerned with economic capital developments meant to “transfor[m]” the area (Fleming, *City* 8-10). To be a resident of public-housing means that your home is owned by the state and, paradoxically, subject to private capital interests. This was true for residents of Cabrini-Green who were literally being evicted from their community at a point when the city recognized that the land underneath the public-housing area was increasing in value (Fleming, *City* 9). Given the residents’ limited economic resources, it is not surprising that the community of Cabrini-Green had little weight in the policy decisions affecting their homes and neighborhood. For the residents who remained, the decision to transform the area by demolishing the public-housing units carried deep implications for the families who had been living in Cabrini-Green for generations. For, of course, rendering a public-housing project obsolete does not make the people who live there go away.

The decision to demolish and to gentrify the Cabrini-Green area prompted residents—despite severe challenges—to mobilize in order to vie for the city’s accountability to and for them as citizens. For the residents of Cabrini-Green, the possibility of “going public” was surely complicated by material constraints, as well as by a history that circulated others’ representations of them as opposed to their own (Fleming, “Subjects” 209-210). It would be no small undertaking, then, for the residents of Cabrini-Green to recast themselves not only as residents of a defunct and condemned housing project but also as vital public actors.

Reconsidering Enclave Publics and Their Resource

Marginalized groups are often excluded from the discourse of the dominant public sphere. In “Rethinking the Black Public Sphere,” Catherine Squires provides three particular ways that marginalized groups are rhetorically positioned distinct from wider publics: as a counterpublic, a satellite public, or an enclave. A counterpublic seeks out interactions with outsiders; a satellite public purposefully separates itself from the wider public, only occasionally seeking engagement; and an enclave is a “safe space” for a group to gather as a political entity away from the wider public (Squires 448). Squires explains that whether a subaltern political entity emerges as a counterpublic, satellite, or enclave is as much a matter of the risks the entity dares to take in going public in a given historical moment as it is a matter of “the internal politics of that particular public sphere” (448). Here, the choice between safety and risk is calculated on the basis of resources available to the public, on the one hand, and the threat of violence risked for self-representation in wider publics, on the other. Although counterpublics, satellites and enclaves all face risks in going public, enclaves are the most at-risk, for they are themselves a limited resource for wider public engagement (Squires 458).

According to Squires, if enclaves do go public, they often perform a “public transcript” (458). By “public transcript,” Squires is referring how the public performance of subordinated groups adheres to actions and behaviors that are demanded by dominant groups for the purposes of “reinforce[ing] their power standing” (467). Here, an enclave can “mimic” public performance, according to Squires, by circulating a public transcript, but this is not the public democratic work of holding power in check, for the public transcript is not up to such work but rather circulates and upholds the status quo—what the dominant public wants to hear or finds acceptable, comfortable. For Squires, enclaves produce “hidden transcripts” which are counterhegemonic “discourses that are hidden from the view of the dominant public and the state” (458). However, Ellen Cushman’s study of inner-city social service recipients complicates the idea that enclaves necessarily completely hide these counterhegemonic discourses. The inner-city social service recipients in Cushman’s study use “hidden transcripts” in safe spaces and also in interactions with social service gatekeepers by way of the “rhetorical and

linguistic” tool of signification (Cushman 15). As Cushman explains, when dealing with gatekeepers, social service recipients would use signification—the act of phrasing something with layered rhetorical meanings, “allow[ing] a person to simultaneously consent to an assertion of power and signal a counterhegemonic assumption as well” (15). Here, enclaves do go public with “hidden transcripts,” and although these rhetorical acts of critiquing hegemonic practices are not overt, James Scott notes how “thousands of such ‘petty’ acts of resistance have dramatic economical and political effects” (qtd. in Cushman 19).

Another way an enclave can go public is if there is “a decrease in oppression or an increase in resources,” whereby moving from the limited position of an enclave to a counterpublic with more rhetorical capital (Squires 460). For Squires, then, an enclave shelters a group from dominant publics, but would need to become a different kind of public entity (likely either a counterpublic or a satellite) in order to engage with other publics.

Yet, as a decidedly enclave public, Cabrini-Green complicates Squires taxonomy concerning both the resources available to enclaves and their interaction with wider publics. According to Squires, enclaves have “few material, political, legal, or media resources,” and when they do interact with the wider public, “they are compelled to conform to a ‘public transcript’ which reinforces unequal social positions and frustrates natural impulses to perform reciprocal actions on the oppressor” (458). As an impacted housing project shrouded in staggering crime rates and media coverage, those left behind in Cabrini-Green constituted an enclave. As the analysis below shows, however, Cabrini-Green residents did interact with the wider public, not by performing a “public transcript,” but rather through inner and cross-public coalition building and self-representation, to include offering their enclave status as a point of *publicity*—a public feature to represent themselves through public artifacts performing their homeplace.

INSTITUTIONAL LITERACIES: RECOGNIZING ENCLAVE PUBLICS AND INSTITUTIONAL LEVERAGE

In addition to the representational view of going public, another version emphasizes institutional literacies that forge circuits of power and mobilize rhetorical action at sites of gatekeeping (Barton and Hamilton 16; Cushman 3). It is such work of Cabrini-Green residents that my Internet research brought to my attention. I argue that what is most significant about the rhetorical work of Cabrini-Green residents is that it transformed them from what Squires would call (and Fleming's analysis would have us see as) an enclave to a recognized counterpublic that could advocate for Cabrini-Green as a viable public homeplace (Belenky, Bond, and Weinstock 13; hooks 41). In the case of Cabrini-Green, mainstream public discourse rendered this group the remotest of enclaves—veritably “obsolete”—but the group's rhetorical work transformed them into a rhetorical force to be reckoned with. This transformative rhetorical work extended to the public representation of Cabrini-Green as a homeplace. By enacting the otherwise private nature of homeplace in the public arena of the Internet, residents publicly re-defined the rhetorical importance of such a position, thus complicating what rhetorical space and agency are available from the position of an enclave public.

Below I draw on the working of other scholars' accounts of local public life in order to better understand how it is that residents of Cabrini-Green were able to go public to protest the appraisal of obsolescence and the consequent demolition of their housing project. This fine-grained reading of the Internet digital paper trail left by residents' bears witness to their following rhetorical achievements: 1) residents built coalitions capable of mobilizing power; 2) residents used these coalitions to circulate counterhegemonic discourse to the larger public; and 3) they reclaimed Cabrini-Green as a public homeplace. These rhetorical projects aren't mutually exclusive activities, but rather strengthen and extend one another. By orchestrating these three achievements, residents of Cabrini-Green conducted a protracted rhetorical project to claim their place in public discourse.

1. The Residents Built Coalitions Capable of Mobilizing Power

In the formation of the bourgeois public sphere, propertied parties came together to deliberate issues of shared concern (Calhoun 7; Fraser 112). The public policy that moved to make residents “obsolete” in deliberations over the “revitalization” of Cabrini-Green worked in a similar fashion. Specifically, part of the drive to revitalize the area was connected to the rise in value of the land beneath this public-housing project (Fleming, *City* 9), which was clear to Cabrini-Green residents, for as Fleming states, “[w]hat the residents of Cabrini Green had long feared seemed to be coming true: they were about to become victims of a huge land grab” (9). Here, the cross-institutional moves that rendered Cabrini-Green an obsolete public garnered public support to demolish the area. I argue that residents’ recognition of and subsequent response to such moves reveal the institutional literacy this group had developed from years of experience creating inner-community coalitions and building a network of coalitions across publics.

Historically, Cabrini-Green residents have used the legal assistance of advocacy groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) to challenge the “racially discriminatory policies of Chicago’s federally funded program” (Fleming, *City* 91), thus exercising the advantage of group affiliations. Moreover, residents have a history of forming inner-community coalitions, such as a “resident management corporation,” created to control rising crime within the area (Fleming, *City* 168). These two examples indicate that residents were not unfamiliar with networking as a local public and among other publics. When the CHA, backed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), along with a multi-million dollar redevelopment plan initiated by Chicago Mayor Daley, formed as a network of institutions calling for Cabrini-Green’s demolition, residents likely understood the need to cast their own wide coalition net of cross-institutional support. Perhaps the best evidence of residents’ literate competencies for going public is their response to institutions marking their community as “obsolete,” thus worthy of demolition. Specifically, community residents formed their own coalitions and coalition ties across differently situated publics, such as the Local Advisory Council (LAC) made of Cabrini-Green residents; the ACLU, a nationally recognized advocacy organization; and the Coalition to Protect Public Housing (CPPH), another national

advocacy organization consisting of public-housing residents and advocacy groups—with one Cabrini-Green resident serving as president. In short, residents leveraged power to form their own links across publics; the result was a dynamic network of institutional positions working in the residents' interests.

Creating a cross-public set of coalitions mobilized power for this group of residents in at least two distinct but related ways. On one level, coalition building among different publics helped situate these otherwise disenfranchised residents with public agency through support from politically recognized external institutions. For example, through the ACLU, residents had access to legal discourse. Since public-housing policy is both founded and amended through government institutions and the legal discourse associated with their attendant laws and grants, residents needed access to legal discourse to understand and to access their legal rights. To be clear, it was the very institutions and their laws that created, owned, and operated these public-housing residents' homes that also determined this community to be obsolete and worthy of demolition. Residents needed legal support when their rights as property dwellers was complicated through a system that largely allotted property and thus attributing agency to federal and state actors (i.e., HUD, CHA and Chicago Mayor Daly). Armed with knowledge of their legal rights and supported by civil rights lawyers (i.e., the ACLU), residents gained access to the legal discourse acknowledged by institutions.

Of course, it is often not rhetorically empowering for subordinated groups to stand in the shadow of other people's representations of them, for subordinate groups' reliance on external representation and dominant idioms can "reify their subordination" (Higgins and Brush 696). As Higgins and Brush explain, it is necessary for subordinate groups to "constitute themselves as characters in political drama capable of bridging the chasms of expertise and privilege that separate them from the sites of deliberation and power" (697). Although Cabrini-Green residents did rely on external representation, they controlled their representation through cross-public coalition building (e.g., with the ACLU and CPPH) and self-representation (through LAC).

On another level, then, in forming a coalition themselves (i.e., LAC), and linking the image of Cabrini-Green and their LAC to both their leadership role in the CPPH and the well-known advocacy group, the ACLU, the publics and subsequent discourses created by residents resisted more singular and reductive stereotypes of disenfranchised groups. In this sense, residents mobilized power by keeping power in check as they controlled their representation of residents as agents. First, the formation of the LAC situated residents as a cohesive rhetorical entity, one capable of serving as self-governed and self-representative. Second, although residents were often represented in court by the ACLU, they were not solely dependent on outsiders to speak on their behalf through the “expert” discourse recognized by formal institutions (cf. Higgins and Brush 695). Specifically, through the CPPH, residents mobilized power by taking the agency associated with formal institutions more directly into their own hands with a representative resident of Cabrini-Green serving as the organization’s president. In this sense, residents were not only *represented* by institutions and their discourses, but also *served as* the voice speaking from a position of institutional authority (as president) to assist this group with additional control over its rhetorical representation. Furthermore, while each of these coalitions (the LAC, ACLU, or CPPH) assisted residents, the combined effort of cross-public association and direct representation offered residents both access to and control over public representation greater than any single organization alone afforded.

2. The Residents of Cabrini-Green Publicly Used these Coalitions to Circulated Counterhegemonic Discourses

By forging associations with those with more rhetorical capital (i.e., ACLU), and taking the legal knowledge forged by such an association to create their own institutional self-representation through a nationally recognized coalition (i.e., CPPH), residents were able to establish the wider public’s recognition of them as political actors. And, more importantly, they were also able to circulate counterhegemonic discourses in more directly self-representative ways. Through the CPPH, residents were able to situate institutional representation *as* self-representation as opposed to passive actors spoken *for*, or put another way, residents’ voices were situated as active advocacy actors with self-representative rhetorical capital. It could be argued that the CPPH—as a collective group of advocacy associations such

as the ACLU and the Jewish Council on Urban Affairs, as well as public-housing residents—might suggest a hierarchical schema with recognized advocacy groups serving as an umbrella over public-housing residents. As Higgins and Brush explain, “[s]ubordinated people [...] rarely constitute a public perceived as capable or ‘expert’ enough to contribute anything valuable to public debate” (695). However, the institutional platform of the CPPH offered residents the position of institutional actors through legal and thus institutional discourse, as opposed to being represented by others who own the “specialized, expert discourse”(Higgins and Brush 695).

The rhetorical work of Cabrini-Green resident Carol Steele, then President of the CPPH, reveals how residents recast themselves as institutional experts by linking institutional discourse with representative voices of Cabrini-Green. Below is one petition produced and signed by Steele and sent to the Human Rights Committee, a committee “of independent experts that monitors implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights by its State parties,” that exemplifies residents’ positions as institutional actors. Specifically, in “[T]he Written Submission of the Coalition to Protect Public Housing in Chicago, Illinois USA to the Human Rights Committee at its 85th Session (2006),” Steele’s use of legal discourse defies institutionalized notions of public-assistance recipients “as problems, not problem solvers” and thus “incapable rhetors” (Higgins and Brush 695). The text reads:

Article 17 prohibits ‘arbitrary or unlawful interference with... family (and) home...’ and stated that ‘Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks’ (Steele para. 11)...The arbitrary demolition of public housing and the forced evictions of public housing residents from their communities clearly violate Article 17. In the absence of adequate, on sight replacement housing, families are separated and whole communities dislocated. (Steele para. 12)

Here Steele turns the legal discourse of Article 17 back onto the institution that created it, pointing to the already sanctioned evidence that affords public-housing recipients civil rights and thus civic standing. In doing so, Steele pulls out legal verification

that the discourse used to support the demolition of Cabrini-Green in part acts against the civil rights of residents both individually and as a community, whereby challenging the dominant discourse that rendered this community “obsolete.” When Steele employs legal discourse as a self-representative voice of residents, she simultaneously situates residents from the position of experts with rhetorical capital to be recognized by institutions. On a similar note, Steele’s reference to Article 17 follows the rhetorical moves made by institutional actors such as the CHA whose use of Hope VI, a legal-support program developed by HUD, supported the demolition of the Cabrini-Green area under the guise of serving the best interests of residents. Here, Steele pulls out what can be understood to be a “hidden transcript” embedded in the institutional discourse of CHA (Cushman 103-107). Hidden transcripts here are the policies that purportedly serve the best interests of social recipients but instead serve the interests of institutions at a given time. The hidden transcript circulating just beneath Steele’s text actively criticizes and exposes this hypocrisy, whereby also critiquing the idea of social service recipients as incapable of civil standing within their own community, an “obsolete” public that needs institutions to determine their best interests despite former policies that indicate resident rights.

In his study of Cabrini-Green, Fleming notes how residents represented themselves as rhetorical agents “in legal documents, where they are seen not as poor, black, or socially disordered, but as plaintiffs ... individuals who sue someone in a court of law” (“Subjects” 234). Yet Fleming’s discussion still places the larger institutional agency on the lawyers who represented residents as plaintiffs, whereby owning the legal and therefore institutional discourse (“Subjects” 235). From this representational view, marginalized groups speak with rhetorical capital by speaking through others as opposed to owning the institutional discourse wider publics recognize. When interacting with wider publics, Squires notes that enclaves often “conform to a ‘public transcript’ which reinforces unequal social positions and frustrates natural impulses to perform reciprocal actions on the oppressor” (458). However, what the above analysis reveals is that residents of Cabrini-Green did go public through self-representation, not by performing a “public transcript,”

but by publicly circulating a hidden transcript critical of the racist practices that created the conditions of Cabrini-Green.

What is important to understand, then, is how this community used the “local public [as] a gate” (Long 10)—their position as an enclave—in which to access larger publics. Residents of Cabrini-Green worked as members of an enclave to make ties with another coalition with more ascribed rhetorical power (i.e., ACLU). This strategy provided access to the larger gatekeepers (HUD; CHA), and eventually, allowed members like Steele to assert their own agency both through institutional practices (court cases) and as direct institutional agents (i.e., CPPH). Through these networks, residents gained access to publics that distributed their agency as a network of institutions.



3. Residents Reclaimed a Public Homeplace

According to Lorraine Higgins and Lisa Brush's study of welfare recipients' use of narratives to enter their experiential knowledge into the debate on welfare reform, the careful construction of ethos is necessary for “challeng[ing] dominant representations of themselves” (698). While my previous analysis showed Cabrini-Green establishing *ethos* to enter the wider public discourse by forging associations with groups with more rhetorical capital (i.e., ACLU) or connecting their self-representation in direct relation with institutional, expert discourse (i.e., CPPH), residents also established *ethos* by way of supporting the *ethos* of this community via self-representing this enclave as a community or homeplace.

On cabrini-green.com, a website dedicated to the history of Cabrini-Green, residents enact the otherwise hidden nature of homeplace in the public arena of the Internet, complicating the notion of an enclave as a limited rhetorical space for self-representative agency.

Drawing on bell hook's radical rereading of home, Iris Marion Young notes that "'home' can have a political meaning as a site of dignity and resistance" (157). Young elaborates the significance of home in the political experience of African-Americans:

[T]he historic experience of African American women [connects] 'homeplace' [as a] site of resistance to dominating and exploiting social structures. The ability to resist the dominant social structures requires a space beyond the full reach of those structures, where different, more humane social relations can be lived and imagined. (159)

For the largely African-American population of Cabrini-Green, such "homeplace" provided a site for constructing identity outside of that which was ascribed—"a place to preserve the specific culture of the oppressed people" (Young 161). It is from posts on their life in Cabrini-Green, added to the Comments section of *cabrini-green.com*, that residents circulate their homeplace as counterhegemonic discourses, contrasting wider public beliefs that rested on the image of a "notorious[ly]" dysfunctional neighborhood (Fleming, *City* 152). For example, resident Joan Bennett states:

I am a former resident of both the red and white projects...I was one of the lucky residents...I had 2 parents...father worked 2 jobs...I would not replace my memories of Cabrini...There were many caring, hardworking people that i will cherish the memories of all my life. My sister purchased my parents 1st home in 1969...I still smile when I think of my childhood.

When Bennett states that "I would not replace my memories of Cabrini," specifically noting the "caring, hardworking people [she] will cherish the memories of," she supports the idea of an enclave as community, a space to root personal pride, and a space of resistance to outside ascriptions. Furthermore, Bennett's statements counter the dominant discourse that would replace notions of home with economic value and make economic viability a requisite to human dignity (Young 141).

Some posts do not entirely elide the very real oppressive features of crime and economic hardship, and yet such posts reveal that Cabrini-Green was more than the sum of the violent acts that took place. Resident Lena Solana left this message on the Comments forum:

I was raised in C.G. from age 10 to age 18. I am very proud to say that it was/ is my true home! I am now a high school teacher and very succesful. Living in Cabrini made me who I am today. Sure it was rough along the way, seeing all of the violence and such, but it built my character.

Here Solana distinguishes two images of Cabrini-Green—the image that only outsiders see and the image of what some insiders have experienced, offering a more nuanced image of Cabrini-Green that previous media images, those of a “notorious” public-housing area, did not capture.

Additional posts indicate that these residents continue to seek out ties with their former community, further establishing the role of an enclave community as a site for both inner-community and wider circulating public engagement. For example, in another post, “Donnell Howard, Handyman *Extraordinaire!*,” one former resident provides another former resident with a professional recommendation:

I'd like to make a special endorsement for my good friend Donnell Howard for any of your Home Remodeling or Handyman needs....He has helped me with installing ceiling fans and painting my condo...He will give you a free estimate for your project.... (Green.Cabrini@Gmail.com)

In providing Howard access to wider (public) media tools for his business, this post reveals a side of Cabrini-Green where residents formed a community built on associations, an act institutions often only associate with those in the dominant public sphere. Here, residents construct Cabrini-Green as an enclave, but one that does circulate to the wider public through recognizable dominant idioms, questioning whether enclaves are not in some respect full-fledged public entities.

One view of marginalized groups going public through self-representation highlights the use of “hidden transcripts.” In Cushman’s study exploring the institutional-literate tools used by African-American residents of Quayville when “interacting with gatekeepers” (69), she explains that these social service recipients might be understood to be supporting their “ideological domination” when using the privileged discourse with gatekeepers, but these “public transcripts” are imbued with “hidden transcripts” that enact “counterhegemonic ideologies...and push at predominant values present in the public transcript” (Cushman 69). This example of an enclave’s use of “hidden transcripts” differs from Squires’ point concerning how enclave publics rely on the use of “hidden transcripts” only in safe spaces (458). For Squires, enclaves move into counterpublics and reveal “hidden transcripts” only when oppression has lessened and resources are available (460). Similar to Fleming, this places the ability for enclaves to go public on external resources as opposed to internal ingenuity, confining the rhetorical strength of enclaves to internal debate or reifying their position by performing a “public transcript” (Squires 458). On some level, the goal for marginalized publics is to “preserve culture [and] foster resistance” (Squires 460 [counterpublic]; 464 [satellite]; 458 [enclave]). For Squires, in the case of *enclaved* publics, preservation equates hiding self-representation (460). Yet, residents of Cabrini-Green did go public as an enclave to preserve their community and counter their “notorious” image, but in ways not addressed by Squires’ taxonomy of marginalized publics.

CONCLUSION

The problem of *self*-representation for enclave publics has meant the risk of reifying their position by “performing a ‘public transcript’” (Squires 458); it is only when groups have gained access to resources or assistance (Fleming, “Subjects” 235; Higgins and Brush 696-697; Squires 460), or are in a less oppressive position, that they are able to address the wider public in any meaningful way (Squires 460). Yet, as an enclave, Cabrini-Green residents offered their position as a point of *publicity*, making it a public feature of their drive to represent themselves. And, through self-representation across different publics, residents of Cabrini-Green challenged notions of enclave publics necessarily needing to rely on the expert discourse of those

with more rhetorical capital, for these residents created their own institutionally recognized rhetorical space of agency.

Institutions have the power to reinforce specific meanings and values of literacy (Grabill 119), but as this study shows, enclaves do not need to stay positioned in subordinated roles to these definitions. Instead, enclaves can work the institutional practice of coalition formation as a gateway for public access. Further, enclaves themselves are not necessarily non-public actors, for Cabrini-Green residents were both situated as an enclave and used that position as a feature of public engagement. Acknowledging this agency does not minimize the conditions under which they labored to go public, but it does increase our scholarly understanding of such work that takes place against all odds. Residents of Cabrini-Green prove exemplary in their capacity to exploit their own position, one vexed by institutional racism, to expose not only local but also wide-reaching systematic inequalities. Scholars in public sphere theory and community literacy might take the work of Cabrini-Green residents as a model for understanding how disenfranchised groups can work with institutions without losing self-representative agency.¹

Veronica Oliver is a PhD candidate at Arizona State University. Her dissertation studies the construction and public circulation of argumentative appeals in relation to an activist organization's decision-making that attempts to leverage its' identity and membership both to serve its constituents and to continue to direct wider public attention to a public controversy. To document the complexity of this decision making, the study grounds its analysis in the rhetorical work of Puente Arizona (Puente) concerning Senate Bill 1070, recent legislation aimed at deterring illegal immigration and deporting current undocumented residents of Arizona.

This dissertation turns on the distinction Catherine Squires draws among enclaves, counterpublics, and satellites. As an organization whose members

1 Residents did not win against the CHA in court, yet such results should not lessen the effects of their rhetorical work, for Cabrini-Green residents' ingenuity transformed this group from the position of "obsolete" to one capable of self-representation in the wider public.

include undocumented people, Puente's public status is subordinated. According to Squires, Puente would likely cultivate its status as an enclave, sheltering member's citizenship status. To make this characterization, Squires' taxonomy turns on matters of risks and resources, arguing that subordinated people form enclaves when the risks for protesting an injustice are high and resources low. Yet, Puente does go public. The dissertation argues that by attending only to matters of risk and resources, current scholarship doesn't sufficiently account for the work of Puente beyond its form and function as an enclave.

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