

Fasten Your Safety Belts Kids!

*SECURITY: FROM THE LOCAL TO THE
INTERNATIONAL*

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MESSAGE FROM THE AUTHOR:

Due to the miniscule possibility of the misuse of information in this essay, the characters' names and exact location have been manipulated and coded so as not to reveal any personal data. I do not think that the information withheld would be of any importance, and all other data that does not compromise the well being of those involved has been held accurate. Sorry about any inconvenience.

“It's just like a security blanket," said McKayla Smith, manager of the Pizza Hut at 1501 N. Main St. "I think just having an occasional cop car outside (the office) will help.”¹

There are many different aspects to the “virtual security regime” that I will define and explicate in this paper. The VSR that I am primarily interested in is the security war of the local. Yes, I will be “ReDefining Normal! Using a variety of intellectual tools, I will explain how the many different trivialities of the system of surveillance in Normal establish a system of racism. This sort of racism is *not only* a system of oppression and violence based on the color of one’s skin. I will be using “racism,” as Foucault utilizes it; a system of discrimination that classifies those who are considered a disease on the reproduction of a “healthy” state, and a simple system of stereotyping people in concern of who ought to get what, where, when, and how. Upon further inspection into the different techniques used by our federal government, the politics of the state of Illinois, and the town of Normal, I hope to expose an underlying theme of racism that woefully inscribes the validity of a “healthy,” homogenous culture.

Defying Laws of Exclusion

This is a wonderful opportunity for me to write this paper because some of my acquaintances are experiencing many aspects of this virtual security regime at the present time. However, it is quite apparent that the type of discrimination that my friends are

¹ The *Pantagraph*. August 1, 2002, Thursday. NEWS; Pg. A5 written by Kevin Simpson. This is just a quote from one of the many articles that condoned the new police substation on West Orlando.

being exposed to is ironically not supposed to be applied to a “people like them.” The reason they are being left unprotected from the discrimination that I will expose is because the rules of inclusion or exclusion were bent to allow them to visualize it. Thus, my friends are experiencing this method of discrimination for the first time, but not for the reasons that others experience. So, for them, this type of security is appalling, but for others who always meet the criteria of the “disease,” this sort of racism is an every day activity; an activity that is omnipresent.

On June 15, 2003, my friends, Sid and Nancy, signed onto a lease at Pleasantview Ridge Apartments. This apartment complex is located on West Orlando Avenue, which is on the north, west side of the town of Normal. Sid and Nancy had been looking for a new domicile, and this particular prospect seemed quite promising because of its wonderful location by both of their colleges, the security deposit was quite low, and the complex had been running a promotion which allowed them to receive the first month’s rent for free. These incentives were hard to resist, so they decided to try and move in, despite the rumors of how “bad“ the neighborhood was.

After reviewing the application, however, it became clear to them that the criteria for approval in this complex was quite divergent from any other landlord that they had been exposed to. They soon realized that what they were interested in was low income housing, and that they did not meet the criteria to reside in the place. The next day, Sid returned the application to Lindsay (the property manager), and she asked him about their status as students. He told her that they were full time students. She frowned, and asked in a quite peculiar voice (louder and more militant that is), “Well are you full time students at this exact moment?” Since it was summer, and Sid hadn’t started his Classical

Political Theory course yet, his answer was negative. After some finagling with their income status, they were allowed to read and sign the lease which was equivalent in dimensionality to that of a middle core college textbook.

This seemed extremely kind of her, but it left my friends and I with some nagging questions about that which I had not been previously exposed to. Were poor people really not allowed to receive higher education? Why was this lease so strict compared to other rental properties that my friends and I have been involved with? Could all this be linked to the rumors of “bad” that I have been told about this area since I moved to the town of Normal from day one? So this is where I now turn.

Restrictions On Education

According to the *Occupancy Requirements of Subsidized Multifamily*², all full time students who live in a multifamily household at Pleasantview should be considered as a dependent analogous to a disabled person or a minor who is under the age of eighteen. The stipulations in which a person who is the “head of the household” or the “spouse” may attend an educational program is that which is only for “job training purposes.” This does not allow the person to go to school full time, but only to attend in small increments so they will be able to increase their occupational ability.

Another restriction on education obviously depends if the student can afford it. That is, a person who attends school for “job training purposes” must be deemed worthy to receive financial aid assistance. This inevitably will lead us to the wonderful world of financial aid.

² US Department of Housing and Urban Development. *Housing Programs*. “Occupancy Requirements of Subsidized Multifamily Housing Programs.” handbook 4350.3 Chapters 3,5, 7, and Glossary. www.hud.com. Still available on 12/5/03

The most obvious case of not meeting the criteria for financial aid is being considered as having too much money to receive aid. This may seem well and dandy from the outside (why should someone who has a lot of money be eligible for financial aid, low income housing, or food stamps?), but there are many inconsistencies in the system of determining who has enough money. The financial aid office determines one's financial status by scrutinizing their parents' income until they are the age of twenty-three or until they have a child. This means that the student applying for assistance may not be eligible for financial aid (although they are more eligible to receive loans) because their parents make too much money. All this assumes that the student will constantly be assisted financially by their parents in every aspect of their life, they are emotionally supportive about the student attending school (usually, but not always, these two go hand in hand), does not want to be autonomous, and their parents support them in their decisions in life. This is the restriction based on family status and class (keeping close to who is and isn't allowed). Other criteria of financial aid include being a "legal" citizen, signing up for the selective service, and not being convicted on any drug charges.³

If one meets the low income requirements, there are still a couple ways in which a student may not be allowed for special student status. The first is if the person is not a legal citizen.⁴ If one does not verify their legality in relation to the sovereign, then they are not allowed financial assistance to better their education. It follows that ineligible non citizens, who receive higher education in this country, pay out of their pockets and are therefore not allowed to reap any other benefits from some welfare systems.

The second way in which one may not receive the special student status is if the

³ US Department of Education. www.fafsa.ed.gov. Still available 12/5/03

⁴ A student who is not a legal citizen is also not allowed to partake in low income housing.

person does not apply for selective service. It is a law in this country that each male over the age of eighteen enroll in the selective service in case they are needed to be exterminators or to be exterminated in the time of war. Thus the confirmation of the state's control over "bare life"⁵ is needed before any allocations of funds for education is given. Notice, however, that this is a monitoring control over a poor person's "bare life", and does not prohibit a more well off student who has not signed up for the draft to attend school (even though the penalties for refusing to sign up for the draft are quite extreme). This may also be seen as a safeguard of the state to ensure that poor people do not dodge or refuse to sign up in the draft to protest during times of war in fear of losing funding for their education.

The third way in which a poor person may be denied special student status is if they were convicted any possession of illicit drugs. Oh yes, this is because we do not want a drug addict to clean up their act and go to school (sarcasm my friend, sarcasm!). According to the US Department of Human Services, "Illicit drug use rates remain highly correlated with educational status. Among young adults age 18-34 years old in 1995, those who had not completed high school had the highest rate of use (15.4 percent), while college graduates had the lowest rate of use (5.9 percent). This is despite the fact that young adults at different educational levels are equally as likely to have tried illicit drugs in their lifetime (50 percent of those not completing high school and 52 percent of college graduates)."⁶ This statistic clearly states that a college education has a definite positive effect on the probable amount of drug usage in that person's life, and people who do not go to college are three times as likely to be an habitual drug user. Also, the DHR reports,

⁵ See section on Agamben. Also, for citizenship eligibility criteria for housing and financial aid.

⁶ Department of Human Resources <http://www.health.org/govstudy/ar018/any.aspx>. Still available

“Nearly half of young adults age 21-25 had tried illicit drugs at least once in their lifetime, and 12 percent were current users.”⁷ Clearly the federal program to assist students financially is quite blind to our nation’s drug usage, and definitely more inconsiderate of our nations poor.⁸ The ultimate conclusion is that if a poor person who has been traced to drugs (perhaps via lack of education, stresses of unemployment and racism, increased surveillance and arrests, or the lack of options that other privileged people are bombarded with) one time in their lives, they would have to pay cash to go to school. In other words, nearly impossible.⁹

Low Income Housing

After my friends had moved into the low income housing, they noticed something very odd in their lease. They received a forty percent income drop from the normal price (which was definitely fine with them). The drop was due to their incomes which were calculated by Lindsay, and the price of the apartment was adjusted to better suit their interests. This is all fine and dandy, except for the numbers that were used to determine their income were radically skewed to portray earnings that were disproportionately higher than their actual incomes.¹⁰ Sid and Nancy did not understand the income criteria for acceptance into the complex as Lindsay kept on stating that their income “can not be too high, but can not be too low.” Thus they thought she had done them a favor by fitting

12/05/03

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ See Urso Spina’s statistic on the increased probability of black people to be searched and arrested based on a system of racism.

⁹ Except by joining the military, which offers all of the mentioned programs. This may explain the disproportional amount of minorities and poor people who become mercenaries for a college education. Also, people who have been laid off from their job cannot receive unemployment benefits from their employer if they are full time students. This is a quite a travesty especially since those who have made much more money, and will reap the most benefits from unemployment usually have already completed their advanced education.

¹⁰ See attached sheets. Sid’s income is about three times less than the stated amount. Also note that Sid is

them into the category in which they would be accepted into the apartment.

It became apparent through more research, however, that these actions were very shady. I wrote HUD (the US Department of Housing and Urban Development) to determine what kind of low income housing program that this complex operated. I was told that the project was section 8, and it was for people with very low incomes. The operation for this program is that the private owner of the apartment complex determines the income of the tenant, and the rent is fixed towards that income. The money that is reduced from the rent is then subsidized by the federal government through HUD. Apparently, the owner has no incentive to give out smaller subsidies. In direct correlation to this, rumors have been tossed around by neighbors that Lindsay keeps all security deposits for her own personal wealth. The privatization of low income housing has the potential for serious white collar crime. It is a definite plausible scenario that Sid and Nancy pay a much higher rent than HUD thinks they do. Why else would their income be skewed so significantly? But this is all speculation, and questioning the policies of the management may leave Sid and Nancy without a place to live for they do not meet the criteria to live there in the first place.

The system of security is readily seen in the procedures of the Decent, Sanitary, and Safety Inspections within low income housing. These inspections are required once a year by HUD to apparently assess the quality of housing that is provided from the privatized businesses who run the projects. The *Federal Register* states that the annual inspections are to “achieve three significant objectives: (1) Consistency in physical condition standards for HUD housing; (2) Standardization of the inspection to be undertaken to determine compliance with the standards; and (3) Implementation of an

the “head of household,” where Nancy isn’t although she really made more than Sid at the time.

electronically based inspection system to evaluate, rate, and rank the physical condition of HUD housing objectively.”¹¹

In the June 30, 1998 *Federal Register* (approximately two months before the DSSI policies came into effect),¹² there was a call to discuss the implementation of the inspections to ensure that the policy was full proof against discrimination. In the September edition of the *Register*, the discussion was laid out in full to answer some of the questions commentators had about the inspections. The discussion was basically about the owner’s rights who managed the low income housing units. Apparently, the program was a mechanism designed to force privatized owners to comply to certain standards of health codes so the tenants may dwell in a safe environment. This certainly has a positive tone to it, but let us now consider a possible negative backlash to these inspections.

After reading and assessing the discussion about the policy, I realized that there was no mention of the privacy rights of the tenants who inhabit these low income houses. My friends had no idea that they were going to be “inspected” during a certain week of the year to see if each unit complied to DSSI standards when they signed on to the lease. They received a letter telling them when the inspection would be.¹³ The letter also mentioned when evictions would take place. It soon became obvious that my friends were supposed to meet certain standards that were deemed normal to engage life in. My friends and their neighbors were being monitored, and a list of infractions were sent to their

¹¹ Department of Housing and Urban Development. *Federal Register*. Vol. 63. No. 169, 10.01.98 pg. 46566

¹² Department of Housing and Urban Development. *Federal Register*. Vol. 63. No. 125, 06.30.98 pgs. 35649-35660

¹³ This is the pre- inspection, done by the landlord to ensure that each unit is up to par before the actual inspections by HUD take place. See attached letters.

doorstep which they were to fix to avoid eviction.

I decided to follow up on the details of this inspection, and the criteria in which a tenant was determined “indecent, unsanitary, or unsafe.” I wrote the administration of HUD to find details. I was told to call an official named Vanessa to address my questions and concerns. Vanessa dismissed my concerns at first bat, and stated that the inspections were in place to actually ensure that the quality of the units were adequate for the tenants in the building. I kept on asking about the privacy of the tenants, and the criteria in which one could be evicted for not meeting standards. She stated that the only times that people were evicted were in extreme cases, such as if there were feces spread on walls, or if the trash had not been taken out for months. I kept hassling Vanessa about the exact criteria, and she finally explained that the evictions can only occur if there is repeated violation of the 100+ page lease that my friends had tried to decipher when they signed it. She kept insisting that this was not the true purpose of the inspections, which I clearly understand that it was not, but sometimes the minor stipulations count and this is a clear case of such an instance. The conversation did not help. It was only a duplication of the discussion that was placed in the *Federal Register*, and did not address the lack of respect or dignity that these inspections had on the people it was performed on.

I have mentioned a couple of times that the lease is extremely detailed. It’s mass alone assures that every part of the tenants' existence is coded and conformed to universalized rules. The rules include an extremely tedious account of subject areas such as parking policy (they are not advocates of guests parking the nearly vacant lot at late hours), pets (including four pages on how to groom the pet properly), outside grill policy, cable television, required renter’s insurance, mold prevention, explication of strict rules

on illicit drug use and sales, guests who visit the house for more than five consecutive days, smoke detectors, how to properly work appliances, plumbing, windows, doors, waterbeds, patios, motorcycle parking, speed limits, sidewalks, outside antennas, laundry room rules, playground rules, soliciting, parties, number of tenants per room, maintenance, extermination, air conditioners, children, curfew, loitering (“...there will be no loitering on Pleasantview property at any time. This includes common areas on the property such as, the front of buildings, the stairwells, the laundry room, and the playground. This policy will be strictly enforced and can and will be used in the furtherance of eviction proceedings.” Who would have thought of loitering at your own home?), keys, property loss, trespassing, neighborhood watch, income changes, dependent changes, student status, storage of belongings, garbage disposal, and many more income stipulations that I do not have time to discuss. I think the only thing missing here is how to wipe your own ass, but I’m sure if Sid or Nancy do that wrong the Decent, Safe, and Sanitary act would probably pick up the slack.

Putting People In Their Place

Another aspect of the omnipresent VSR that I will be examining is geopolitics. Although one might assume that this VSR is applicable in many (if not all) portions of this country, I will once again narrow my criterion to involve the terrain of the town of Normal, Illinois. The focus of this aspect is the physical placement of peoples across the local geography that are determined based on the causality of an objective bias of racism. To formulate my hypothesis I will utilize the zoning laws that have been applied to the physical layout of the town.¹⁴

¹⁴ Normal, Town of. *Town of Normal Zoning Code. Includes all Amendments through 9/16/91.* Available at Milner Library

The West Orlando area (where my friends live) is noticeably segregated from the rest of the Town of Normal. This is the neighborhood right behind the Eagle that had closed down on North Main Street not too long ago. Because the majority of low income housing in the Town of Normal is located within these few blocks, the people that reside in this region are disproportionately minorities. On the direct opposite side of Normal however, around the Veteran's Parkway area and the cheap milk of Wal Mart¹⁵, the population is radically white, and do not need low income housing benefits to survive.

I decided to go to the Town of Normal City Hall to investigate the strategic placement of low income housing, and to purchase a zoning ordinance map. I had already reviewed the zoning laws, and there was no mention low income housing in the text. My confusion led me to question one of the administrative workers at the city hall about the placement of low income housing in Normal. The man was very nice, and told me that the constraints that HUD has put on the size and density of their own housing would ensure these complexes must be placed in a medium, multi family district. He told me that there would be technically nothing stopping any low income housing project from opening up in one of these designated zoning areas. The only reason why the town would know they were low income would be because usually these projects ask for more lax rules on such issues as parking and taxes. He admitted that through these pleas, the town may use persuasion to relocate low income housing in different areas. Another factor is the price of the property in which the zone is located. Many low income housing providers do not want to spend the money for a good location, or the location is

¹⁵ I say this because there is no cheap milk by the Orlando area. Well, perhaps if Mobil or Wal-Greens has a sale. Nonetheless, the gas stations that serve random highway wonderers lack the nutritional needs of the many people who dwell in the Orlando area. This is exacerbated by the dependency on public transportation and money needed to call a cab. There is much more I can say about this (especially the

inadequate to their needs. Usually, the richer neighborhoods do not have public transportation or close employment opportunity which is vitally needed and utilized by the poor.

The Zoning code is sort of a looser version of my friends' lease. From the type of trees allowed in one's front yard to a description of who is and isn't allowed to dwell in certain areas, it lays out the rules in which the town is to operate . The rules are coded and formulated to include and exclude. It is an explication of how the supposed normal, democratic, and free human would choose to live on any given day with no exceptions.

There are four zoning districts that relate to the residences of the people in the community that I am interested in.¹⁶ R1A and R1B are single family districts. A single family is defined as any number of people who are related to each other by blood or through legality, or not more than two people who are unrelated working to uphold the house. By defining family in this way, it disallows any break from the homogeneity of its own self definition. The "A" and "B" part in their title refer to the type of density the homes are allowed to be placed in. For instance the R1A district does not allow anymore than two single family homes in one acre, whereas the R1B allows six dwellings per acre.

One can readily see class written all over these rules, but it is not as clear cut as it seems. Many of the homes in R1A zoning district in Normal, are in lower classes than R1B zones. This is because many of the R1B zones are little subdivisions that are placed on the perimeter of the east side of Normal that are meant to be a sort of hideaway for their middle to upper middle class inhabitants. An upper poor to middle class

politics surrounding the closing of Eagle), but I have not the time.

¹⁶ I am excluding historic zones (old and refurbished houses), mobile home residency, and mixed residence housing which is a mixture that allows only single family residence, and double family residence. Otherwise, nothing smaller than a town house.

neighborhood in the R1A district would include the neighborhood that lies due north of Illinois State University.

In contrast to single family districts are the multifamily districts. The definition of family in these districts is different than that of the single family districts. A multifamily district family is defined as those who are related to each other through blood or legally, and up to four people who are not related to each other but share a common household. R3A is the medium density, multi family residence community, and home to all low income housing units. There are 16 dwellings per acre allowed in the R3A zones. The R3B zones are high density, multi family districts and allow up to 72 dwelling units per acre. This zone is not conducive to HUD's housing regulations, and therefore one would not find any low income housing on these properties. One can readily observe on the zoning map that the only allocated land for high density, multifamily residency is in the land surrounding Illinois State University, and thus mainly utilized by students.

It is quite apparent that there is an implicit geopolitical force that underlies the location of low income housing. The zones are chosen by an appointed town official who has underwent training in "social engineering." The locations of R3A zones have been placed as to ensure low income housing is feasible in a few areas. One can readily see this by marking the public transit routes that flow throughout the town. The necessity of transportation is a vital factor on mobility to employment opportunities and other necessities for poor people. The R3A zones that are not accessible to public transportation are not practical choices for low income providers to locate. On the same coin, the majority of off campus student housing is located under the R3B zones, and are thus not utilizable by low income housing providers. The rest of the town is segregated

from low income housing,¹⁷ by single family districts which constitute the majority of the population's wealthy. This is the primary way in which people who need low income housing to survive are forced into their own location, marked off by boundaries which serve as walls to the surrounding communities.

The Police State

The first night that Sid and Nancy moved into Pleasantview Apartments was quite memorable. Sid and Nancy both recalled that they had numerous members of family that were in visiting from out of town spending the night because they had helped them move out of their old place. When they were just about closing their eyes, Sid awoke to a rapid strobe light filling the room. Sid and his father stared out the window in disbelief, as they saw six police cars surround another car filled with young black adults. The police officers were all crouched behind their cars with guns drawn. They ordered each passenger out of the car and made them lie on the ground in front of them. When they were all laying on the pavement behind their car. The police officers rushed up to the vehicle using evasive tactics, with guns drawn, to ensure there was no one remaining in the vehicle. After a thorough search of the vehicle, the police officers finally let the young men go on their way.¹⁸

The first building one notices upon entering Sid's neighborhood, after passing the shopping units facing Main Street, is a small branch office of the Normal Police. This police substation was opened August 5, 2002 in response to a mugging that resulted in a murder of an elderly man, Bob Miller, outside of Eagle parking lot on April 16, 2002. In

¹⁷ It is notable that single family districts are not only segregated from low income housing, but also from students who would wish to rent out a house in these areas. The restriction of the number of unrelated people (2) who constitute a family usually insures this.

¹⁸ Nothing like this is mentioned in the *Pantagraph*. It makes me wonder, however, if these sort of tactics

the *Pantagraph*, many articles were published about the new police substation, and the positive effects that it would have on the community. Using this station as headquarters, the low income complexes (my friends included) are monitored regularly for criminal activity, constantly reminding the population of the neighborhood that their criminal tendencies will be squashed on sight.¹⁹

It is my suggestion that this police involvement directly reflects the widely held dominant beliefs about these “troubled” areas. None of the editorials or articles I read in the *Pantagraph* questioned the location of this police station in relation to the neighborhood. There is also no question or concerns about the reasons for the increased crime rate in these neighborhoods, such as poverty and its roots. In the same respect, when entering the neighborhood, the police station becomes a symbolic reminder of society’s quest for segregation and their unwillingness to address the concerns of the poor. Only this “Other” needs a special omnipresent security system that keeps them in line in their own specified plane of existence. The police are directly responsible for taking care of these “troubled areas” so they do not affect or change any aspect of the more prosperous, affluent subdivisions of Normal’s population who live across the Main divide.

But By Who’s Theory of Power?

I will analyze two different theories of power. The traditional and one of the most accepted view of power is that of Thomas Hobbes and his *Leviathon*. Hobbes argues that a central authority or sovereign is needed to keep people from falling into the state of nature. The state of nature is a place in which all *men* are equal, and thus potentially

would fly if applied to the drug induced college student population across town.

¹⁹ See the Normal’s strategic placement for their only police substation in their town.

always in a state of constant war. This explains Hobbes' famous characterization of life in the state of nature as "solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short."²⁰ The sovereign is derived from a contractual agreement from the people to ensure that their life has more quality than that of the state of nature. The sovereign's only goal is that of self preservation, and this allows the people of the state to be somewhat protected from the massive allocation of power that the state holds, because the killing of its own people would be analogous to committing suicide. Hobbes suggests that the population should not question or disobey the rule the sovereign has placed on them. This is because the worst case scenario of sovereign rule is much better than life within the state of nature.

Reading with Hobbes, we may place many of the items discussed here under his analysis. For instance, the lack of opportunity via education and thus the proliferation of cheap labor in the job market may be a classic example of the sovereign ensuring that the power structure within the state system stays in tact. Also, the lack of funds, and thus the unwillingness to address problems, of our nation's poor people shows how Hobbes' power may categorize their priorities when running the state. Perhaps an overemphasis and extremely insane amounts of money spent on security and military spending are more viable for the preservation of the state than the happiness of the nation's poor. Also, the constant inspection and police surveillance and monitoring of troubled areas is a typical Hobbesian response to the problems within the state.

Michel Foucault lays out his own theory of power in *The History of Sexuality; An Introduction: Volume 1*. Through his analysis and explication of the genealogical and societal constructs of sexuality, Foucault offers a divergent view of power to that of Hobbes' sovereign. First of all, Foucault argues that power is not a thing that is given or

²⁰ Hobbes, Thomas. [1651]1973. London: Everyman's Library. Chapters 13 and 15 pg. 65.

taken by a sovereign or a person, he states that “power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society.”²¹ Power is explained by its omnipresence, and the numerous positions in which it is utilized and displayed across all aspects of society. Hopefully this can be seen by the numerous ways in which I have portrayed many divergent issues that all collaborate to reinforce the social position of poor people in this paper.

Furthermore, Foucault argues that power is not external to actions of power play, but are necessarily embedded in them. This portrays an inner working system of oppression that guides these actions and decisions (geopolitics, surveillance, economic funding, etc). Another disagreement from Hobbes that Foucault portrays is that power does not work from the “top down,” but is exemplified from the “bottom up” by a “...manifold of relationships of force that take shape and come into play in the machinery of production, in families, limited groups, and institutions...”²² This means that the formulations of power can be seen on every level of action and discourse within life, and not just an effect of an authority’s decision on its people. An example of this is portrayed by the dominant discursive roles that surround the issues within this paper, and also by the implicit display of acceptance, as if it was tautological, of the towns zoning rules and regulations. Foucault also argues that resistance is always present in systems of power, but should never be seen as outside of it. This shows that resistance is usually based by individual, but can randomly produce small ruptures. These resistances only address small aspects of the numerous or omnipresent zones of power relations that people are

²¹ Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality; An Introduction; Volume 1*. Pg 93. Random House Books. New York. 1979.

exposed to.

Foucault explains four strategies that are displayed in society that utilize sexuality as a system of power. One of these is the norm of the Malthusian couple, in which he explains that “The legitimate and procreative couple laid down the law (3).” This strategy is still being perpetuated, and is certainly explicit in the zoning of land that is based on strict definitions of “family.” Nothing has changed since this writing, sexuality is still exercised as a political tool. This becomes completely obvious, when the statue in front of the City Hall of Normal is ironically named “The Normal Family,” and portrays a man and a woman staring at each other, with the kids sitting “normally” on the mother’s lap.²³

I find Foucault’s analysis of power to be much more plausible than that of Hobbes. This is because Hobbes’ theory of power is too simplistic. Foucault can utilize many different aspects of every day life that reify systems of domination (such as discourse), while Hobbes can only address power as it relates to the sovereign and the ruled. This unfortunately leaves Hobbesian theorists out of the loop on who reifies power boundaries, and how they are preserved and changed throughout time. Hobbes cannot fully address all the issues presented within this paper, how a system of racism is manifested and reified throughout infinite avenues of cultural ideologue. Also, with Hobbes it is silly for a person to resist the actions of the sovereign because this interferes with its own self preservation. Foucault allows a space for resistance, and thus it is plausible to think progressively against dominant ideology. Thus if we are to really

²² Ibid. pg. 94

²³ Establishing women’s roles as well. It should be noted that the Town of Normal has passed some progressive legislation that protects citizens from discrimination by sexual preference. See Agamben’s section on the choice between liberty and equality.

analyze power structures, and the way in which they operate in Western society, it is my argument that we must discard the old Hobbesian way, and promote something similar to what Foucault is advocating.

Biopolitics

At the end of *The History of Sexuality*, and in his lectures in the College de France²⁴, Foucault explicates his own theory of biopower. Biopower reared its ugly head when the human body became a commodity via institutionalized capitalism (late 16th century). The reproduction of a “healthy” human body became a fascination of the state, and as a result demographics and the social sciences at universities became necessary professions. In the eleventh lecture at the College de France, Foucault argues that if a sovereign (one who has the right of life and death) is to use the power of bio politics for the production and promotion of a normal, healthy state it must become racist. Racism in this context does not necessarily mean discrimination based on color, although this is usually relevant. Racism also pertains to anything or anyone that does not fit the normalized bill of healthy or normal as it pertains to its cultural, juridical, and ideological discourse. The people who are considered a disease are allowed to be killed. This does not necessarily mean the actual loss of life, but also “exposing someone to death, increasing the risk of death for some people, or quite simply, political death, expulsion, rejection, and so on.”²⁵

This sort of racism and killing is definitely applicable in the situations that I have laid out in this paper. The biopolitical power is obvious in the state’s insistence to check that poor people living under low income housing are living in decent and sanitary

²⁴ Foucault, Michel. [1976] 2003. *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the College de France, 1975-1976*. Lecture 5: 4 February 1976, Lecture 11: 17 March 1976

conditions.²⁶ A war of the sanitary is a good way to marginalize and protect against the disease. The constant surveillance and brute force on “troubled” areas can be a sort of antibiotic to keep the disease from flaring up. Finally, the zoning map is drawn and initiated so that the disease and death is successfully quarantined from the rest of the town.

Analysis of Agamben

Giorgio Agamben claims that he is finishing up Foucault’s work in his book, *Homer Sacer*.²⁷ He argues that the concentration camps, and similarly every other genocide of this century, clearly mark the ultimate conclusion of biopolitics. That is when the exception becomes the rule and is realized normally, and bare life is what is at stake in politics. The exception is defined as “*what cannot be included in the whole of which it is a member and cannot be a member of the whole in which is always already included.*”²⁸ In the context of this paper, the most notable exceptions would be perhaps the one poor person who was found with feces smeared on the wall (and who knows when and where that has happened), or the mugging and murder of the man at Eagle parking lot. These two instances have allowed the power to shift and become overly intrusive “just in case” other incidents like these exceptions happen again. These are all exceptions based on supposed facts such as danger to society or themselves, whereas the concentration camps were when the exception had simply become the law.

²⁵ Ibid. pg. 256

²⁶ WIC also performs “mandatory house visits” under the rational of decreasing the probability of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

²⁷ Agamben, Giorgio. *Homer Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Stanford University Press. Stanford CA. 1998 I think Agamben does bring many reasonable points to the table that definitely relate to Foucault. I am not quite sure, however, that Foucault would necessarily conclude on the same page as Agamben, especially in his strict adherence to binary systems of power, and masculine prescription of sovereign power.

The *Homo Sacer* was a Roman juridical explication of a man who could not be sacrificed, but could be murdered without any implications from the law. This is the definition that Agamben uses to explain people who are not covered by the law (not a citizen), and therefore are reduced to bare life. The concept of *Homo Sacer* can easily be related to refugees, or any other group of people that may be considered a disease, alien, or foreigner. Agamben, however, wonders if finding equality for these people is worth the loss of liberty that they would experience by the state once they received it (say like being regulated by HUD).

Agamben also links modern democracies to totalitarian states because they both politicize every aspect of life. This is apparent when viewing the strict rules of conduct that have been laid out in the Town of Normal zoning codes, and the all inclusive “how to live your life” lease that federally funded housing units force on their tenants. There is no denial that bare life is what is at stake for the sovereign power. From when one should be considered dead to when one should be considered alive, the state encompasses all parts of the citizen’s life. The slow stripping and regulation of bare life in modern societies have come to a point in which Agamben believes that we are currently living in a modern day concentration camp. The camp slowly bears its face as more and more amendments are stripped away from a select people who are immobilized to a certain geopolitical location. If we use Foucault’s definition of “killing” laid out in the last section, the situation of poor people in this town are definitely good candidates of the receiving end of the camp. If one cannot see it here in Normal, we can widen the criteria to include minorities in the inner city. Couple politics of location with the skewed percentage of black men who are put to an end by capital punishment or by imprisonment

²⁸ Ibid. pg. 25

and Agamben's prescription becomes awfully close to a frightening reality.²⁹

Relating to Urso Spina's Cage of Violence

In her essay entitled *Introduction: Violence in Schools: Expanding the Dialogue*,³⁰ Spina offers a definition and explication of violence in our culture that is absolutely commensurable with what I am dealing with in this paper. Violence in the US "is inextricably linked with the history, entertainment, and economics of the culture,"³¹ and is any method that promotes the "killing" that Foucault defines in his lectures. Spina argues that schools are a general way in which people, at an early age, are judged and forced into categories of "proper places" that are stereotypical by the basis of the cultural standard of intellect, health, and criminality. She believes that school violence cannot be solved by a method of Hobbesian type security, but must be solved by analyzing and changing the internal workings of the society that fuels it.

She uses many different aspects to illuminate (as I have a tried to in this paper) the Foucault theory of power at work. Poverty is a major contributor to violence in this country, where one percent of the population has allocated approximately fifty percent of the wealth. Instead of trying to redistribute and repair this massive discrepancy between the have and have nots, tax cuts are given to the rich and are usually paid for by welfare cuts by poor people. Race is another important factor, where the poor white people are harming themselves by being racist towards the poor minorities. Spina believes that major revolutions may occur if people could just get past race. Racism is embedded in the

²⁹ I think its important to note here that Agamben is rejecting Hobbes distinction of the public and the private. Hobbes believes that the sovereign rules over the public realm to ensure safety and stability. Agamben is saying that the political is private now by its very nature, and we need to get rid of this Hobbesian distinction of power.

³⁰ Spina, Urso. 2000 "Introduction: Violence in Schools: Expanding the Dialogue." in *Smoke in Mirrors*,. Lanham MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

American system via low funding for inner city schools, misinterpretation of “gangs,” stereotypes of criminality, and increased surveillance and arrests simply because of skin color and poverty. I do not think the poor children in the town of Normal have as much funding problems as Spina describes (because this is not an inner city, of course).

However, I think my explanation of hardships to receive financial aid presents yet another barrier to be thrown on top of Spina’s for poor people to obliterate race and class restraints.

Spina also relates gender violence as another major problem with our society. She explains that the term “domestic” violence is just another term for wife beating or torture. Lack of adequate programs, financial assistance, and job opportunities leave many mothers with no place to go when a man has decided to become violent. Children are also another release for some men’s anger, and are forced to live in fear daily because of the immobilization of their mothers. Spina also explains how guns, security, entertainment, and prison systems also play a role in this system of violence. I think she has pretty much hit many nails on the head in this paper, and it sheds some light and reinforces some of the issues presented in this paper.

Juxtaposing Local Relations With International Relations

Up to this point, I have only been defining and utilizing the terms and power relations of the local. A main artery of readings that we have discussed in class have been policies and power relations of International Relations. In the next few analyses, I hope to show that many of the same issues and policies that are used in the local can be directly linked and are analogous to issues and policies of IR.

³¹ Ibid. pg 25

Zizek's Victimization

Zizek's critique³² of NATO's intervention on Yugoslavia during its' ethnic cleansing campaigns on Kosovo bring many palpable issues to the forefront. Zizek argues that the war for human rights motive that stronger states have been arguing lately is just a hegemonic way to secure their own strategic interests. First of all, there is no strict criteria by which one dictator should be chosen to be toppled over another. Second, strong states do not really care about human rights, and this obvious by the way that they allow their corporations to exploit weaker countries which reinforces their political destabilization. Third, human rights arguments depoliticize the confrontation to a point where there is no complex struggle amongst people with different perspectives, just victims and aggressors. Last, NATO was responsible for the Kosovar's victimization and dependency on them to be their savior. This may be seen by the way NATO privileged support for the much more moderate leader of Ibrahim Rugavo, and their lack of backing for the Kosovo Liberation Army, which would have at least allowed Kosovars to be more self reliant. Zizek argues that these tactics give NATO the position of a paradox: having to save people from what they are responsible for causing.

There are strong correlations from Zizek's analysis that relate to the politics of the local. The DSSI inspections that are allowed by the government to supposedly ensure that low income housing owners keep their domiciles safe are similar to the actions of NATO by not allowing the Kosovar's to be self reliant. The state could have just as well created

³² Zizek, Slavoj. 1999. *Nato as the Left Hand of God?* Zagreb: Bastard Press. Pp. 20-38: "Human Rights And their Obverse," and "The Ideology of Victimization."

a system that made it possible for the tenant to initiate searches on property that they deemed unsafe. Furthermore, the motive to add a police substation on West Orlando was partially due because of victimization, to protect the innocent people of the community. The numerous interviews done by the fearful people of the community in the *Pantagraph* depoliticizes the situation to the point where there is no conflict, just the state helping out the victims. The town of Normal is thus reduced to having to save the people from what they are responsible for causing; social inequality via social construction and engineering.

Reiff's Slaughterhouse

In *Slaughterhouse*,³³ Reiff argues that the West had no intention of helping Bosnia, even though they acted like they did. By the sheer longevity of the genocide, Reiff suggests that the killings were set in slow motion, unlike the intense and accelerated murders committed in Rwanda. Some of the Bosnians started to believe that the West did not interfere because they hated Muslims, and were just allowing Milosevic to exterminate for them. Furthermore, Reiff explains that since the UNPROFOR (United Nations Protection Force) did not defend the Bosnians, but simply allowed for humanitarian aid. This allowed the Bosnians to become dependent on those who dehumanized them. Reiff illustrates that many of the Bosnian middle class had a very hard time coping with the fact that the West did not care. It was as if they were “betrayed by their own modernity.”³⁴

The Serbs and the UN both had a similar agenda for Bosnia to just give up. This is because the UN's mandate was only for “peace keeping” not protection. Reiff stated that this policy only allowed the slow death of the Bosnians because the aid kept them barely

³³ Reiff, David. 1995. *Slaughterhouse: Bosnia and the Failure of the West*. New York: Simon & Schuster, Pp. 117-189.

alive so the Serb's could slaughter them. Reiff argues that as soon as the West seriously threatened to retaliate, the Serbs backed down enough to let it blow over and then continued attacking again. He argues that the UNPROFOR was simply allowed to do anything they pleased. A clear example was the UN's failure to investigate an accusation that a UNPROFOR soldier raped a Bosnian woman in one of the rape camps that were created by as part of Serbian ethnic cleansing program.

There are multiple analogies that should be considered in Reiff's essay in relation to local or domestic policy. Similar to the Bosnian dependence on UNPROFOR for aid, poor people in the United States who need aid receive it from the same people who dehumanize them. This is seen by the policies initiated by low income housing or any other welfare program because the state reinforces the dominant constructs of society that necessarily entail that these people will be dependent on aid. The middle class Bosnians who found it hard to cope that the West did not care, may be similar to the many middle class Americans who continue to be complacent with their government's constant catering and commitment to big money corporations even while they ignore every corporate scandal that have constantly ruined and taken advantage of the economic system in which they are thus exploited by.

The Serb strategy to back off just enough so the West would not interfere can be seen in a couple aspects of our society. First, it may be seen in the minimal programs that hold necessities over poor peoples' head. When things get too bad, the government can give a little back (never anything like universal healthcare, but more similar to the "not really there" W. Bush tax cut) so people become complacent enough to adhere to further exploitation. This can even be seen in minimum wage battle where it takes many

³⁴ Ibid. pg. 123

concessions to get the twenty-five cent raise and poor people rejoice over pennies that do not come close to what corporations should be paying them.

International Relations and Theory

In this section I will compare the theoretical concepts that have been introduced by Kenneth Waltz and Neta Crawford. The reading presented in class gave a small taste of what Waltz thinks the concepts of IR should consist of.³⁵ He argues that structural stability of the international system is all that matters. Therefore, the most powerful nation or nations are responsible for keeping the system stable. Waltz argues that the style of how the sovereign nation or nations rule does not matter, but only how power is distributed between the nation states. He thinks that because power of sovereign states is all that really matters, history is cyclical or static by its very nature. Waltz believes that stability should be strived for and is a necessity to ensure preservation of the power structures and peace.

In contrast, Neta Crawford argues in, *Argument and Change in World Politics*,³⁶ that history is not cyclical. Through her exegesis of decolonization, Crawford illustrates how ethical arguments play a big factor on how hegemons act in the international system. Thus, she disagrees with Waltz that sovereign decision and action should be the only concepts involved in IR. Crawford characterizes IR as more of a political battle by means of norms on all sides of the disagreement. I think that Crawford's book is an excellent response to Waltz's argument that sovereign power and stability should be the major concepts condoned in international relations. Her explication of how sovereign interest

³⁵ Waltz, Kenneth. 1979. *Theory of International Politics* "Chapter 9: The Management of International Affairs."

³⁶ Crawford, Neta. 2002. *Argument and Change in World Politics: Ethics, Decolonization, and Humanitarian Intervention*. The Cambridge University Press. New York.

did not explain many of the aspects involved in decolonization shows some blatant flaws in Waltz's argument.

Furthermore, Crawford coheres with all aspects of Foucault's theory of power on a global scale. Waltz can also be seen as a standard Hobbesian, and therefore their major flaws seem to be equivalent. So, following the reasoning of this paper, we must look at the people in the international system that have been determined outsiders from the dominant political discourse. This can be readily seen by the West's economic exploitation reified exponentially by the debts built by the IMF and the World bank, war policy (think Normal police substation), and racist discourse concerning the Global South. These are just a few of the power systems used by the West to keep these people disenfranchised. The international policies and discursive attacks on these states are completely analogous to the system of oppression that I have been trying to develop about the Town of Normal in this paper.

I think Crawford's explanation of argument wonderfully illustrates how change occurs in these sorts of power systems. Crawford explicates how arguments go through many processes such as legitimization and delegitimization, and how their success depends on many other complex factors. She emphasizes that change is a slow process with normative or ethical arguments being constantly converted, changed, and realigned within the political discourse and action. This is also consistent with Foucault's explanation of how resistance is everywhere, and how it constantly changes and reformats the existing power structure. This leaves us at least some hope for positive change in the future, although it may be agonizingly dawdling.³⁷

³⁷ By the way, I think that Agamben is relevant here on the international scale. This is quite obviously seen in refugees, but also can be translated to accompany the present situation in the Global South (these people

Summary... Concluding Remarks

The policies that I discuss in this paper throughout the analysis of the local and Kosovo are an apparatus of a VSR. The security systems that are or were implemented within these policies do little to nothing to solve the “problems” that these VSRs were addressing, but have actually perpetuated it. These programs only necessitate the racist stereotypes that the recipients of these programs had been originally deemed. It is a policy of containment not commitment to progressive measures of reciprocity. This conclusion leads me to believe that these social measures deal the cards of self fulfilling prophesy and must correspond to an objective program that hands out privilege on the basis of socially constructed forms of oppression.

and nations as Homer Sacer). However, I do not think he allows the same change that Crawford explicates (and I think that this is sort of divergent from Foucault as well), and this seems to be one of his shortcomings.

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