

# STRUCTURES OF UNHOUSING: Racial Capitalism and Housing Precarity in Los Angeles

**Desiree Fields, University of California, Berkeley**  
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# STRUCTURES OF UNHOUSING:

## Racial Capitalism and Housing Precarity in Los Angeles

### **KEY PROPOSITIONS:**

- The systematic production of unhousing
- Forces of speculation combined with state-organized violence to produce evictions, displacement, and banishment
- Rooted in long histories of racial dispossession and spatial illegalization

### **KEY ACTIONS:**

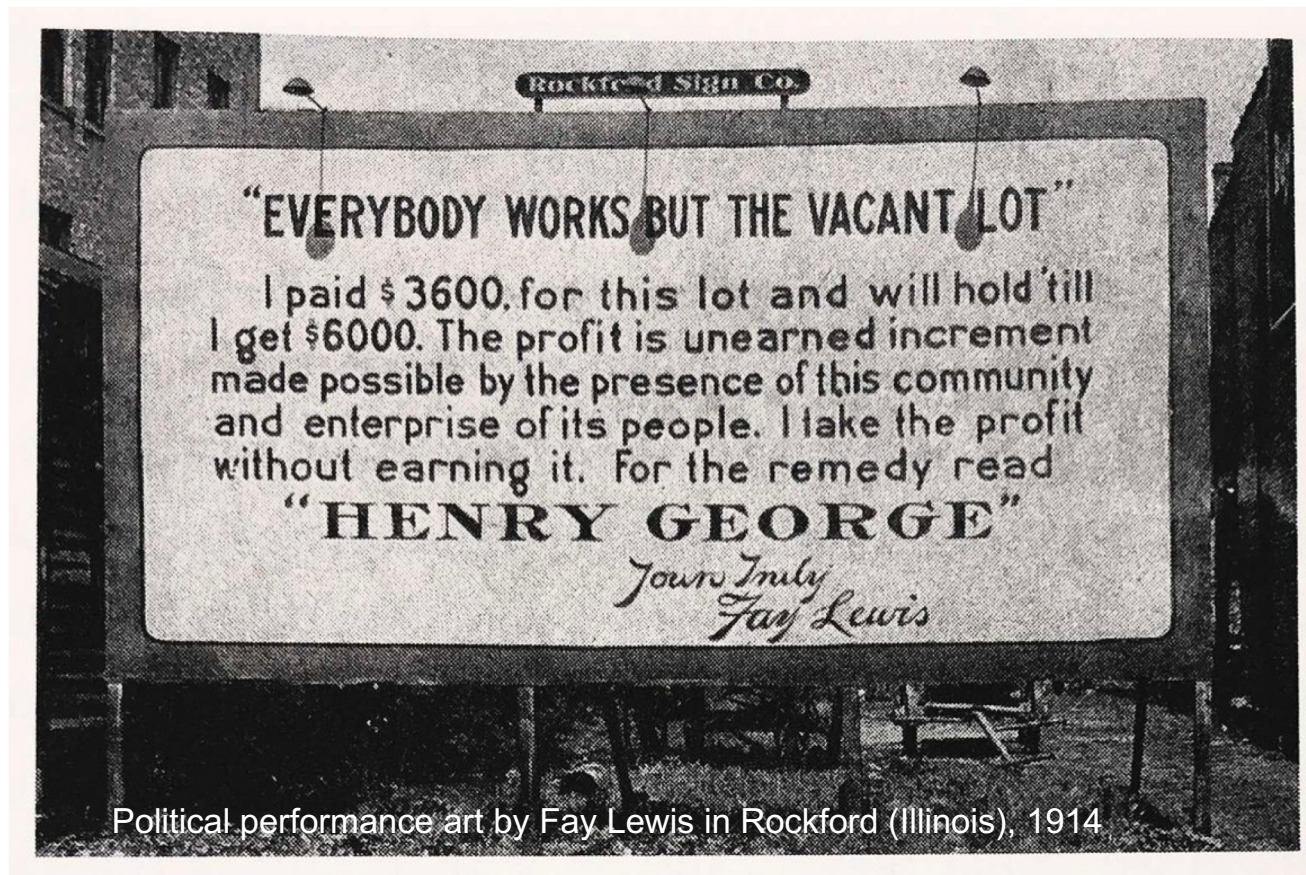
- Ending the criminalization of poverty
- Regulating financial speculation
- Guaranteeing the right to remain
- Socializing housing

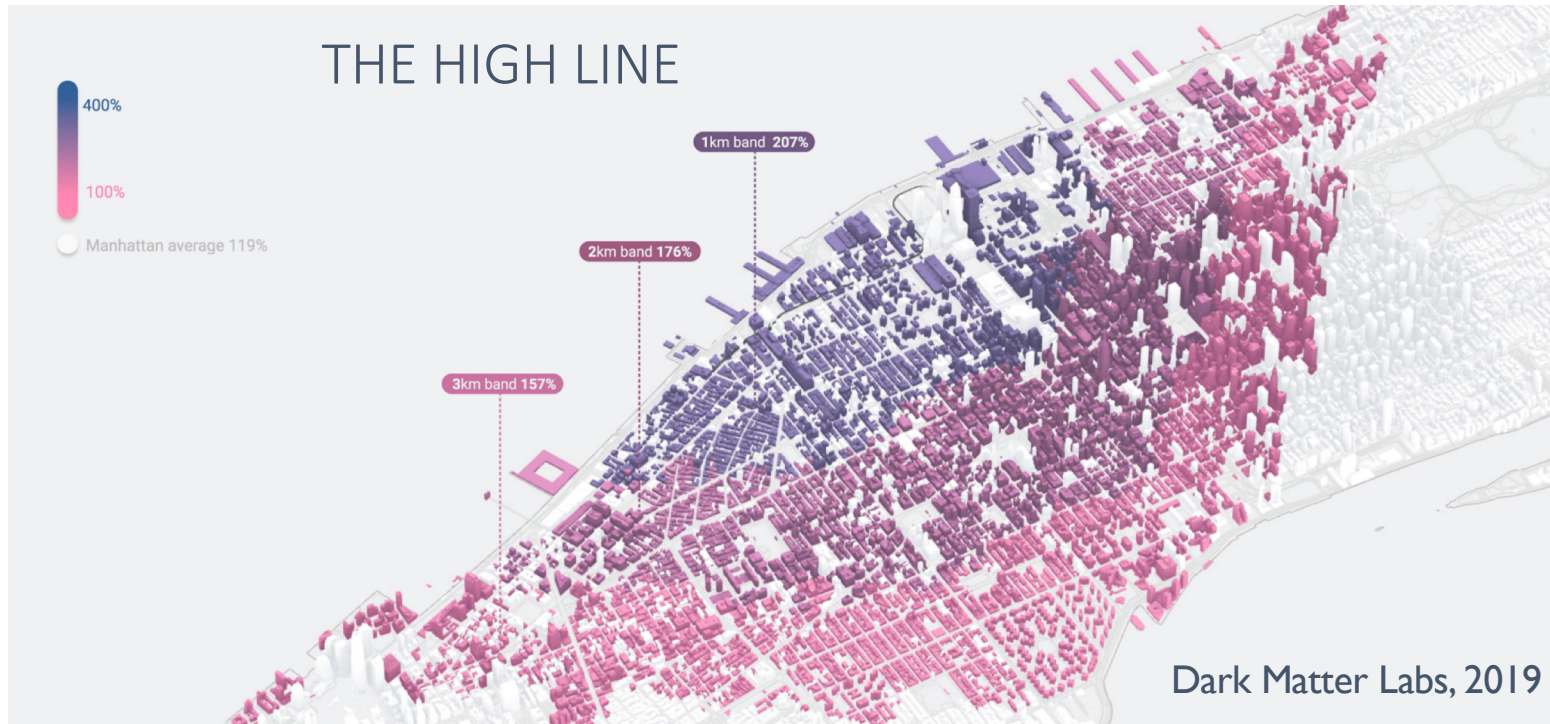


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**Desiree Fields, University of California, Berkeley**

## STRUCTURES OF UNHOUSING: RENT





\$187m to build...

\$3.4bn increased value for nearby properties...

\$103m in additional property tax.

*“The rest went to private landowners”*





# URBAN RENT-SEEKING STRATEGIES

RIDING  
PUBLIC INVESTMENT

UPGRADING

UNDERDEVELOPMENT

FINANCIAL AND DATA

Photo: Hunter Kerhart




Tolani King, Moms 4 Housing,  
Oakland, CA, December 2019



Wedgewood Inc. headquarters,  
Redondo Beach, CA, December 2019

# RENT AND UNHOUSING





“FINALLY DOWNTOWN  
HAS BECOME A REAL  
CITY, BUT I’M  
CONCERNED IT’S  
GOING TO COLLAPSE  
AGAIN...”

(DOWNTOWN LA  
DEVELOPER)

A photograph of two police officers in dark uniforms walking at night on a sidewalk. They are holding flashlights, and their shadows are cast on the wall of a building behind them. The scene is dimly lit, with a strong orange glow from the flashlights. The building has several windows with bars. A dog is visible in the background on the right. The overall mood is somber and surveillance-oriented.

# SPECULATION

Terra Graziani  
Anti-Eviction Mapping Project

# Cycles of Investment + Disinvestment

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REDLINING

FORECLOSURE CRISIS

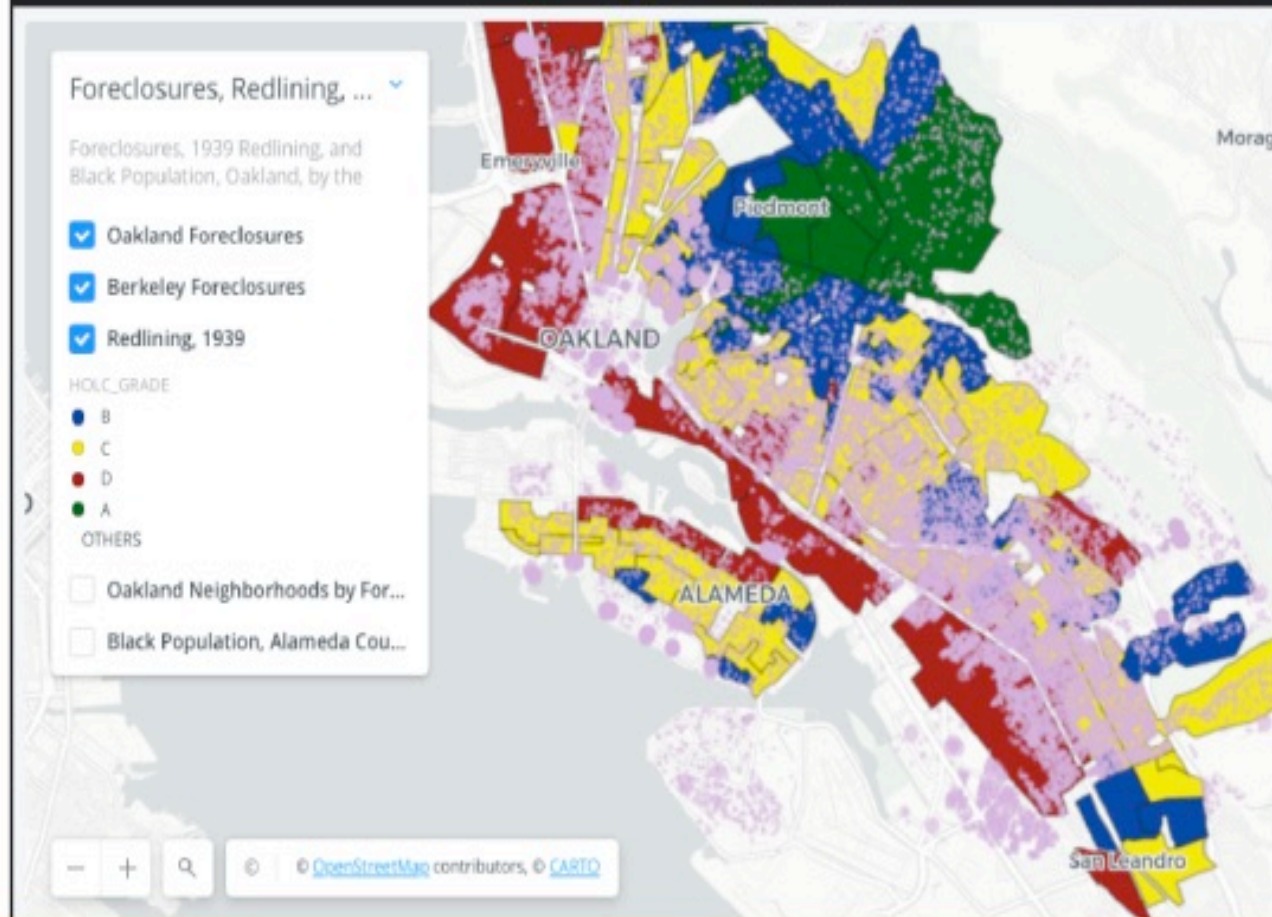
WALL STREET BUYS UP HOMES

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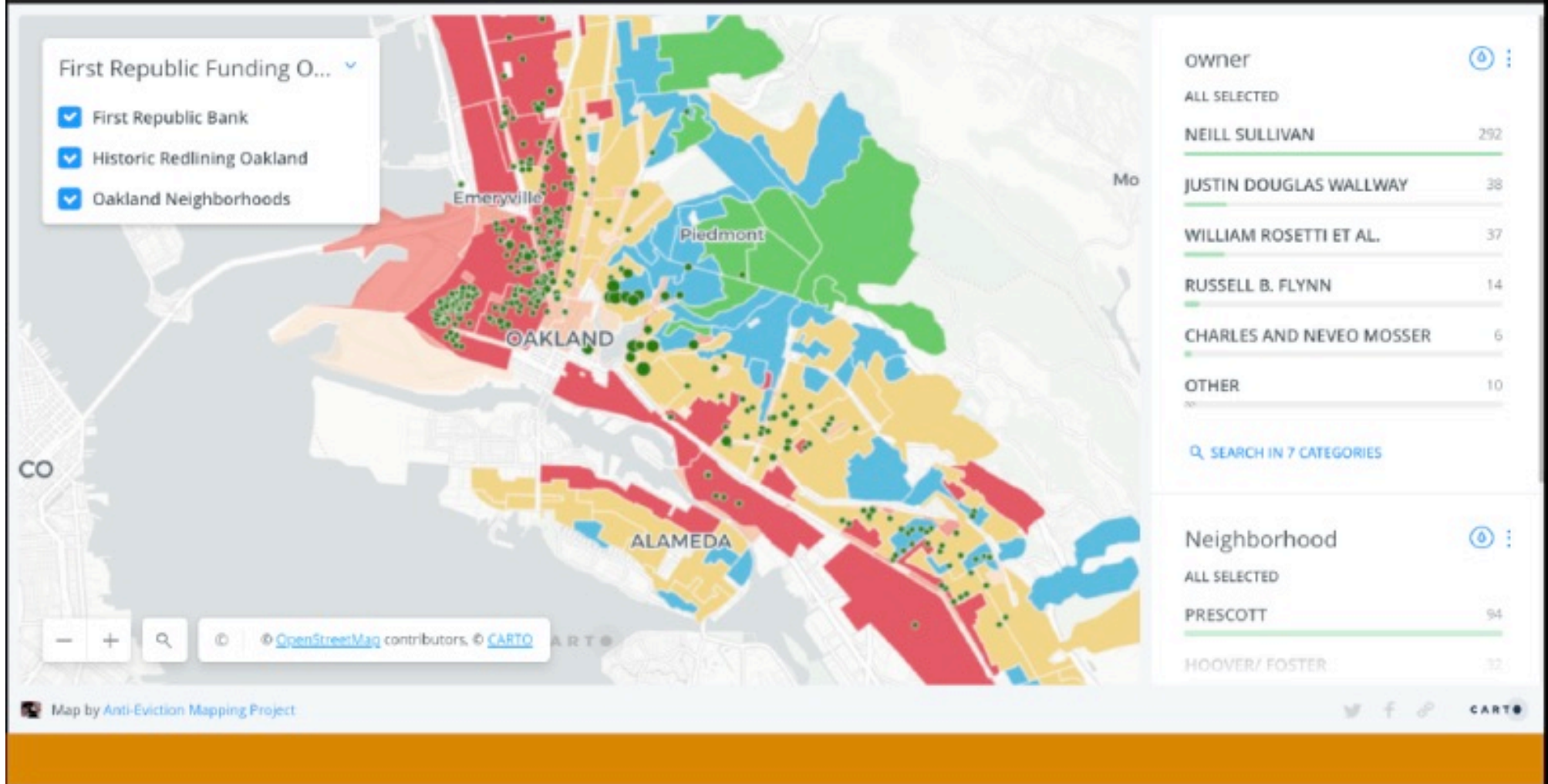


# Alameda County Foreclosures, 2006-2016, and 1939 Redlining Map

Foreclosures mapped in relation to 1939 Redlining Map. [Click here for more on Redlining.](#)



# First Republic Bank Loans Made to Evictors compared with Oakland's 1939 Redlining Map

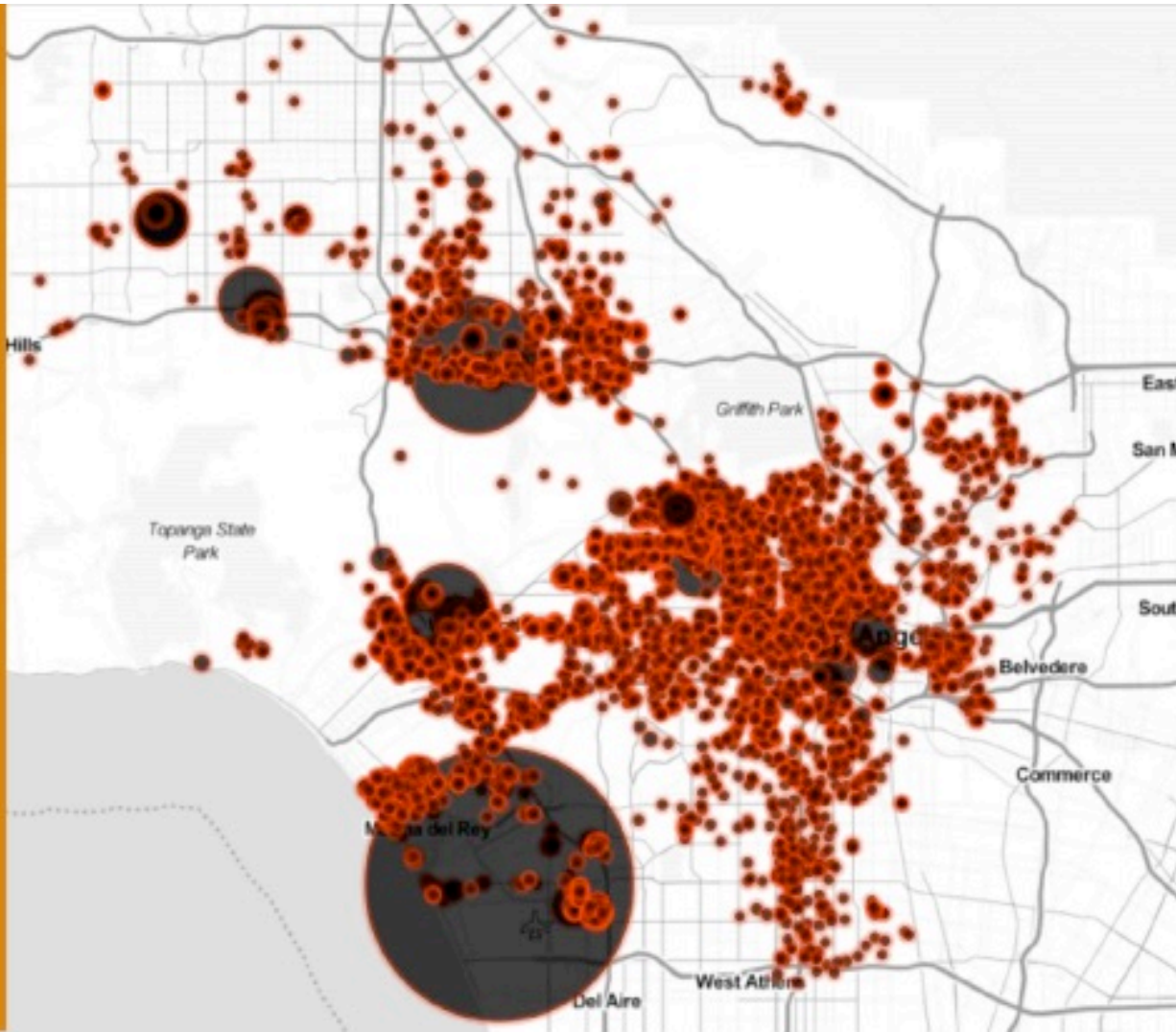


# Eviction is a Tool of Speculation

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THE ELLIS ACT

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THE DESTRUCTION  
OF LOS ANGELES  
AFFORDABLE HOUSING  
DUE TO THE

**Ellis Act!**

**26251**

NUMBER OF UNITS IN WHICH  
LANDLORDS/DEVELOPERS FILED ELLIS ACT  
DECLARATIONS TO EVICT TENANTS WITH  
THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES

1/1/2001 - 9/24/2019



Map created by the [Anti-Eviction Mapping Project](#)

In collaboration with the [Coalition for Economic Survival](#).

FOR \* ECONOMIC



# Policing is a Tool of Speculation

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LOS ANGELES' CITYWIDE NUISANCE  
ABATEMENT PROGRAM

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# Los Angeles' Citywide Nuisance Abatement Program (CNAP)

LOS ANGELES POLICE  
DEPARTMENT

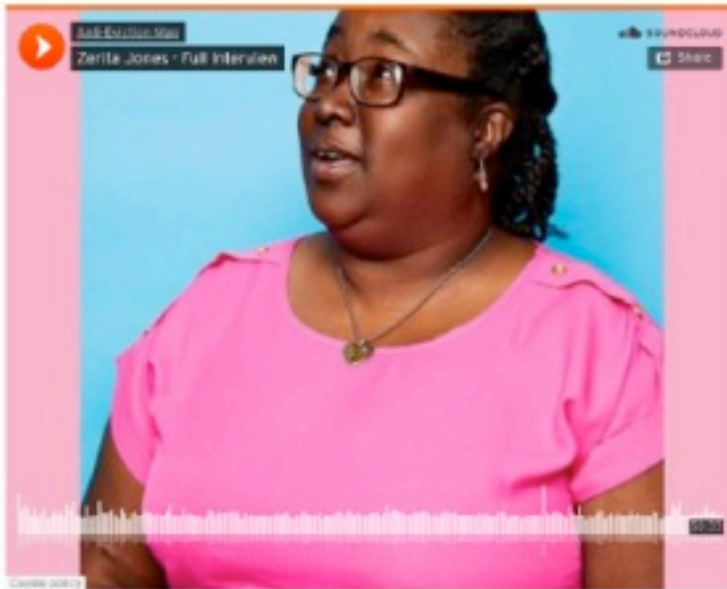
LOS ANGELES CITY  
ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

LOS ANGELES  
DEPARTMENT OF  
BUILDING AND SAFETY

LOS ANGELES  
DEPARTMENT OF CITY  
PLANNING

HOUSING AND  
COMMUNITY  
INVESTMENT  
DEPARTMENT

(COLLECTIVELY  
KNOWN AS THE  
**PROBLEM PROPERTY  
RESOLUTION TEAM**)



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## ZERITA JONES

tenant of the Chesapeake Apartments and  
founder of the Chesapeake Tenants Association

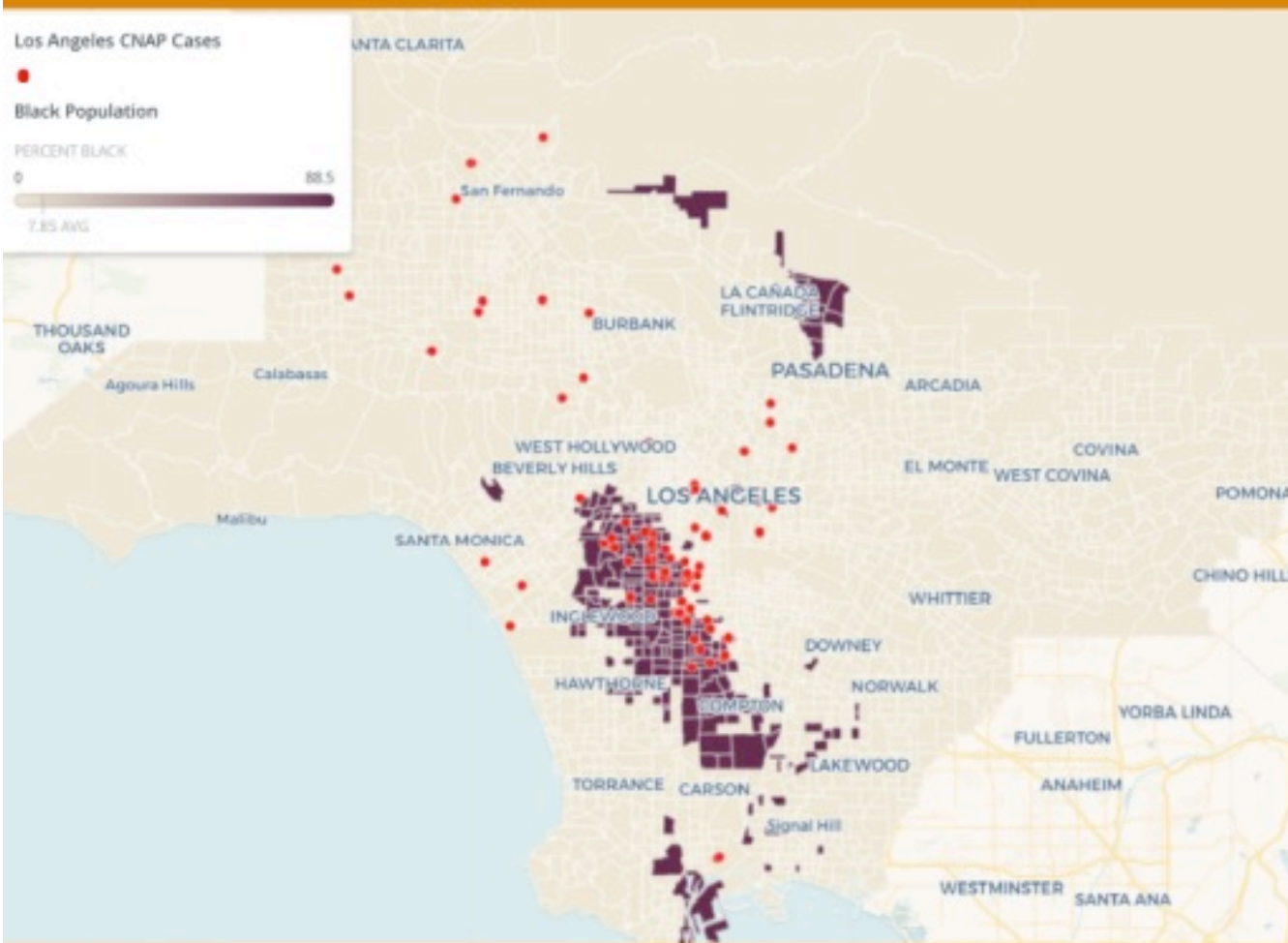
Susan Miller Dorsey  
Senior High School

"The security isn't for us.  
Its for their property"

ZERITA JONES

CRENSHAW





## CNAP and Black Population in LA

2013-2018 cases filed by the City Attorney under CNAP

# Speculative Vacancy

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SPECULATIVE FINANCE KEEPS HOUSES  
VACANT AND PEOPLE UNHOUSED

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# is Anybody Home?



In a sample of 25 luxury buildings across Los Angeles...

**3,569** Total Vacant  
Condo Units

**73%** or 2,692 Units are  
Vacant or Second Homes

**47%** or 1,469 Units are  
Investor-Owned



Los Angeles has over  
**3** vacant units  
per unhoused person



# How Do We Stand Up to Speculation in Our Cities?



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**Pete White, The Los Angeles Community Action Network**



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## **SOCIALIZING HOUSING**

**Ananya Roy, University of California, Los Angeles**

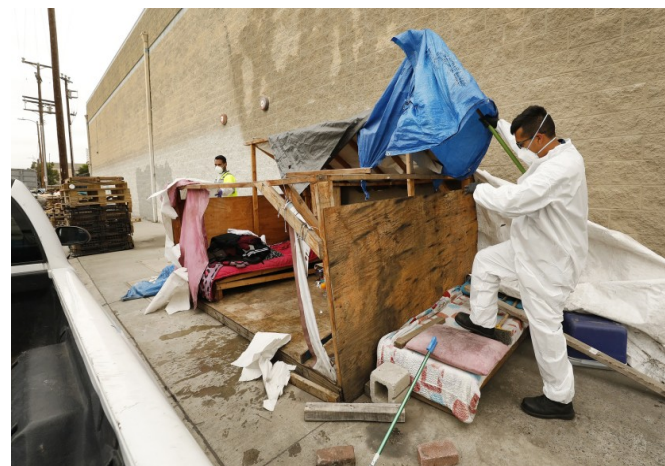
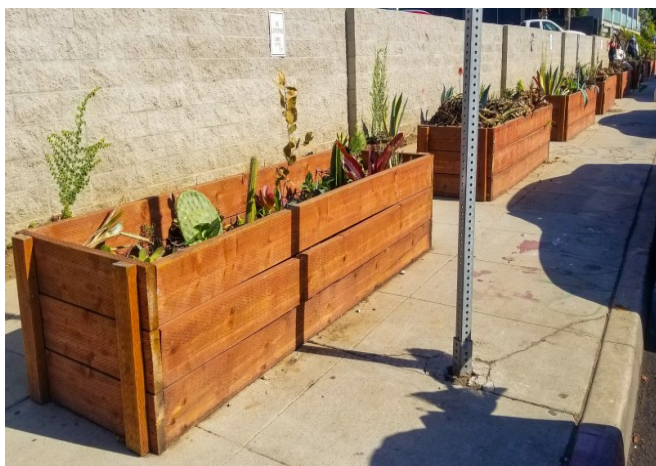
# STRUCTURES OF UNHOUSING: Racial Capitalism and Housing Precarity in Los Angeles

**Can there be housing justice on stolen land?**



# STRUCTURES OF UNHOUSING: Racial Capitalism and Housing Precarity in Los Angeles

**Who has the right to property?**





# STRUCTURES OF UNHOUSING: Racial Capitalism and Housing Precarity in Los Angeles

**The social function of property**



**PLATAFORMA  
DE AFECTADOS  
POR LA HIPOTECA**

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## Expropriation



# STRUCTURES OF UNHOUSING: Racial Capitalism and Housing Precarity in Los Angeles

**“Why would you want to save capitalism, and not human beings?”**

**Walter Dignolo**

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## KEYWORDS:

**RENT**

**RESISTANCE**

**SPECULATION**

**SOCIALIZATION**