Gentrification through Housing:
Urban Eugenics and Lawrence Veiller's
1900 Tenement House Exhibition

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Abstract

New York City is currently experiencing a severe affordable housing crisis, and one of the main factors contributing to this problem has been commonly attributed to gentrification. Since the 1970s, Gentrification Studies have shed light on a wide range of issues but have not paid much attention to the history of housing in New York City. This paper traces inequitable housing development back to the Progressive Era when the home, specifically the tenement home, became the site of racial population management amidst mass immigration, rapid urbanization, the expansion of capitalism, and the growing fear of 'racial suicide.' Focusing on the Tenement House Committee (THC), under the direction of Lawrence Veiller, I will show how the organization's strategic housing policies and the technologies it employed such as cartography, correlational statistics, and demographic methods, was utilized as a means of *urban eugenics* to produce a 'fit' and 'abled' citizenry and labor force. I will argue that in the guise of (scientific) philanthropy and attempts to solve the problem of 'light and air,' THC mobilized and equipped architects, social scientists, politicians, and prominent reformers to support a larger project of population control that would have long-lasting effects on the racial geography of the city and the nation.

In his inauguration speech on January 1, 2018, the incumbent Mayor Bill de Blasio renewed his pledge to transform New York City into "the fairest big city in America," specifically in a "time of vast overt disparities" ("Transcript"). Addressing "the truest stakeholders of this town […] people who do the work […] but have too often not reaped the rewards," de Blasio promised that his administration would "make sure that this city that is now too expensive for them becomes theirs once again" by "giv[ing] them the affordable housing they need [and] creat[ing] for them the good-paying jobs they deserve" ("Transcript").

On the surface, de Blasio's speech is seemingly innocuous, reflecting a long tradition of New York's progressive sentiments. Beneath the rhetoric, however, lies a more problematic and unsettling logic that connects current ideas regarding housing affordability to a long-established system of meritocracy that has governed New York City. In his statements, housing and jobs are understood as contractual remuneration for labor instead of as basic human rights to shelter and sustenance. This line of

reasoning is reminiscent of the Progressive Era's ideology of 'the deserving poor,' a belief that only those who meet specific criteria of moral, religious, social, and economic *fitness* are justifiably entitled to charitable aid, welfare, housing, education, and access to public amenities.

In another instance, during an interview after his first inauguration in March 2016, Mayor de Blasio stated that the issue "first and foremost on the minds of millions of New Yorkers is the *ability* to afford to live in their own city" ("If You Build It"; emphasis added). De Blasio's choice of the word *ability* in the context of housing is another striking echo of the rhetoric of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century progressive reform. This *ability*, according to de Blasio, has been starkly debilitated by the rampant gentrification of New York's neighborhoods caused by previous administrations' unregulated urban development policies. The conflation of afford-*ability* and the hypernym *gentrification* is used so often in discussions of New York's current housing crisis that its epistemology and historical roots are frequently unquestioned and taken for granted. While the term *gentrification* captures trends of changing socio-economic conditions and demographics of neighborhoods, as well as the realities of cultural politics and globalization, it tends to glaze over the complex intersectional processes of class and gender, as well as the sexual, ableist, and racial power struggles that have systematically stratified the city for over two centuries.

The term *gentrification* first emerged in the field of sociology and urban planning in the 1970s to describe the socio-cultural and demographic changes of the post-baby-boom era and the exploitation of ever-widening rent gaps by the real-estate sector. With the inequitable development of cities in the 1980s and 1990s, interest in the study of gentrification increased. The field broadened, including contributions such as geographer Neil Smith's "Rent Gap Hypothesis" and David Ley's theory of post-industrial socio-cultural reconfigurations, sociologist Sharon Zukin's work on cultural consumption, and economic geographer David Harvey's influential studies of global patterns of urban development. This wealth of academic work has enabled us to understand the complex dynamics and intersectional relations of power and their effects on urbanity. However, the common framing of gentrification as a phenomenon that began between the 1960s and 1970s obscures a much older history of uneven urban development—a history involving eugenics, biopolitics, and racial capitalism. This history established the ideological foundations, economic logics, and racialized geographies that paved the way for projects such as slum clearance, urban renewal, redlining, planned shrinkage, gentrification, dispossession, and displacement throughout the twentieth century.

Gentrification, I argue, is therefore an incomplete story of New York City's current housing crisis. While gentrification studies often *begin* with the assumed existence of inequality in the development of cities, this paper explores the ways in which urban planning and housing poli-

cies during the modern era, rooted in what I term *urban eugenics*, created those very disparities. Tracing the debates around 'affordable' housing back to the Progressive Era, this paper focuses on the Tenement House Committee (THC), a subdivision of New York's Charity Organization Society (COS), founded in 1898. THC was the first charitable organization in New York City dedicated to housing reform. Over the course of two decades, THC was a guiding force in the housing reform movement and a powerful advocate of legislative regulation. Directed by a committee composed of planners, municipal administrators, politicians, architects, academics, lawyers, philanthropists, and housing developers, THC made significant contributions to the improvement of the safety and standards of the city's tenement housing, maturing into "the most successful instrument of reform in the history of housing movements in America" (Lubove, *The Progressives* 118). THC's meticulous housing surveys, its effectual utilization of statistics and cartography, its evocative communication of findings through modern data representations, and its compelling lobbying strategies were replicated by housing commissions nationwide throughout the early twentieth century. Eventually, THC's work in New York paved the way for the founding of the National Housing Association in 1910, with THC's chairman, Robert W. de Forest, and mastermind Lawrence Veiller as heads of the housing reform consolidation. With its expansive influence on the urban and housing reform movement, THC played a significant role in developing a system for describing, categorizing, and managing the 'urban poor' through the allocation of affordable housing. In the name of scientific philanthropy and informed by colonial taxonomies of racial hierarchies, varying tangents of social Darwinist thought, environmental determinism, and eugenics, urban reform during this era organized and designed a topography of 'two cities'—one of the 'fit' and the other of the 'unfit.'

This article approaches housing as a tool for (re)producing white middle- and upper-class values, a fit labor force to support laissez-faire capitalism, and a good citizenry that would maintain and preserve republican ideals. I understand the social space of the home, and the material space of the tenement, as the contested sites of an intersectional biopolitical power struggle over the right to reproduction. I use the term *urban eugenics* to describe discourses and practices such as urban planning strategies and urban design (e.g., architecture, landscaping) that follow Francis Galton's two main objectives of eugenics: 1) "to check the birth-rate of the Unfit instead of allowing them to come into being," and 2) "the improvement of the race by furthering the productivity of the Fit by early marriages and healthful rearing of their children" (Galton, *Memories* 322-23).

This definition was later refined by the obstetrician Caleb Williams Saleeby, who distinguished between 'negative' and 'positive' eugenics.[1] Negative eugenics, according to Saleeby, are practices "prohibiting the conception of the unfit [by] discourage[ing] the parenthood of the un-

1 See "Introduction" to this special issue.

worthy," while positive eugenics seeks to "encourage the parenthood of the worthy" (31). Both forms complemented each other and were means to the same end. Under the direction of Lawrence Veiller and Robert de Forest, I argue, THC's planning, lobbying, and management of New York City's tenement housing were guided by principles characteristic of both forms of eugenics. While the THC brought about critical improvements in tenement housing conditions, I will show that access to such housing and better living conditions became a way to sort new immigrants in New York City into categories of the 'fit and deserving' and of those who were not, and thus could be consigned to slums, boarding houses, and other forms of shelter that 'discouraged' the 'conception' of progeny.

Of course, the American epistemologies and genealogies of Darwinism, social Darwinism, and eugenics are highly complex. As other scholars of eugenics have pointed out, the ideology of Victorian progressives in the United Kingdom and the United States was ambiguous, occupying a fluid discursive space that shifted between *biological determination* and *environmental determinism* (Haller; Kline; Soloway). However, despite the pluralistic ideological underpinnings, the multiplicity of social, religious, political, and economic motives, and the varied methodologies and practices, eugenic ideas about breeding a better race, engineering favorable forms of life, and deterring the reproduction of the 'racially inferior' proliferated in social and political discourse at the turn of the century. Although the term *eugenics* had not yet been coined in the mid-nineteenth century, fears of immanent infiltration by the 'impure races' were palpable in public discourse around tenements and slums. Philanthropic agencies such as the "Select Committee Appointed to Examine into the Condition of Tenant Houses in New York and Brooklyn" warned that "we must, as a people, act upon this foreign element, or it will act upon us. Like the vast Atlantic, we must decompose and cleanse the impurities which rush into our midst, or [...] we shall receive their poison into our whole national system" (qtd. in Ward 27).

These eugenic ideas propelled various reform efforts: as early as the 1860s, Darwinian ideas were embraced by the North American intellectual, scientific, and reform community, providing the basis of eugenic thought.[2] Charles Loring Brace, founder of the Children's Aid Society (CAS) and the modern foster care system, believed that "[t]he very condensing" of the urban poor "within a small space, seems to stimulate their bad tendencies" and that an improved environment could improve the 'gemmules' that would be passed down to their progeny (qtd. in Ward 14). Between 1865 and 1930, CAS relocated an estimated total of 200,000 orphans and 'paupers' from New York City and Boston to rural farms in the West to be raised by 'Christian' (Protestant) families. While Brace did not adhere to the determinism of eugenics, genuinely believing that a good home in a bucolic setting would have a rehabilitative influence on a child's hereditary future, CAS's strategy of removing

2 See Fuller's expansive survey for an overview of how Darwinism was embraced by North America's scientific, literary, and social intelligentsia.

children from districts that lacked proper 'American' domesticity strategically depopulated the 'dangerous classes' in an effort to stop the cycle of pauperism, vagrancy, and crime.[3]

In addition to CAS's urban reform efforts, shortly after Galton published *Hereditary Genius* in 1869, 'family studies' began gaining traction in the United States. Works such as Richard L. Dugdale's *The Jukes: A Study in Crime, Pauperism, Disease and Heredity* (1877), Oscar C. McCulloch's *The Tribe of Ishmael: A Study in Social Degradation* (1888), Frank W. Blackmar's *The Smoky Pilgrims* (1897), and Albert E. Winship's *Jukes-Edwards: A Study in Education and Heredity* (1900) claimed to have identified families that carried "bad germ plasma," which would be transmitted through generations. This hereditary inferiority, according to the studies, predisposed generations to diseases, feeble-mindedness, and other social ills including pauperism, alcoholism, prostitution, and crime.[4] According to criminologist and historian Nicole Rafter, family studies had far-reaching effects, from social policy to the agendas of charitable organizations. The family studies validated popular criminological theory (e.g., "defective delinquency") that claimed a cause-and effect relationship between feeble-mindedness and crime, which in turn led to the establishment of institutions that incarcerated "morons" for "indefinite sentences—up to life" (Rafter 1). While ideologies and methodologies differed, these family studies validated eugenic thought, emboldened social workers, ministers, business leaders, philanthropists, and policy makers to pursue more stringent measures in managing and controlling the 'breeding' of this 'dangerous class,' and brought eugenics into public discourse.

By the turn of the century, the reach of eugenic ideas had surpassed the realm of specialized 'scientific' knowledge and had infiltrated all areas of social, cultural, political, and economic life. Popular literary works including William Dean Howells's *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1890) and *An Imperative Duty* (1891), H. G. Wells's *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896), Frank Norris's *McTeague* (1899), Jack London's *The People of Abyss* (1902), Mary Antin's *The Promised Land* (1912), and Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland* (1915) ushered eugenic ideas into middle-class homes, social clubs, and reformist circles. Reform-minded economists such as Edward A. Ross (founder of the American Economic Association, AEA), Francis Amasa Walker (AEA's first president), Henry Farnam (cofounder of the American Association for Labor Legislation, AALL), and Simon Patten (the Wharton School's reformist economist) warned that industrialization and the fierce competition of laissez-faire capitalism had weakened American social institutions and that the 'inferior' immigrant races, more adaptable to the conditions and environments that industrial capitalism had created, would outbreed the white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant race.[5] Endorsing eugenic economic policies, Walker claimed that before attempting to "eliminate poverty, much more pauperism, from […] social life," society had to "strain out of the

3 See Charles Loring Brace, *The Best Method of Disposing of Our Pauper and Vagrant Children* (1859) and *The Dangerous Classes of New York and the Twenty Years' Work among Them* (1872). For a good history of Brace's "orphan trains," see O'Connor.
4 See Rafter for a concise historical overview of eleven family studies conducted between 1877 and 1919.
5 See Leonard for an excellent overview of progressive economic ideologies circulating at the time.

blood of the race […] the taint inherited from a bad and vicious past" (qtd. in Leonard 211). These eugenic ideas, discourses, practices, and policies emerged as a means of rationale and control amidst the volatile changes that were taking place within the young nation's social structure, such as the unsettling of traditional gendered roles by new forms of labor, the alienation and absorption of the 'self-made man' in a nascent world of large corporations, the ever-shrinking spaces of the private and the public in a new and rapidly transforming urban-geopolitical landscape, and the increase of new immigrants and simultaneous decrease in the birthrates of 'old stock' Anglo-Saxon immigrants. These changes were deemed particularly threating to the health of the 'American Home' and, in extension, the health and future of the nation. In the form of reform and charity, wittingly and unwittingly, tenement housing became the site of careful management: a space that urban reformers believed would shape the future of America. Focusing on three key figures of the tenement reform movement—THC's mastermind Lawrence Veiller, architect I. N. Phelps Stokes, and early economist-sociologist Dr. E. R. L. Gould—this paper details the ways in which the movement used housing as a *eugenic tool* to socially engineer and gentrify a new class of immigrants in order to (re)produce *abled* and *be-fit-ting* stakeholders of New York City.

The Tenement House Exhibition

On the frigid evening of February 10, 1900, after a year of frantic planning, the Tenement House Exhibition was opened to the public. Lawrence Veiller, secretary of the Tenement House Committee and organizer of the exhibition, had chosen a prominent location: the Old Sherry Building at 404 Fifth Avenue. While planning the exhibition, Veiller realized that if the Committee were to succeed in the "education of the people of New York City as to the serious evils [of the tenement house condition] it was obvious [they] could not expect […] people to visit the tenement house districts"; instead, he was convinced that he had to bring "the so-called slums to the people uptown" (*The Reminiscences* 2: 11). Veiller had sent out invitations to real estate men, builders, architects, insurance companies, philanthropists, professors, and students of economics and sociology. The evening was a tremendous success: a stream of people sauntered into the plush banquet hall of frescoed ceilings and red, white, and gold walls, which were covered with thousands of photographs, charts, and maps displaying the living conditions of New York City's other half. The highlight of the exhibition was a cardboard model of an existing New York block, bounded by Bayard, Canal, Chrystie, and Forsyth Streets, as it stood on January 1, 1900 (Gould, "Housing Problem" 382). A description attached to the model gave a detailed account of the block: it contained 39 tenements that housed 2,781 inhabitants. There was one water closet for every ten persons, and not a

single bathtub. 660 people from that block were reported to have applied for charity, and there were records of 32 cases of tuberculosis—the model illustrated what Veiller called "the City of Living Death" (Lubove, *The Progressives* 123). It allowed attendees to not only visualize but also to transport themselves into the dark, cramped, diseased, miniaturized microcosm of New York City's working class.

The exhibition was held as part of Veiller's political strategy to strike back at the Tammany-controlled Municipal Assembly, which had repeatedly dismissed the appeals of the Tenement House Committee to revise the ineffective Tenement House Law of 1868. The Tenement House Committee was a subdivision of the Charity Organization Society (COS), a national organization with chapters in over a hundred cities across the United States. The main objectives of COS were "[t]o see that all deserving cases of destitution are properly relieved; [t]o prevent indiscriminate and duplicate giving; to make employment the basis of relief; [t]o secure the community from imposture; [and] [t]o reduce vagrancy and pauperism and ascertain their true causes" (COS Minutes from 1879 qtd. in Ziliak 435-36). COS functioned as the intermediary between philanthropists, local charities, and the recipients of charity. They determined those who were worthy to receive assistance through 'scientific charity'—a method informed by the tenets of eugenics that employed a variety of 'scientific methodologies,' such as correlational studies, surveys, and observational studies, to determine the best means of eradicating poverty. Veiller, a veteran housing reformer, had persuaded Robert de Forest, the chairman of COS, to establish a separate division dedicated to lobbying on behalf of the working-class poor for better housing conditions in order to bypass municipal government and to press for new and remedial legislation to replace the outdated Tenement Law. The Tenement House Committee was founded in 1899, but Veiller's efforts to persuade the municipal government to make changes that year fell on deaf ears. The 1900 exhibition was aimed at "creat[ing] a wave of reform sentiment powerful enough to induce the New York State legislature to step in and undo the work of the municipal authorities" (Lubove, "Lawrence Veiller" 668). Veiller charged the municipal authorities with "greed," "neglect[,] and misrule" for fueling the city's most severe crisis— the "tenement house problem" ("The Housing Problem" 47, 49).

Framing the "Tenement House Problem"

The phrase "tenement house problem" first began appearing in public discourses in the late 1870s. It referred to the squalid conditions of tenements and the myriad socio-economic problems, diseases, and urban disorders attributed to it. Tenements began emerging as a widespread housing type during the second half of the nineteenth century. Various reasons led to this development. First, between 1820 and 1860, New York's population grew from 123,706 to 813,699, transforming the city

into North America's largest metropolis (U.S. Census Bureau). The dramatic rise in population, due to immigration from Eastern and Southern Europe, resulted in a great demand for low-cost dwellings. As early as the 1820s, investors began filling the need for dwellings with substandard, high-density, multi-story commercial tenement buildings.[6] Second, tenements absorbed the incremental land prices that had risen steadily throughout the nineteenth century. By shifting their focus from single- and two-family row houses to multi-story apartment buildings, speculators, developers, and builders were able to optimize their returns. Third, with very limited municipal and state legislative regulation and inadequate provision for the enforcement of building laws, builders realized that they could erect tenements without many bureaucratic obstacles. Housing the urban poor became a lucrative enterprise. By 1890, 35,000 of the 81,000 dwellings in the city were tenements (Lubove, *The Progressives* 43). Out of New York's total population of 1,515,000, one million lived in tenements that housed twenty-one persons or more[7]— 66 percent of New York City's population lived in tenements.[8] The tenement house problem was ostensibly characterized by two evils: *congestion* and the deprivation of *light and air*.

The Problem of Congestion

Like many of his contemporaries, Veiller believed that poverty in cities was the direct result of "the environment created by the tenement house" (*Tenement House Reform* 138-39). The transformations of New York's 'built environment' ushered in by industrialization, urbanization, and immigration had dramatically changed the spatial configurations of urban life that had once organized and ordered class, gender, and social relations. The urban condition frequently described by tenement reformers as *congestion* can be understood as the perceived chaos, the disordering of power structures, and the breakdown in systemic assemblies of knowledge, values, and beliefs. And no other built structure exacerbated congestion more than the 'dumbbell tenement.'

The dumbbell was the most widely built tenement between the late 1870s and 1901. It was essentially a front and rear tenement situated on a 25 × 100-foot lot. To maximize profits, builders usually constructed these tenements in rows of 3-12, maximizing the space of a block on the gridiron. It was "usually five or six stories high and contained fourteen rooms to a floor, seven on either side running in a straight line. […] The hallways and stairwells were dimly lit by windows fronting upon the air shaft" (Lubove, *The Progressives* 31). The dumbbell housed 20-22 families, four families to a floor sharing two water closets. The design was severely condemned by reformers for its small rooms, narrow airshafts that denied tenants light and air, its threat as a fire hazard, and the congestion it caused within the building and in the building's surroundings. Despite its damaging reputation, the design was widely adopted,

6 The earliest tenement on record was a seven-story tenement at 65 Mott Street.

7 The exact numbers according to the U.S. census: 515,547 in 1850 and 1,515,301 in 1890. Cf. "Dwellings and Families in 1890"; and Lubove, *The Progressives* 43.

8 An article from *The Christian Recorder* gives a different set of numbers: "Out of a total population in New York of 1,891,000, 70.46 %, or 1,333,000, live in 39,138 tenement houses" ("Jewish Immunity" 3).

as it was the most profitable to landowners, speculators, builders, and landlords.

Veiller believed that *congestion* was the "greatest evil" facing the poor in large cities ("The Housing Problem" 49). According to him, congestion manifested itself on two levels: 1) the overcrowding of individual rooms and tenements; and 2) the overcrowding of "densely packed" areas (50). On the first level of the *congested home*, Veiller argued that congestion contributed to the "destruction of home life, the weakening of parental influence, the falling off of religious faith, the changed relation of the sexes, the absence of privacy, [and] the intrusion of strangers upon the family life" (51). Reformers believed that the institution of the family and the American home—deemed to be the sacrosanct space of the genesis of life, society, and civilization—was under grave threat by the transgression of the borders of Victorian domesticity. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, industrialization, urbanization, and the onslaught of modernity blurred the imaginary boundaries between the home and the marketplace, private and public space, and middle- and working-class districts. Urban reformers, planners, and landscapers felt a tremendous urgency to restore these social-spatial divisions that upheld a white, patriarchal, and heteronormative social order. Housing became the forefront of this battle to protect the site where a good citizenry and a healthy, abled workforce was produced. Speaking at the Tenement House Exhibition, Veiller vilified the prevailing tenements for not separating the "bad men and women" from the "respectable people" and the dangers of "influences upon children of what they see and hear in the halls and the air shaft" ("Tenement Reform Urged"). Reformers were concerned that the mixing of the 'worthy poor' with the 'incorrigibles' would inevitably result in 'unfit' posterity. To help pay the rent, families living in tenements often took in boarders. Despite the fact that the number of boarders decreased between the 1850s and the 1900s, Progressive reformers used the term 'lodger evil' to raise the alarm regarding the number of boarders living with families in tenements.[9] Exacerbating the visceral fear of the intermingling of the 'worthy poor' with 'criminals,' the 'feebleminded,' and the 'unfit' were countless social organization reports, health board studies, journalistic pieces, and works of fiction that described the moral and sexual perils of children and adults, women and men, and boys and girls not merely living together but oftentimes sharing the same bed. According to Veiller, this was a breach of the "propriety and decency" that must be afforded families to secure "moral standards" ("The Housing Problem" 51-52). An educational pamphlet, *For You,* distributed by the Tenement House Department after the exhibition, warned that "[l]odgers often cause trouble in the family and sometimes break up the home. Lodgers have even been known to betray little girls—the daughters of the family they live with" (qtd. in Fogelson 324). As the home was considered the space of the inception and creation of life, it was of foremost importance

9 The number of lodgers had decreased significantly from the 1850s, from 35 percent to 21 percent in the 1900s in metropolitan areas with a population greater than 50,000. Calculations based on the U.S. Census Bureau data by Ruggles et al. qtd. in Beito and Beito 487.

that reform began within the walls of congested tenements. Borrowing the language of eugenics and bacteriology, which was mainstream by the late nineteenth century, E. R. L. Gould described congested tenements as "the most fruitful *breeding* ground for vice," and added, "[t]here pestilence, crime and disorder find *birth*" (qtd. in "Breeding Ground for Vice"; emphasis added). Conflating popularized scientific knowledge of a virulent invisible world of germs and bacteria with a tangible, environmental materiality of social evils created a sense of some prospect of control amidst the perceived disorder of urban life.

The battle to instill the ideal of the 'American home' and help produce the fit American family in immigrant neighborhoods coincided with the rising hysteria of 'race suicide.' Although the term, mainly attributed to sociologist Edward A. Ross, was coined a year after the THC exhibition, urban progressive reformers were acutely aware of the popular notion that the white, Anglo-Saxon race was allegedly in danger of being 'outbred' by a new stock of 'inferior' immigrants. Frederick Jackson Turner declared the frontier closed in 1890, citing U.S. census data on population density at the western boundary that had risen beyond the two percent threshold. This stoked fears that new immigrants—who were believed to be racially better suited to survive the harsh conditions of industrialism—would eventually outnumber the dominant race. Theodore Roosevelt, the THC's most vital legislative advocate, believed that 'race suicide' was "the greatest problem of civilization" (qtd. in Leonard 209). Turning the tables on Spencerian social Darwinism, he claimed the issue at hand was the "elimination instead of the survival of the fittest" (Leonard 209). Tenement homes overflowing with new immigrants of different races 'huddled together' in decrepit living conditions posed not merely a threat to those who were deemed gentrifiable and assimilable, but to the white, Anglo-Saxon race as a whole. This fantasy galvanized zealous efforts in the regulation of gender norms and sexuality as well as the overarching goal of the depopulation of tenements and slum clearance.

Another obstacle reformers saw within the larger problem of the *congested city* was that tenements, which oftentimes concentrated around manufacturing districts such as the Lower East Side, were cut off from the "controlling intelligence" of the "civic spirit and enlightened public sentiment" of the greater American society (Veiller, "The Housing Problem" 51). While overcrowding was an endemic problem of large cities in general, Veiller claimed that the "evils are greatly intensified" when these areas became a "city within a city […] composed of people from every nation, alien to our life […], ignorant of our language and brought up under conditions, social and political, that are entirely foreign to the ones under which they are now living" ("The Housing Problem" 50). The threat of congestion on the spatial level of the city was the "herding together" of Polish and Russian Jews, the Italians, the Bohemians, the Chinese, the Irish, and the Syrians—immigrant populations that did

not share the same republican values, social orders, and practices that Veiller, COS, and other reformers were trying to disseminate. Using the analogy of the city as an organic body, Veiller described the effects of congested districts gradually evolving into "some vile slum [that] *stops the circulation of the city's healthful currents* and ultimately gangrene sets in and the offending portions have to be cut out with the surgeon's knife" ("The Housing Problem" 51; emphasis added). In other words, the effect of congestion produced a blockage disconnecting these districts from the greater 'civilizing' influence of American society.

As a strategy to alleviate these effects of *congestion,* progressive urban reformers such as Jacob A. Riis and Frederick Law Olmsted focused their efforts on the construction of city parks which they believed would have 'civilizing effects' on the masses. In 1850, calls for the city to provide public spaces away from the choking density of the city resulted in the purchase of 700 acres of land from 59th to 106th Street, to be converted into a park. The rugged area acquired by the city had been settled by poor Irish and German immigrants, some owning pig and goat farms. The land also encompassed Seneca Village, the pillar of New York's African American community. Despite the pleas of the settlers, the park commission evicted 1,600 people and razed their communities, along with the African Union Church and Colored School No. 3. The commission argued that the greater public good that was to come with the park overrode the concerns of the few and justified the eradication of the shanties.

In 1857, Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux began building one of the city's most ambitious public works project. Olmsted, a romantic and transcendentalist, envisioned the park as a reformist enterprise, a place where "the rich and the poor, the cultivated and well-bred, and the sturdy and self-made people shall be attracted together and encouraged to assimilate" (qtd. in Rosenzweig and Blackmar 138). His design guided visitors with serpentine walkways and wide passages through carefully landscaped wooded areas and bucolic fields to open vistas such as the Bethesda Terrace, where crowds would gather, fostering a communitarian setting. Olmsted declared that Central Park would "exercise a distinctly harmonizing and refining influence upon the most unfortunate and lawless classes of the city—an influence favorable to courtesy, self-control, and temperance" (96). The civilizing effect of the park hinged on the panoptic self-governance of its visitors, with the middle / upper class gentry exemplifying the 'proper' behaviors and social etiquettes befitting a modern, democratic urban society. Olmsted's republican vision did not materialize, and Central Park became an elite park. Gatekeeper counts during the first 13 years after the opening of the park recorded that the largest and most regular groups of people to visit the park came with horses and carriages (Rosenzweig and Blackmar 212). The urban poor concentrated in lower Manhattan and the Bowery were geographically disconnected

from the park. When the park was opened, land values along the park soared and New York's elite began buying out middle-class lots. Far from Olmsted's hopes that it would be a place in which the lowly and lawless classes would come to be reformed by light and air, Central Park came to define the topography of the white, middle- and upper-class 'fit' and divided the city into affluent Upper Manhattan districts and Lower Manhattan slums.

A decade after Central Park was opened to the public, Jacob A. Riis, reporter, reformer, and founding member of the Tenement House Committee, began calling attention to the dilapidated conditions of Mulberry Bend, the "foul core of New York slums" (Riis, *How the Other Half Lives* 96). Located at the southwest corner of the infamous Five Points, Mulberry Bend was the symbol of all that was decrepit and deplorable to Riis. In his well-read documentary, *How the Other Half Lives*, published in 1890, Riis estimated that a total of 5,650 inhabitants were living in squalid tenements (100). Citing a report by the Council of Hygiene in 1865, he noted that the population consisted of less than five percent white Americans, "two thirds of the remainder being made up of the lowest grades of the laboring poor and of vicious classes"—mainly Italian and Irish immigrants ("The Clearing" 173). In his chapter "The Bend," Riis included a table entitled "Death and Death-rates in 1888 on Baxter and Mulberry Streets between Park and Bayard Streets" alongside pictures of dark and overcrowded tenements in the vicinity, combining an evocation of scientific authority with a viscerality that effectively conjured a false correlation between the death rates and the grainy black and white photographs of human and physical congestion. The table, drawn from the *Register of Vital Statistics*, numbered the total deaths within the population of the two streets, distinguishing between "five years old and over" and "under five years," highlighting the staggeringly higher number of deaths among babies and toddlers than among those above the age of five. Unlike the other 'dens of death' that Riis maps in his study, he argued that the Bend required exigent intervention by the municipal government. The solution Riis fiercely advocated was the complete annihilation of the tenements that made up "the wickedest of all slums" and the construction of a small park in its place ("The Clearing" 172). After almost a decade of lobbying, Riis and likeminded reformers finally persuaded the municipal government to purchase the plot of land and raze tenements in an area with the greatest population density in Manhattan at the time. A large part of Riis and other reformers' successful campaign was the evocation of the city's rights under the 1887 *Small Parks Act* to acquire small parks in congested neighborhoods—an act that was largely dormant until Riis's campaign. The inauguration of Mulberry Bend Park in 1897 initiated one of New York City's most prevailing strategies of 'slum clearance.' Landscaped by Calvert Vaux and in line with Frederick Law Olmsted's implorations for the city government to act on the problem of the lack

of green spaces, Mulberry Bend Park functioned to 'unclog' the civic arteries, allowing light and air to penetrate enclosed spaces that reformers believed bred crime and death.

While congestion was believed to keep out and cut off the civilizing effects of white, middle- and upper-class morals, practices, and sensibilities, it also meant the exclusion of American socio-economic and political control within these seemingly bounded enclaves. Besides renting rooms to lodgers to reduce the cost of rent, many residents in the Lower East Side used their homes as manufacturing spaces. Thus, they not only infringed on the modern, industrial capitalist separation of work and leisure, home and factory, but also contributed to the unregulated growth of informal economies. By the second half of the nineteenth century, the garment industry had become one of the city's most lucrative and thriving sectors. As mail-order catalogues and department stores increased the accessibility and affordability of ready-made apparel, a new fast-paced mass market created a need for an abled laboring class to meet its needs.[10] As fashion cycles changed quickly, manufacturers avoided fixed capital investments in specialized machinery and the need to train skilled labor by delegating contractors to oversee the production process. Contractors would hire newly arrived immigrants, usually from the same ethnic and language group, to work in their tenement homes. The sweatshop industry in the 1890s was dominated by Italians, only to be surpassed at the turn of the century with the influx of Eastern European, Yiddish-speaking Jewish immigrants. Veiller and other progressives argued that the sweatshop not only exploited the poor but also undermined the *standard* and *quality* of the American labor force and its product:

> With the abnormal increase of population through immigration, a vast horde of workers each year are brought to compete with the workers already here. Accustomed to lower wages and to a lower standard of living, they underbid them both socially and industrially, until the standards sink lower and lower. And from this industrial overcrowding we have that peculiar evil known as the "sweating system" by which men and women and even children are ground down in the treadmill of human labor, set to mean tasks and *stunted intellectually and physically*, forced by necessity to incessant toil. (Veiller, "The Housing Problem" 52; emphasis added)

In a fashion reminiscent of 'race suicide' reasoning, late-nineteenth-century economic and labor discourse held that immigrants such as Jews, Italians, and the Chinese were genetically endowed with the ability to endure long hours of hard labor and would inevitably overrun the 'American' job market. Although reformers effectively called attention to the exploitative mechanisms of sweatshops and won many statutory victories such as the ban on child labor, regulated working conditions, capped working hours, and a fixed minimum wage, their efforts hinged on the protection of white, Anglo-Saxon labor. The imagined 'hordes' of desperate, hungry, and adversity-resilient laborers flooding the Ameri-

10 See Soyer for a historical overview of the garment industry.

can workforce, diminishing not only the quality of products but the vitality of the nation's economy and social order, was not only perpetuated by progressives. It was a common idea weaponized by anti-immigration pundits, labor union leaders, politicians, academics, and economists. Edward A. Ross, founding member of the American Economic Association, proposed that the 'native' "Anglo-Saxon stock was biologically well-adapted to rural, traditional life, but less well-suited to the new urban milieu of industrial capitalism" (Leonard 210). He theorized that "Latins, Slavs, Asiatics, and Hebrews" were able to adapt better to the harsh conditions and the competitive nature of industrial capitalism, and, therefore, to outbreed Anglo-Saxons (Leonard 210). To urban reformers, the sweatshop was the prime example of the process of 'race suicide.' Riis, commenting on the so-called 'sweaters' in the Lower East Side, predicted that "as long as the ignorant crowds continue to come and to herd in these tenements, his grip can never be shaken off. And the supply across the seas is apparently inexhaustible" (*How the Other Half Lives* 140). Various solutions were proposed to ameliorate the growing informal economy of the sweatshop, but the one resolution that garnered the most support was the eradication of sweatshops through the demolition of tenements and the relocation of immigrant laborers to rural areas beyond city limits. In an interview in the *Independent*, the agricultural agent of the Hirsch Fund gave a succinct summary of the general consensus amongst reformers: "[…] to move the crowds is to kill the ghetto and the sweatshop, and to restore industry to healthy ways" (Riis, *Children* 217). *Congested* neighborhoods did not merely pose a challenge to the assimilationist, gentrification-based agendas of charitable organizations and progressive reformers, it also obstructed the city's *healthful circulation* of people, labor and goods—the flow of America's racialized capital.[11]

The Problem of "Light and Air"

While Veiller focused on strong-arming legislative support to fight the 'evils of congestion,' his counterpart, the architect I. N. Phelps Stokes, poured his efforts into designing an improved tenement that would solve both the problem of congestion and the vexing problem of light and air. Light and air was a concept deeply rooted in the cultural, geographical, and spatial imaginaries of nineteenth-century New York. As the population grew and buildings multiplied, the built environment of the industrial city was perceived as encroaching upon open and public spaces, evoking a nostalgia for the rural landscape and the romance of nature's redemptive qualities. Urban movements such as the City Beautiful Movement and Frederick Law Olmsted's landscaping of Central Park galvanized ideas for incorporating elements of the rural country into the urban landscape as civilizing elements of democratic republicanism and progress. Light and air became the symbolic racial-

11 While immigrant communities experienced tremendous hardships, many of them (e. g., the Jewish community of the Lower East Side, the Chinese community of Chinatown) also created thriving lived spaces with productive social and economic networks. Although far from being an equitable economy, New York's garment industry was born out of an informal economy within the 'congested' tenement homes and districts of the Lower East Side. By 1898, almost 80 percent of the city's garment industry was operated by Jewish immigrants concentrated south of 14th Street. See Sachar (145-46).

ized and classed divider between the enlightened and cultured uptown and the savaged, morally depraved downtown. This is evident in titles of books and articles published during this period, such as George G. Foster's *New York by Gaslight, with Here and There a Streak of Sunshine* (1850), Matthew Hale Smith's *Sunshine and Shadow in New York* (1868; see Figure 1), James Dabney McCabe's two books *Lights and Shadows of New York Life* (1872) and *New York by Sunlight and Gaslight* (1882), Helen Campbell's *Darkness and Daylight, or Lights and Shadows of New York Life* (1892), James W. Buel's *Sunlight and Shadow of America's Greatest Cities* (1891), W. H. Gleadell "Night Scenes in Chinatown" (1895), George H. Fitch's "A Night in Chinatown" (1887), and D. E. Kessler's "An Evening in Chinatown" (1907). This visual division also reflected the understanding of the Victorian hierarchy of the body, which was transposed to the spatial configuration of the home and the city. Historian John Kuo Wei Tchen notes:

> At the top of the bodily hierarchy were the intellect and the spirit, which corresponded to the parlor, the library and the music room—the most important rooms of the household. The genitals, anus, and their associated functions represented the lower bodily stratum; in the household they were to be concealed from any gaze or other sensory exposure, and the tasks associate with them—cleaning, washing, stooping, and the like—were to be performed by those deemed suited for lowly work. These bodily and household hierarchies were in turn mapped outward onto the streetscape along a lateral uptown / downtown axis: on the one hand, the civic centers, courts, churches, public libraries and clubs frequented by […] middle-class and elite Anglo-European New Yorkers; on the other hand, the slums—filthy dens of iniquity and vice, infested with disease and vermin and occupied by racial others. (275-76)

Tchen points out the parallels between the new bourgeoisie's repression of references to the lower body and the Victorian desire to eliminate urban filth: "the slum, the ragpicker, the prostitute, the sewer, the rat, and the racial other" (276). The idea of bringing sunshine, light, and air to the darkened areas of the city was an effort not only to sanitize and improve the conditions of the built environment, but also to purify / sterilize those living within its boundaries. With miasmic theories attributing the cause of diseases to noxious vapors that permeated the city and congested districts, and adherents of the germ theory arguing that light was the greatest disinfectant and sterilizer of disease-carrying microbes, light and air were also directly linked to physical health, which, by extension, was believed to affect the moral health of the home, the economic health of the city, and ultimately the nation's wellbeing. During a time when cholera and tuberculosis ravaged the city, affecting neglected immigrant and poverty-stricken districts the hardest, reformers strove for stricter sanitary codes, and sought to find a solution to the dark and badly ventilated tenements.
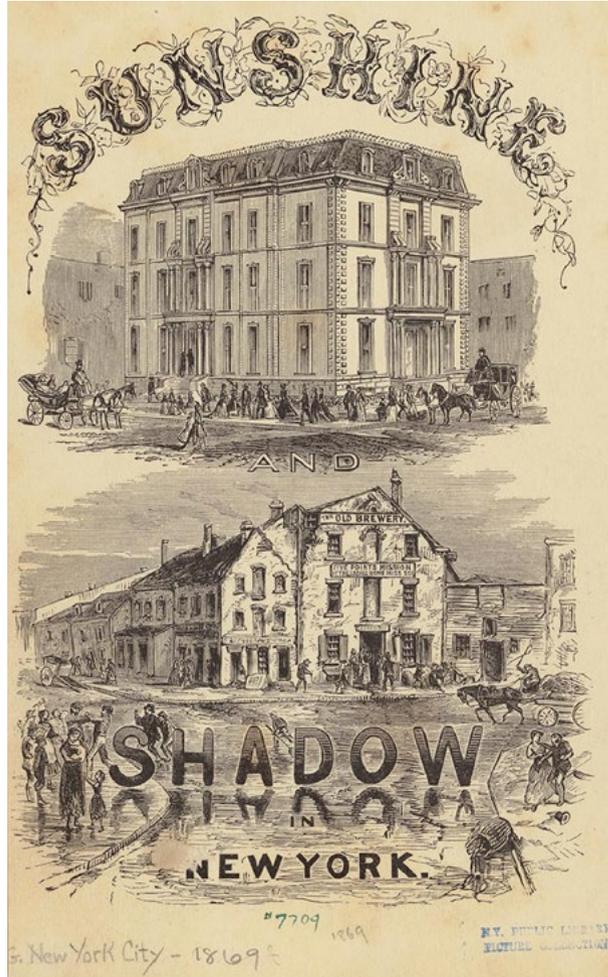
Figure 1. Cover Illustration for Matthew Hale Smith's *Sunshine and Shadow in New York* (1868). The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

Stokes, coming from a long line of abolitionists, civil rights activists, and philanthropists, belonged to a small group of American architects who were interested in the planning and design of low-cost housing (Lubove, "I. N. Phelps Stokes" 76). He drew from and improved on the ideas of his mentor, Ernest Flagg, who had declared buildings on a 25 × 100-foot lot "not fit for [even] the lower animals" (76). Flagg had demonstrated that dumbbell tenements were extravagantly expensive, with superfluous and inefficient use of space. Revolting against the 25 × 100-foot tenement lot, Stokes revealed an innovative plan that opened up the center of the block, converting that space into small parks and playgrounds. Ordinarily, due to the exorbitant land cost, leaving the center of a block vacant would have been economically impractical. Stokes's design, however, was innovative in that it depended on the "absorption of part of the costs by the municipality" (80). In practice, Stokes proposed

that the city condemn congested, dilapidated tenements, raze the buildings, and convert the center lots into green spaces. The city was then to sell the strips along the two sides of the block measuring 40 × 400 feet for the construction of tenements. With the city's financial investment, the more efficient use of space, and Stokes's shrewd calculations that factored in light and air, the cost of the original rent paid by tenants of the demolished tenements was retained. Stokes's design attracted much interest from the city, reformers, and model tenement developers, as his plan would save the city over $1 per square foot in the cost of land while clearing large areas of the city that were considered slums. Also, the increase in levels of light and air raised the value of the property. While Stokes's plan increased the volume of light and air, improving the standard of living of tenement residents, the plan only allocated living spaces for two-thirds of the block's original population. The elusive, almost abstract concept of light and air, executed through Stokes's tenement design, resulted in the displacement of one third of a tenement's original population. In the guise of economic pragmatism, as well as urban and social reform, Stokes's design provided the city and its reformers with an effective eugenic tool for regulating and managing New York's urban poor. Stokes's design amalgamated the three cornerstone concerns of the tenement house reform movement: congestion and decongestion; economically profitable housing for the urban poor; and an improved 'built environment' with greater access to light and air.[12]

The Tenement Solution

In preparation for the exhibition in 1900, Veiller conducted meticulous research, locating and classifying all the tenements in Manhattan, from the southern end of the Battery to the Harlem River at 129th Street.[13] According to Veiller, 15,000 "bad tenements" had been built in the city by speculative builders since 1890 ("Tenement Reform Urged" 7). These derelict tenements housed two thirds of the city's population, "under conditions that ought not to be tolerated by any community" (Veiller, *The Reminiscences* 2: 15). Tenement-house construction at the turn of the century was often "a short run-speculative operation," with nine out of ten tenements built out of short-term speculation instead of long-term investment (Lubove, *The Progressives* 112).[14] Builders usually had very little capital and would secure loans from 'building loan operators,' insurance companies, banks, and private individuals.[15] Their objective was to finish the construction as quickly as possible and transfer mortgage obligations and any potential risk of violations to the purchaser. Interestingly, the *New York Times* concluded that, based on a survey conducted in 1896, "the tenements and the rear tenements in this city [are] very largely, almost entirely, own[ed] by people of moderate means in the 'middle class' of the community" ("Disease Breeding Homes" 2). Half the rear tenements were "owned by individuals,

12 It is important to note that Stokes and Gould followed speculative real-estate strategies and would seek out plots of land that were in districts with the potential for economic growth, with the assumption that land and property prices would rise—their strategies and economic speculation were antecedents to *gentrification* as we understand it today.
13 His effort resulted in over a hundred large-scale maps measuring 35 by 76 inches.
14 See also Veiller, "The Speculative Building" 369.
15 See Veiller, "The Speculative Building" 370. "Building loan operators' business is the buying up of land in certain portions of the city [...] and holding such land until some builder desires to build in that neighborhood" (370).

both men and women, who themselves live in their miserable premises"
(2). On the one hand, speculative builders raised the prices of land and
property in the city, constructed substandard homes abiding to the low-
est standards set by legislation, and disregarded the safety and sanitation
needs of tenants. On the other hand, rent in Manhattan was exorbitant
around 1900 and was the highest compared to other North American
and European cities (Veiller, "The Tenement-House Exhibition" 19).
Owning property allowed working-class families to secure an invest-
ment in an ever-growing real-estate market. Commercial tenements
also created urgently needed living spaces. Veiller accused speculative
builders of exploiting the working class and the urban poor and of pro-
ducing a 'built environment' that bred crime, disease, moral depravity,
and 'unfit' American citizens. He fought hard and succeeded in advo-
cating stricter building and tenement regulations and stricter manage-
ment of the social and economic welfare of tenants. As an alternative to
the speculative-commercial tenement housing, Veiller and likeminded
reformers promoted an investment strategy known as "Philanthropy
and 5 percent." It was a strategy that was already well-established in the
mid-nineteenth century by "model tenements" associations involving
"forming a commercial entity to construct model housing and limiting
investor dividends to keep rent affordable" while insuring a five-percent
return on investment (Knerr 23).

One of the leading figures in this enterprise was Dr. E. R. L. Gould,
an executive member of the Tenement House Committee and one of the
invited speakers at the Tenement House Exhibition. Gould was elected
president of the extremely successful *City and Suburban Homes Company*
in 1896—the largest model housing agency in New York managed by a
wealthy philanthropist. He had worked at the Department of Labor and
had conducted extensive series of studies on the 'workingmen's home.'
In 1895, he published a transatlantic comparative study entitled *Housing
of the Working People*, in which he detailed the housing of the working
class in various cities across Western Europe. He concluded his 461-
page report with a classification system of working-class tenants that
would assist charity organizations and the department of labor to more
efficiently sort, organize, and manage the urban poor through housing
policies. Gould stratified the working class into three groups. The first
was composed of artisans who were "steady, thrifty, and socially ambi-
tious," made good tenants, and were able to pay rent—a group from
whom private builders or model companies "would secure a good return
upon capital" (439). Gould described the second group as "the unfortu-
nates" who by reasons of "sickness or other misfortune" had acquired
debt (439). He characterized this population as "prone to be lazy," "not
particularly intelligent or ambitious," "possess[ing] bad habits," and as
"irregular rent payers" (439). According to Gould, this group should
be the focus of charitable efforts and re-habilitation and would be well
suited for model tenements managed by "lady rent collectors"—a system

of financial and moral management that was introduced by the English reformer Octavia Hill (440). Hill reasoned that good tenancy was a result of good housing management in which a landlord needed to act as "an advisor and friend to the tenants, listening sympathetically to their problems while insisting upon prompt rent payments, sobriety, and moral respectability" (Lubove, *The Progressives* 105).

The "lowest class" for Gould included the "incorrigible, the drunkard, the criminal, the immoral, the lazy, and the shiftless [who] do not pay rent [and] ruin any property in which they take shelter" (*Housing of the Working People* 440). Gould characterized those in this class as usually "unmarried" and as "hav[ing] hardly any domestic or civilized feelings," and he reported "happily" that these were increasingly being driven out of the tenements into lodging houses due to the "increasing strictness of sanitary enforcement" (440-41). In late-nineteenth-century New York City, the term lodging house referred to municipal-operated shelters for the homeless and those living in severe poverty. These barebone shelters were gender-segregated, and numerous people were placed in large dilapidated rooms with cots or bunk beds. Lodging houses, in contrast to homes, were transient spaces with no privacy. Gould's recommendation of forced relocation of the 'lowest class' from homes to lodging houses was a form of urban eugenics that effectively denied the 'unfit' privacy, and thus the means of reproduction. Another example of urban eugenics was Gould's support of the institutionalization of children belonging to members of the lowest class, so as to ensure that they "might grow up [to be] useful members of society" (441).[16] Like Veiller and Stokes, Gould held that the solution to the "tenement house problem" could "only be wrought out along economic lines" (443). The production of a healthy workforce and a worthy electorate depended on 1) laissez-faire capitalism that provided a market to regulate the supply and demand of housing, 2) a state that functioned as an agent, enforcing fair laws in the building and management of tenements, and, finally, 3) philanthropic management of housing and rent as a utility for social control of the urban poor. Gould wrote that "[d]iscipline, regularity, and insistence upon prompt daily payment for accommodation given, can not fail to have a reforming influence upon individual habits" (441). His principles of good housing and tenancy established moral standards of good and bad citizenry, repositioned the 'home' and 'domesticity' as the civilizing agent of society, and importantly, in the guise of statistical rationalism and economic pragmatism, sorted out the deserving poor from society's 'incorrigibles.' Housing was reserved for the financially 'fit,' the mentally 'abled,' and the morally 'deserving.' Those who did not meet these standards within the meritocracy were systematically denied the opportunity to participate in New York's market economy, access to property and capital, inclusion in the ever-gentrifying neighborhood, and significantly, a home and the possibility of procreation.

16 According to Gould, this idea was proposed by Lord Provost Russell of Edinburgh, a pioneer of the city's public health department (*Housing of the Working People* 443).

Racialized Geography and Cartographic Erasure

In 1894, six years before the founding of THC, reformers succeeded in lobbying the New York State legislature to appoint a committee to conduct a study of tenements. Within six months, the Gilder Committee compiled an extensive 600-page report enumerating the conditions of 'overcrowded' tenements. The committee's most notable achievement was the publication of six maps drawn by cartographer Frederick E. Pierce: four detailing the population density of wards between 1860 and 1890, one illustrating population density based on sanitary districts, and one displaying the "distribution of the Principal Nationalities by Sanitary Districts." These maps were a novelty. It was the first time that statistics collected from various institutions such as the health board, city administration, and charities were combined on such a large scale, and the first time these statistics were represented as a map. The maps were deemed so powerful, *Harper's Weekly* acquired and published three of them (see Figures 2 and 3). Read alongside journalistic accounts of the 'urban poor' and Riis's photographic account *How the Other Half Lives*, these maps crystalized and validated the gentry's imaginary geographies of race, poverty, and place. These maps located perceived epicenters of crime and disease, while dramatizing their infringing proximity to white, middle- and upper-class neighborhoods. Visually, the maps ordered and made intelligible the relationship between congestion, light and air, poverty, and disease, thus connecting these concepts through a new form of correlational logic.
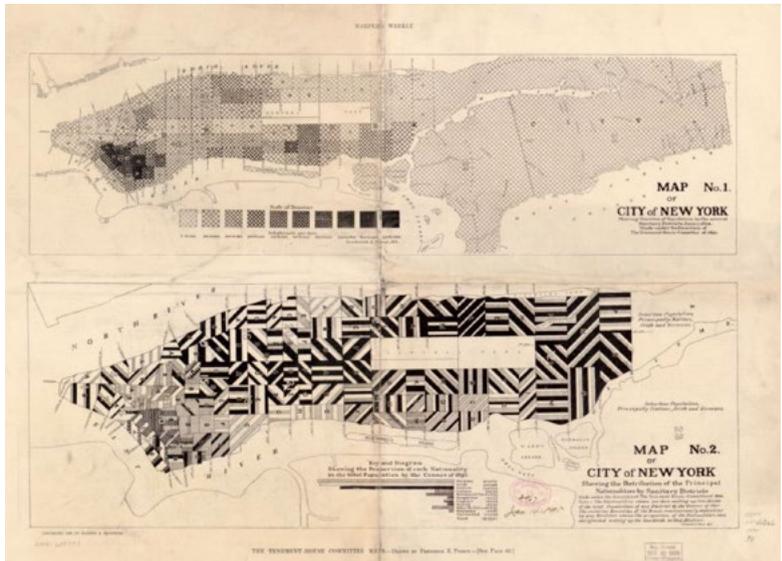

Figure 2. THC's "Map of City of New York, Showing the Distribution of the Principal Nationalities by Sanitary Districts" (1894). By Frederick E. Pierce. Library of Congress.

Figure 3. One of Veiller's "Poverty Maps" marking recipients of charity on each block between Bowery, Rivington Street, Ludlow Street, and East Houston (1899). Photographed by author. Permission from New York Historical Society, Patricia D. Klingenstein Library.

Upon closer examination, however, the cartographic methodology told a more obscure story. First, the committee's mapmakers based their 'nationality map' on the 1890 census, but "all the nationalities given [were] not plotted" (Pierce, "Tenement House"). Those that were not represented included Scotch, English, Welsh, Scandinavian, and Canadian. Pierce argued that this was "to bring out in clearer contrast those that do exist to a greater extent," in other words the German, Irish, Italian, Russian, Polish, Hungarian, and Jewish immigrants, who were the primary target groups of reform and 'gentrification' ("Tenement House"). Second, the map only shows the nationalities "making up two thirds of the population of any district," effacing at least two large African American neighborhoods, all Native Americans, and the Chinese who were scattered across Manhattan or lived in areas where their numbers were overshadowed by other nationalities.[17]

The series of maps produced three racialized categories: immigrants who were considered assimilated and adapted to the ways and manners of the 'gentry'; immigrants in need of charitable assistance, management, and reform; and those 'unrepresented,' living below the grid of America's economic, political, and civic progress. Although there were efforts by organizations such as the American City Planning Institute (AICP) to house a chosen number of African American 'workingmen,' the vast majority lived in tenements, paid significantly higher rents than other racial minorities, and were denied tenancy beyond designated areas. Chinese immigrants, already affected by the 1882 *Chinese Exclusion Act*, were completely neglected by the housing reform movement. In his chapter on the Chinese Quarter in *How the Other Half Lives*, in which he deliberated whether the Exclusion Act was justified, Riis concluded that "for [the Chinese] there is neither hope nor recovery; nothing but death—moral, mental and physical death" (128).

17 While the "Nationality Map" marks two blocks occupied by African Americans, other archival sources record large communities living between W 59th and W 64th Streets as well as between Tenth [Avenue] and West End. Seneca Village 1825 through 1857, Weeksville in Brooklyn. According to the 1890 census, there were 23,601 African Americans, 52 Native Americans, and 2,021 "Asians" living in New York City.

Conclusion

By the time the Tenement House Exhibition closed, two weeks after it opened, over 10,000 people had attended (Veiller, *The Reminiscences* 2: 19). Besides the cardboard model, the other feature of the exhibition that drew most attention were Veiller's impressive disease and poverty maps. They were displayed as a series of 47 parallel, large-scale maps of all the tenement districts in Manhattan, "so that a comparative study of them may be made" (Veiller, "The Tenement-House Exhibition" 22). Each map provided "the street number of each building, the height, number of stories, also the amount of land covered, the shape of the building, the number of residents in each building, and the small amount of land left vacant for light and air" (Veiller, *The Reminiscences* 2: 15). Each black dot on the poverty map represented five families residing in that tenement who had applied for charity within the past five years. Each color-coded dot on the disease map indicated one case of tuberculosis, scarlet fever, typhoid, or diphtheria. The maps and the manner in which they were displayed functioned as a strategy of knowledge that crystalized the 'uptown' New Yorker's imaginary geographies of race, poverty, and place. These maps helped locate tenements that were deemed epicenters of crime and disease while revealing their threatening proximity to white, middle- and upper-class neighborhoods.

This correlational logic was a novel and paradigm-shifting way of understanding and expressing relationships between things, and, importantly, was used as a tool for measuring probability, frequency, and risk. While early theories and practices of measuring probability were used in the field of meteorology, observational astronomy, and geodesy in the first half of the nineteenth century, social statistics emerged alongside the national census when differentiated population data was made available, sorting people based on categories such as age, gender, place of birth, citizenship, and race. The concept of correlation was developed by eugenic pioneer Francis Galton. His cousin's controversial book, *On the Origin of Species*, published in 1859, had validated Galton's idea that ability was linked to heredity and that nature, not nurture, was the determining force. Galton's first thoughts on eugenics appeared in *MacMillan's Magazine*, a popular Victorian periodical, in 1865. In this article, "Hereditary Talent and Character," Galton used a selected biography of 605 notable English men who lived between 1435 and 1853 to determine if the men's closest relatives also exhibited their extraordinary traits (see Gillham 87-88). Heavily biased towards nature as the determining factor, Galton reported finding "102 notable relationships for a frequency of 1 in 6" (Gillham 87-88). Four years later, he refined his research methodology and published his pioneering work in eugenics, *Hereditary Genius,* in which he attempted to "show [that] man's natural abilities [intelligence] are derived by inheritance, under exactly the same limitations as are the form and physical features of the whole organic

world" (1). In 1888, studying the relationship between the length of forearms and height, Galton had a breakthrough in the statistical expression of the relationship between two variables.[18] This simple yet elegant concept paved the way to new methods of measuring and communicating the connection between variables in relation to the norm. His (re)discovery of correlation analysis and its applicability to the description of social and developmental trends fostered a new discipline of social statistics. This occurred during a period of 'data revolution' in which the state, municipalities, governing bodies, and social and charitable organizations began collecting and consolidating data. 'Correlational logic'—often misused and misunderstood as an indication of causality—became mainstream.

Banking on his exhibition visitors understanding the concept of correlation, Veiller's maps juxtaposing poverty and disease, on an immensely scaled cartographical canvas, solidified the relationship between concrete spaces and abstract ideas of racialized difference. The maps were extremely effective, because in their semblance of scientific empiricism and positivism they no longer merely represented the 'City of Living Death,' but functioned as a tool of *worldmaking*: spatially ordering difference, locating those differences in relation to white, middle- and upper-class areas, predicting risks between poverty, disease, and death, and masking the inequality built into New York's racial capitalism. Just as the abstract theories of miasma were embodied by the corporeal racialized other, Veiller's maps, with the tenements marked in red, made tangible and measurable the impending peril of 'race suicide,' the slow and progressing degeneracy of the white, Anglo-Saxon pedigree, as tenements continued to mushroom across the city, encroaching upon areas of light and air, breeding disease, moral corruption, and death.

Governor Theodore Roosevelt, who had officiated the exhibition, approached de Forest and Veiller on the opening night, saying "[t]ell me what you want from Albany and I will do everything I can to help you get it." According to Veiller, Roosevelt admitted to him that "it was the maps that convinced him that something radical had to be done" (*The Reminiscences* 2: 19). The maps, "which show the centers of disease and poverty," together with Roosevelt's support, let the Tenement House Committee succeed in pressuring Albany to pass the *Tenement Law of 1901* (2: 19). This new law banned the construction of dumbbell tenements, stipulated a minimum amount of light and air, and provided stricter regulation with regard to fire escapes and sanitary codes. When the new law went into effect, many small building firms and private, speculative builders closed their businesses. Model tenement companies, such as Gould's *City and Suburban Homes Company*, thrived. That same year, Riis voiced his skepticism that "our tenement house reform was taking a shape that tended to make it impossible for anyone not able to pay [up to] $75 to live on Manhattan Island" (qtd. in Lubove, *The Progressives* 181). His prediction, according to historian Roy Lubove, was

18 The concept of the correlation coefficient was first invented by French physicist Alphonse Quetelet in 1846 but was 'rediscovered' by Galton in his 1888 study. See Galton, "Co-Relations."

accurate: "New York's poorest workers did not, in fact, occupy new-law tenements built after 1901" (*The Progressives* 181). With the consolidation of greater New York, the completion of the Williamsburg (1903), Queensboro (1909), and Manhattan Bridges (1909), and the opening of new public transportation lines, the foreign-born population in Queens, Brooklyn, and the Bronx increased significantly in size between 1900 and 1910. Immigrants who remained in Manhattan tenements had to be 'able' to pay higher rents. Tenement housing reform aligned itself with racial capital's need for fictions of differing abilities, for distinctions between the *gentry-fiable* poor and the 'incorrigibles.'

The Tenement House Exhibition of 1900 marked an important moment in the standardization and fortification of values, ideologies, and technologies that would continue to permeate urban planning and affordable housing policies throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. From the New Deal's red-lining policies, Robert Moses's mowing down of communities to make way for automobiles, urban renewal projects in the 1960s and 1970s, and Robert Starr's policy of 'planned shrinkage' to the current discussion of gentrification, urban eugenics has helped design the city of the abled and the *gentry-fied*. While constantly being revised to suit new forms and trends of capitalism, the disquieting ideologies and practices of eugenics continue to order and manage the right to shelter and the right to home. In his first address to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in March 2016, the newly appointed HUD secretary Ben Carson reiterated what he believed was HUD's mission: "[...] helping the downtrodden, helping the people in our society to be able to climb the ladder. Because [...] that really [is] what it's all about. It's about the American Dream. The ability to move up that ladder, the ability to make a difference in the lives of our fellow Americans recognizing how much innate potential there is within them." Carson's ideas of ableism, the system of meritocracy that continues to 'sanitize' New York in service to global capitalism, the continual racial and economic segregation through housing policies—these present inherited and material legacies of the *urban eugenics* of the Progressive Era.

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