

« Feet in the streets, heads in the beds »

Media, gentrification & right to (im)mobility

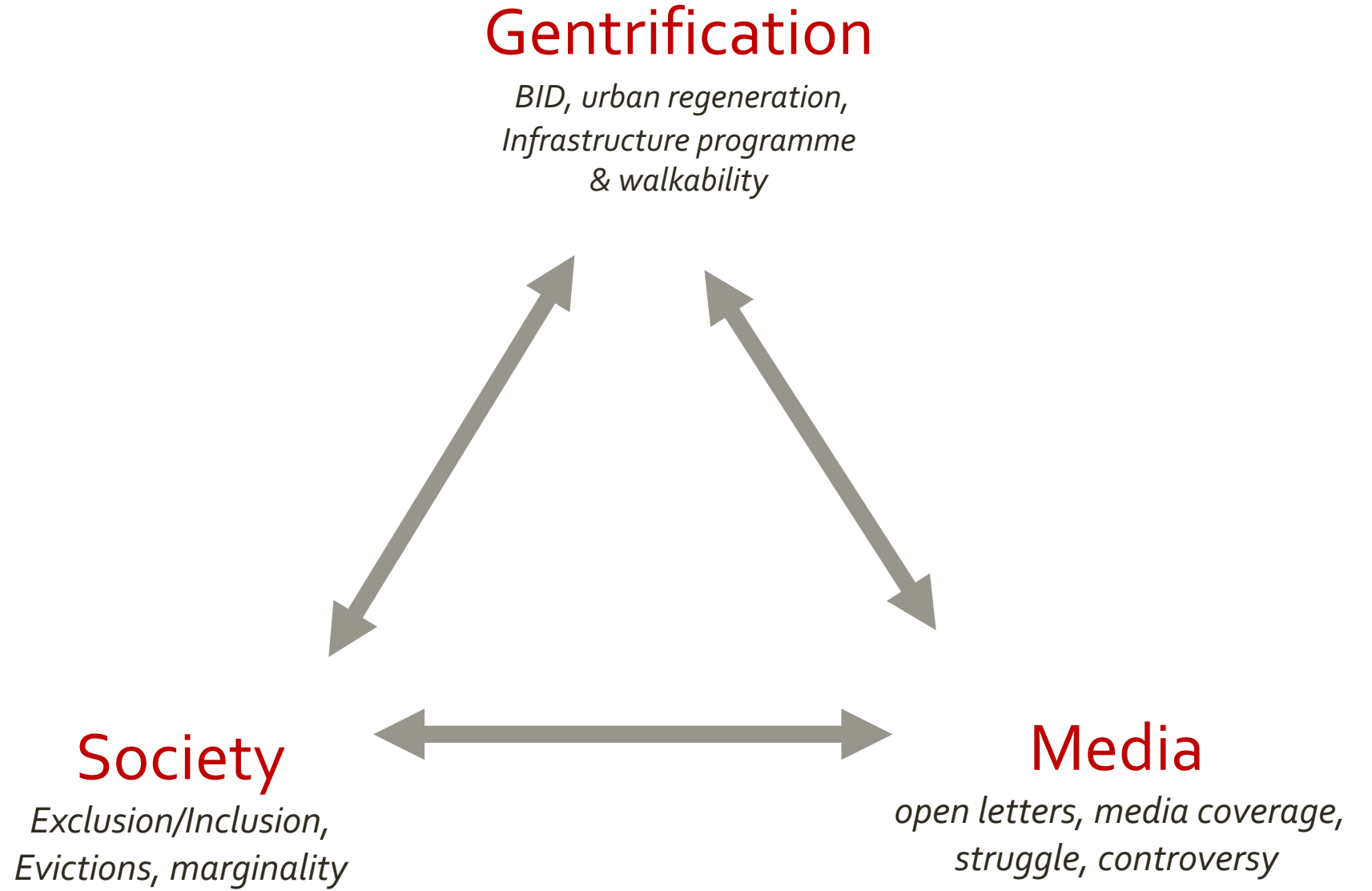
A political ecology of public space NoMa BID, Washington D.C.

Nacima BARON U. G. Eiffel - Ecole d'Urbanisme de Paris - Laboratoire Ville Mobilité Transport

Introduction

Introduction

Three
interrelated
topics



Introduction

Co-constitutive dimensions of gentrification

Public space

Socio-Technical Shaping



Public sphere

Discursive shaping



(public good, public space, public sphere ...)

Introduction

The **ABC** media and gentrification

Ambivalence

the way a dominant media « navigates » in a controversy

Battlefield

physical (the locus) and symbolic (point of friction)

Community or « **C**ivic social capitalism » * ?

«The contemporary *celebration of streetscape*
tends to *naturalize the neighborhood scale*
as the primary site of *ethical action*» (J. Stehlin*)

* C. Woodrow 2018, The Next Economics : Civic Social Capitalism Sustainable Cities and Communities Design Handbook, Elsevier p. 209 234

** J. Stehlin Cyclescapes of the Unequal City: Bicycle Infrastructure and Uneven Development University of Minnesota Press, 2019

1. Concepts

2. Setting the scene

3. C

4. The Clash and Backlash

5. Gentrification media metanarrative

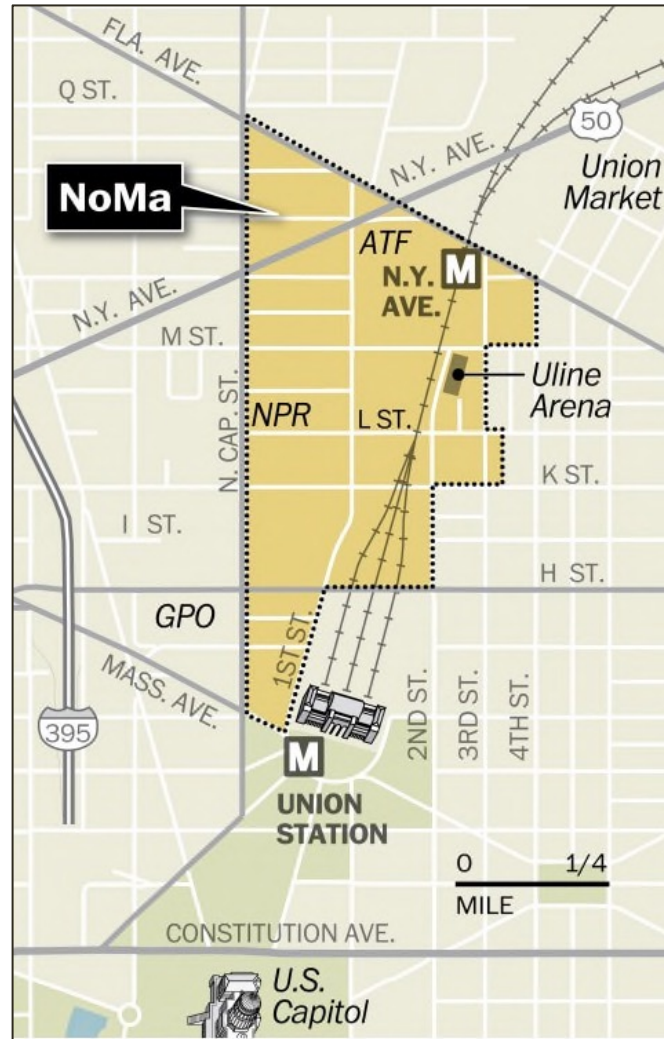
Part 1

Concepts

Part 1 Concepts

Gentrification & BIDs

BIDs are gentrification tools



Concepts

Transport
Policy Fix

Transit-induced
gentrification

Buffer spatiality

Residential
dissonance

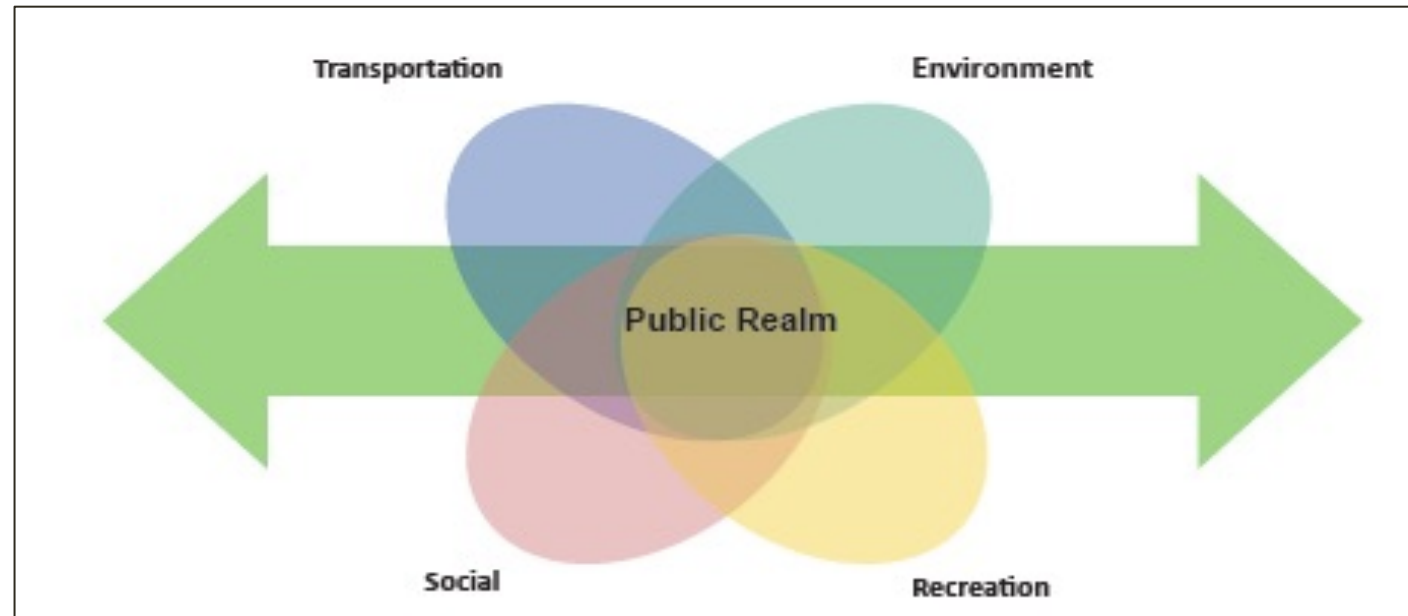


Part 1 Concepts

Microtransit
Complete streets

Public space
activation

Urban realm holism



Part 2

Setting the scene

Part 2

Infill
development

-

Construction
boom

Residential Growth

0

residents in 2010

7,500

residents today

12,000

residents in 2019

Part 2

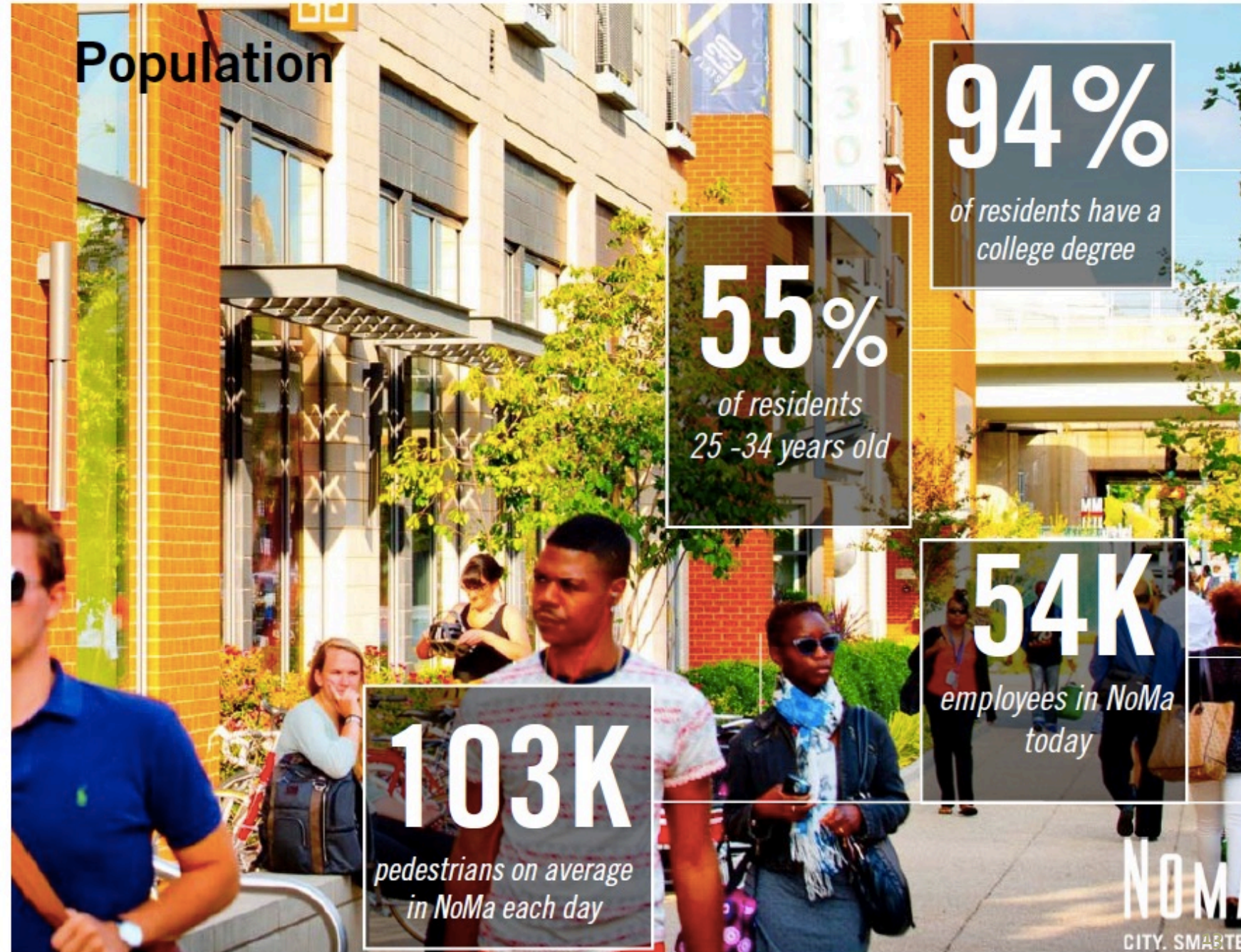
Jobs + new
tenants

=

Demographic
attractivity

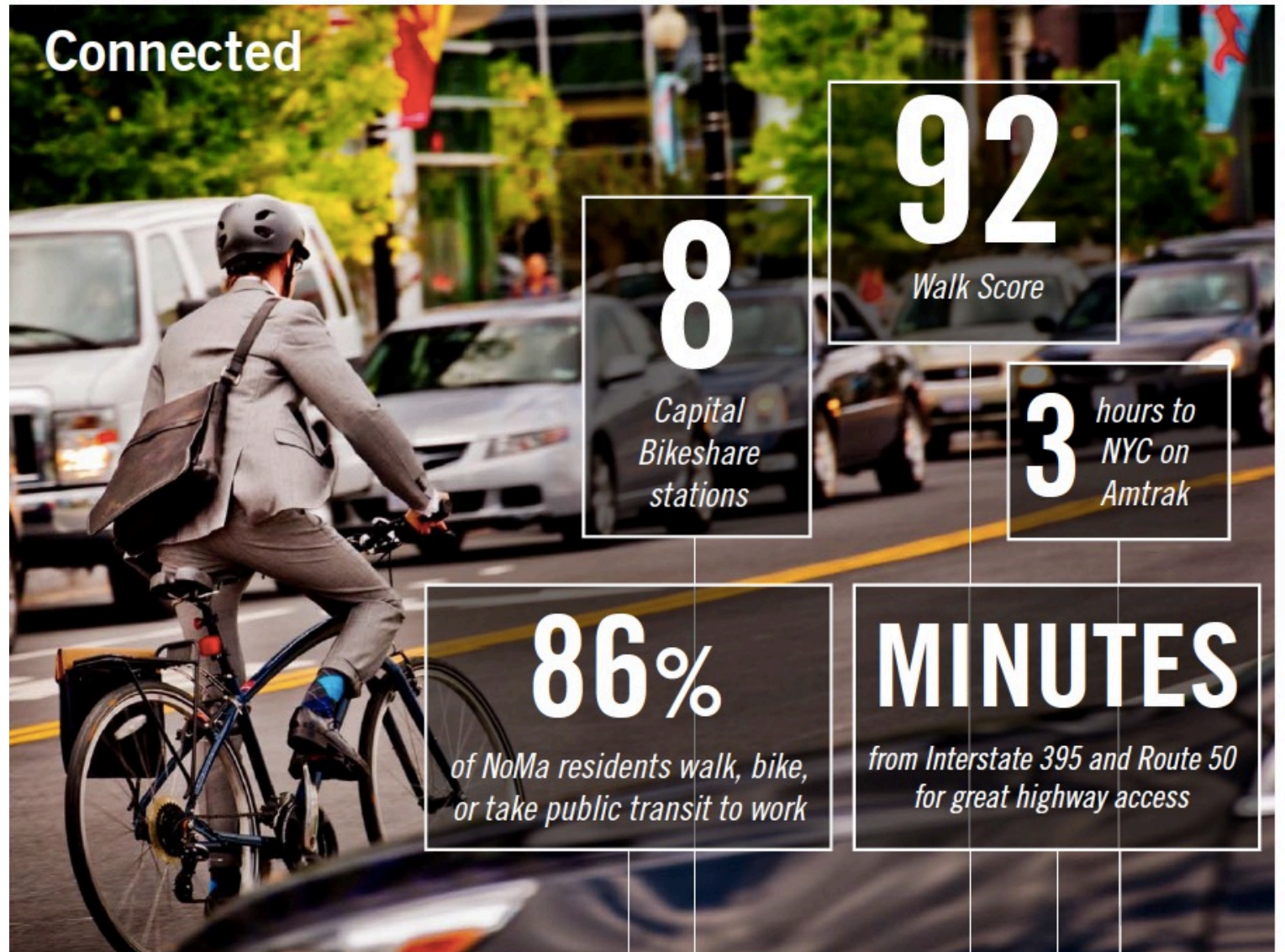
+

Racial change



Part 2

Mobility & Walkability guaranteed by Walk Score

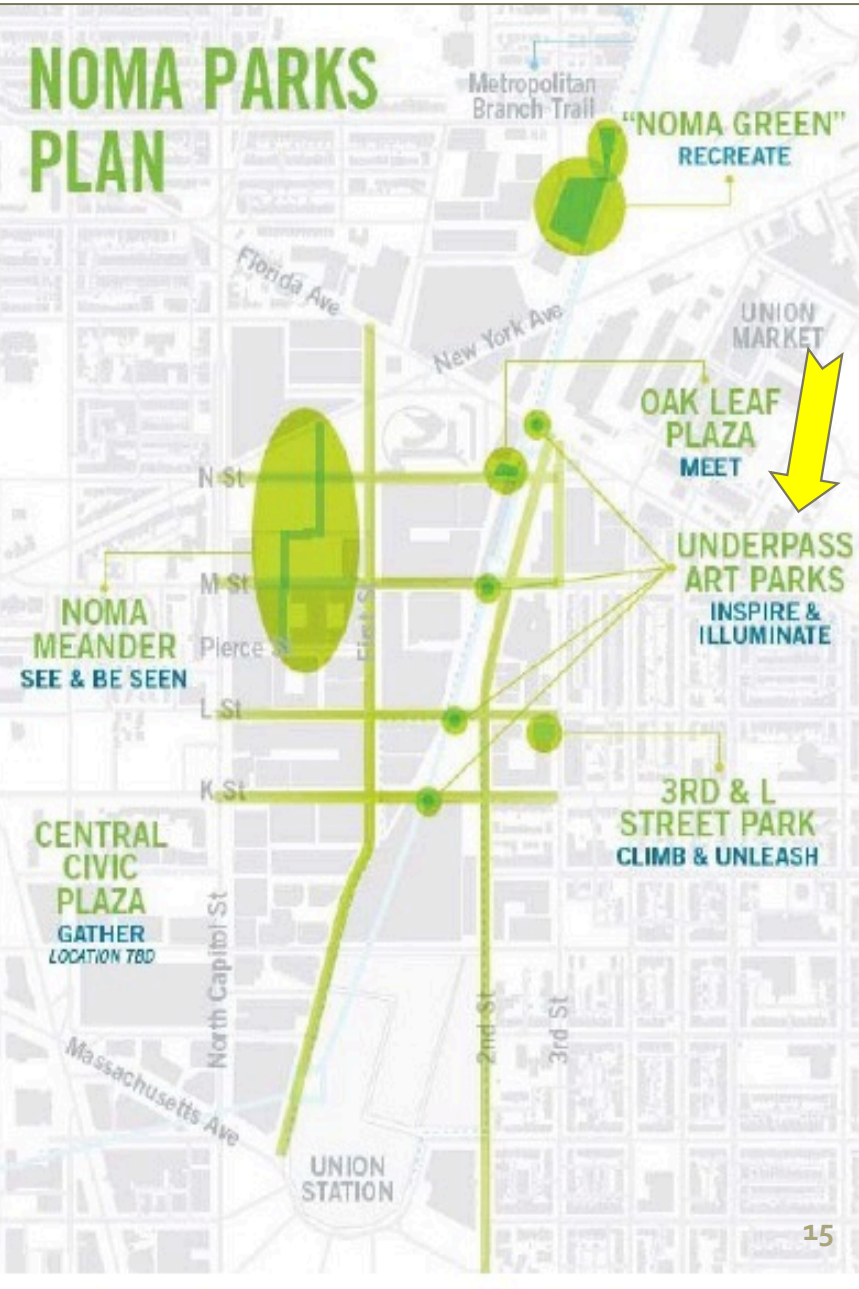


«The neighborhood that transit built»

Part 2

NoMa BID
Discursive
strategy

Place/
Infrastructure
renaming &
rebranding



Part 2

Roads Tunnels

become

Art Parks

4 underpasses under Union Station & Red Line rail tracks International Design competition



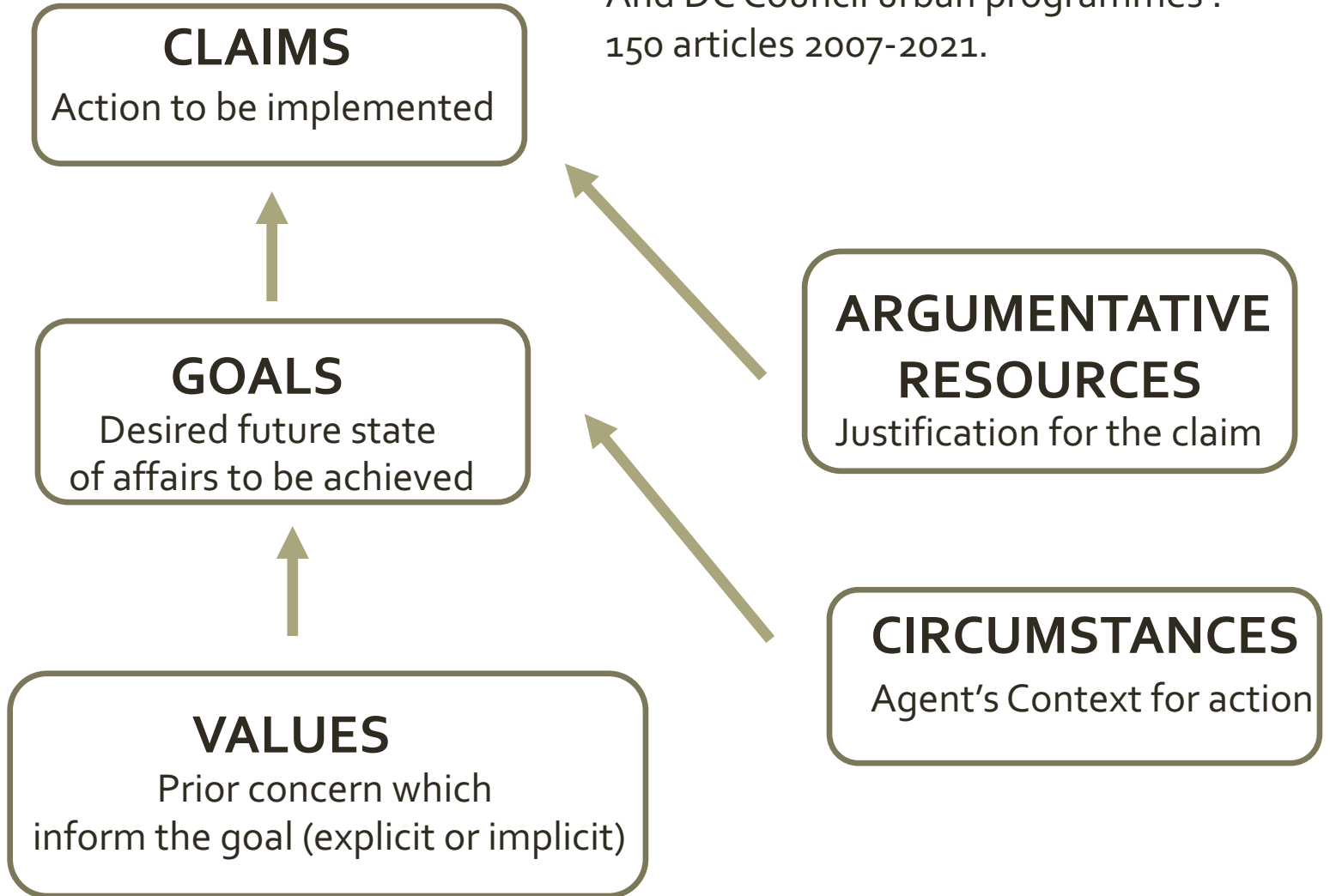
Part 3

Media Coverage of urban metamorphosis

Part 3

Sources and Methods

Argumentative analysis



Corpus: Factiva Search NoMa BID actions
And DC Council urban programmes :
150 articles 2007-2021.

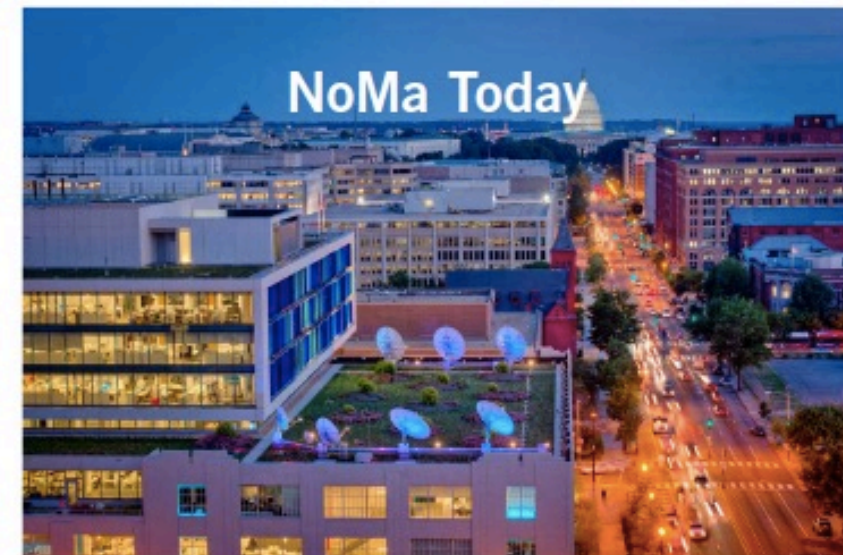
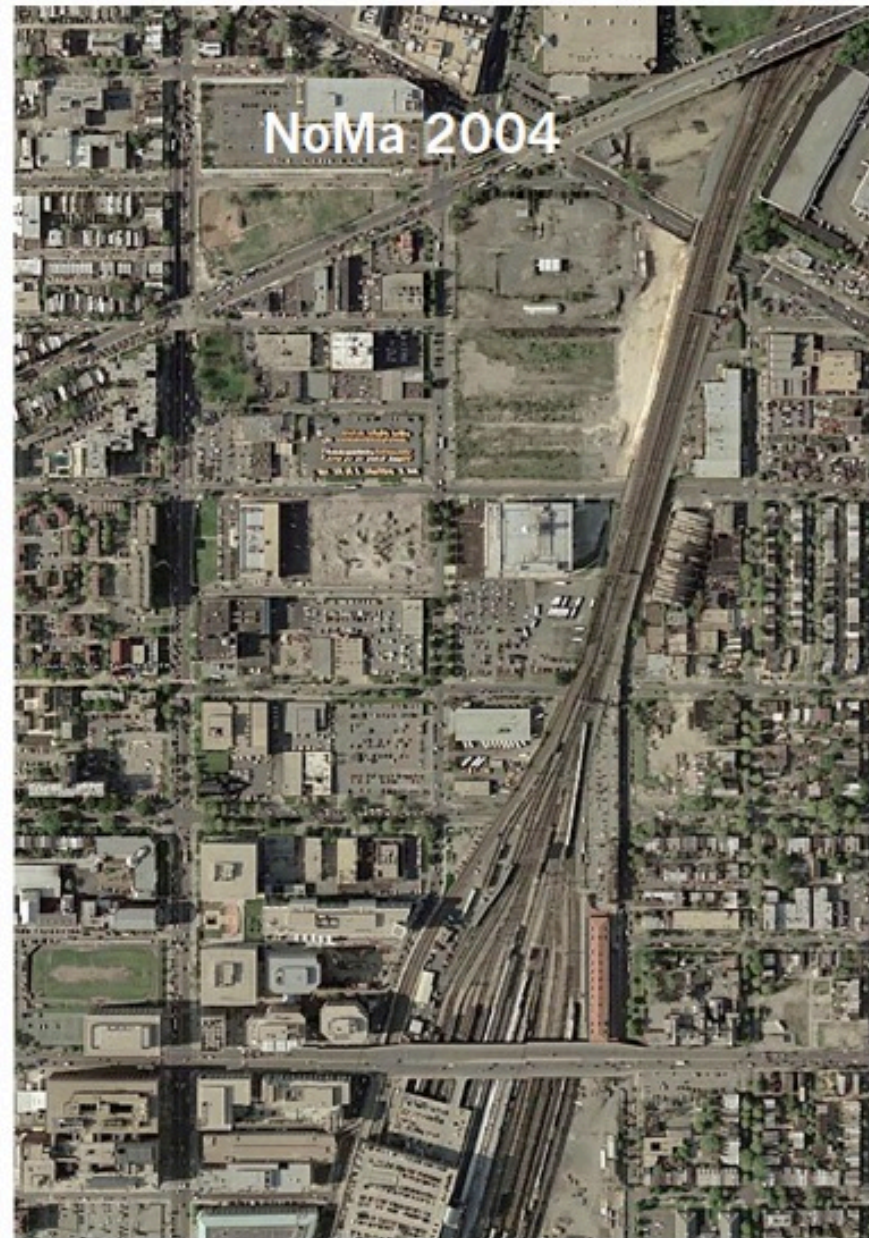
Fairclough&fairclough 2012, p. 45 quoted in

Part 3

WaPo

chronicles a

Metamorphosis



Part 3

WaPo

« NoMa is

D.C.'s

SimCity of

Gentrification»

BOOMING



ACCESSIBLE



FUN



SAFE



Part 4

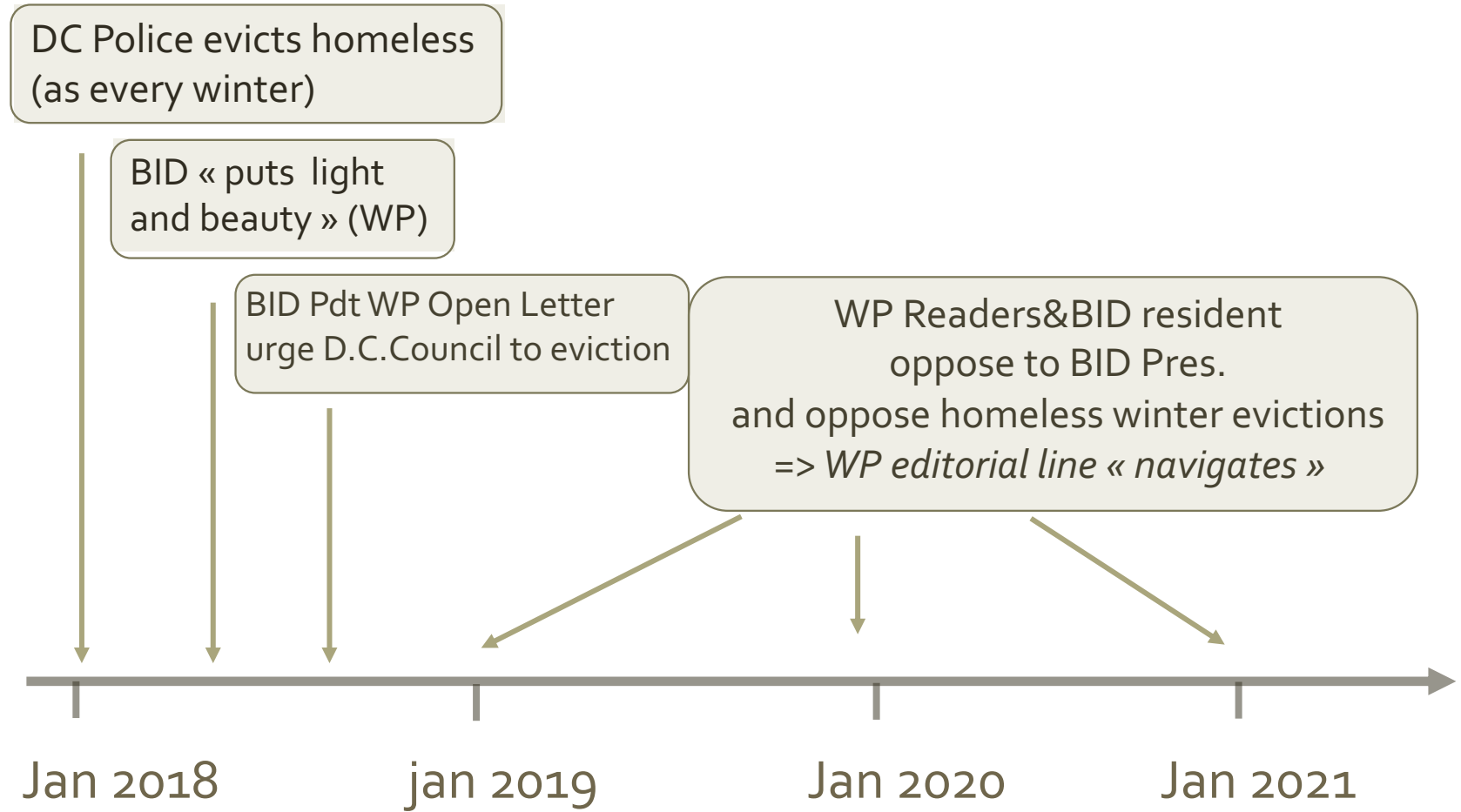
The clash

Part 4

From DC
police routine
evictions

to

BID controlled
evictions



Part 4

BID's vision



Robin-Eve Jasper
2011-2020 NOMA BID President

STATEMENT

State of encampments :
bad and worsening

CLAIMS

DC Council accountable
Failed public policies
Not NOMA task



CIRCUMSTANCES

Tunnels = connectivity
More ped/bikers

CONSEQUENCE

NOMA residents = victims
- from harassment
- from car traffic

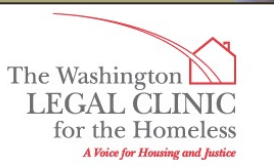
Along with
open letter,
BID bans access
to homeless

after DC Police
clearing up
encampment



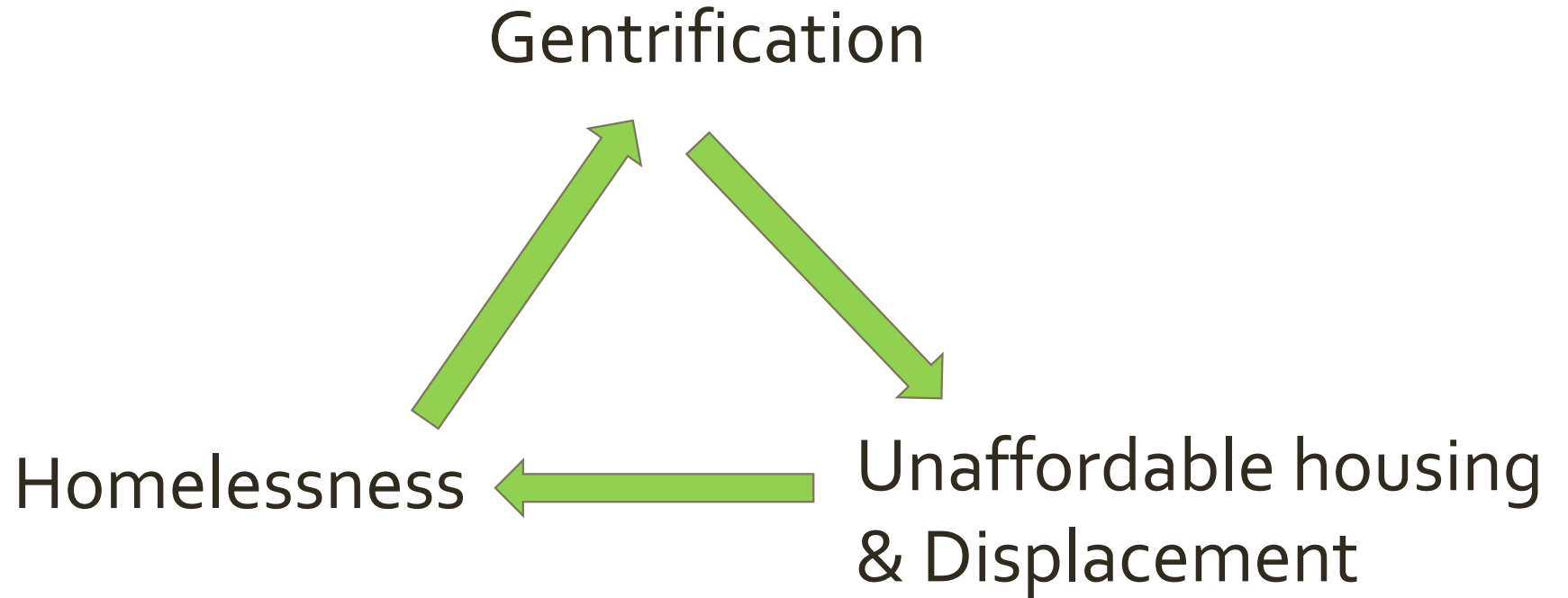
Part 4

D.C. Council & ONGs Vision



Ann Marie Staudenmaier
Wash. Legal Clinic
for the Homeless

Housing price is the problem = Bid is the problem
= The Problem is political



Residents welcome homeless people and share space with tent cities

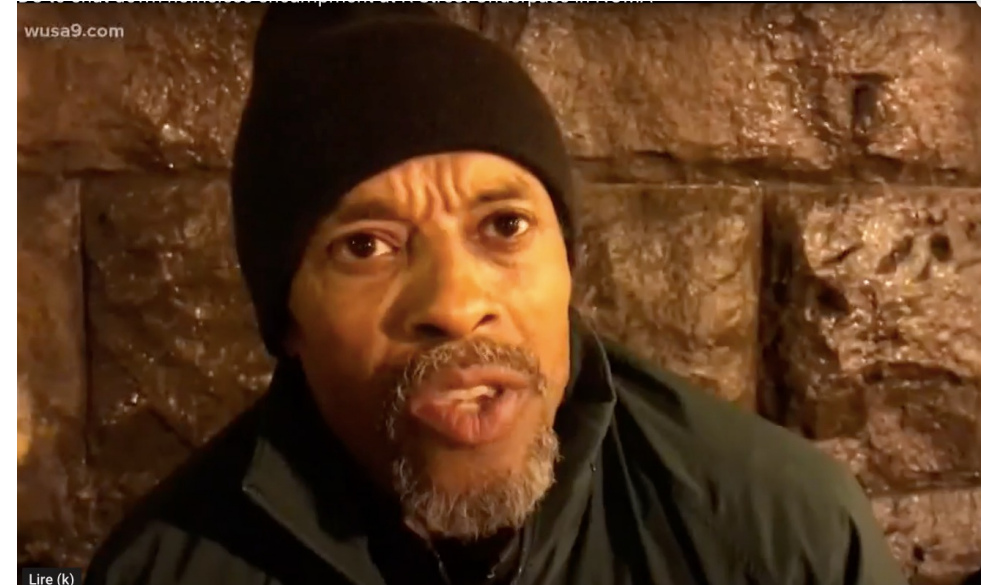
Part 4

NoMa's residents



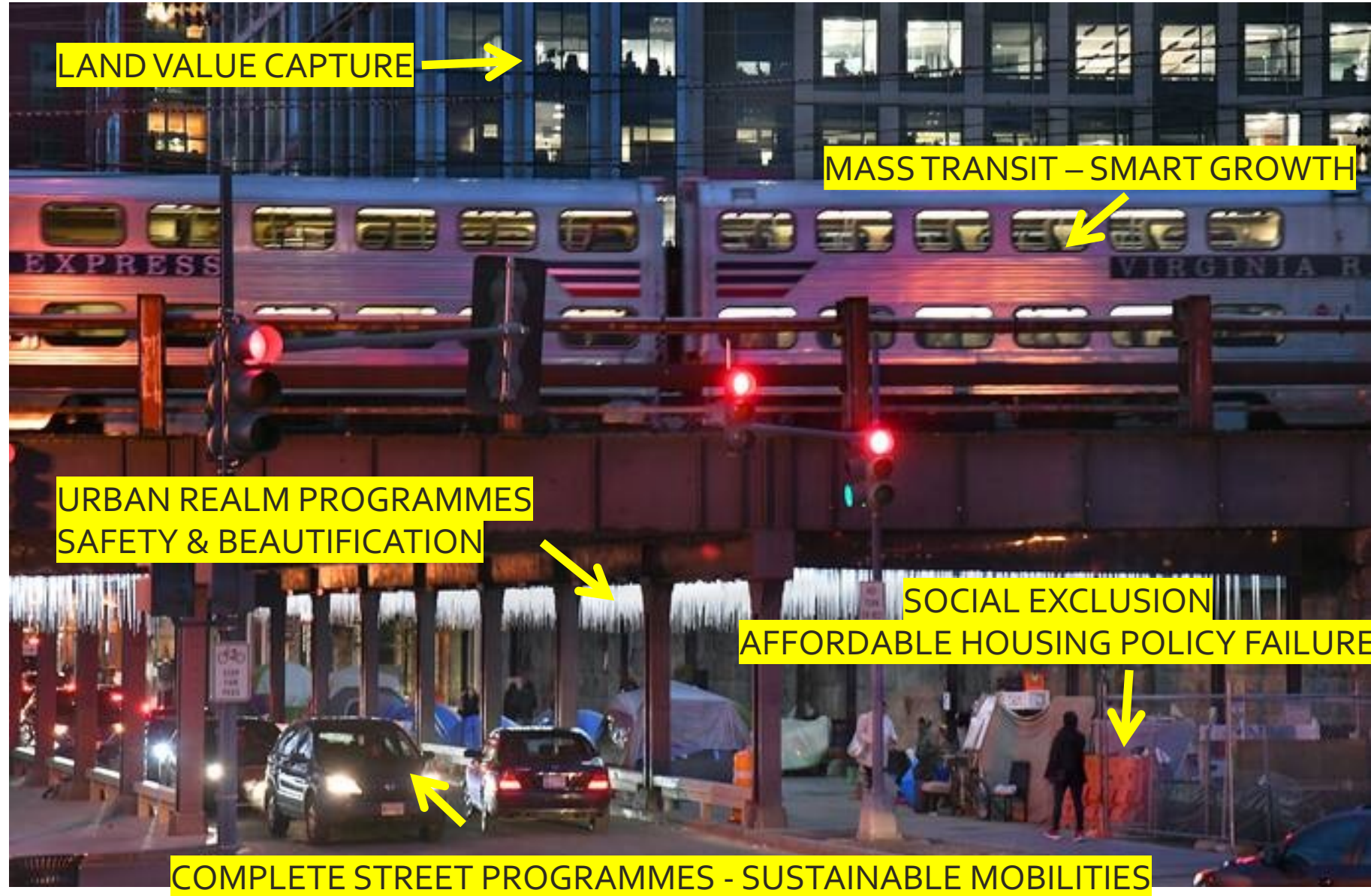
Miranda Ehrlich
NoMa resident

- Don't fear contact with homeless
- Long presence in place
- Can share public space with them
- Not responsible for bad mobility conditions



Catching

The big picture
and its
complexities



Part 4

6500 homeless
600 living in tents
> 80 deaths /year

Art Park = Eviction

Real →



Envisioned →



Part 5

Compassion... and beyond

Washington Post role in gentrification backlash

Justin Moyer



Joe Heim



Marissa J. Lang



Petula Dvorak



Part 5

Columnists are Brokers

& choose
among
many storylines



Urban contrasts
Beauty vs social distress



Who is (the most) vulnerable?
Mobility rights vs right to shelter

Part 5

WP Ondulating editorial line & structural ambiguities

FRICION POINT

STRUGGLE

SYSTEMIC SOLUTION
Institutions + WP readers legitimed

Homelessness manageable in gentrified (= friendly) neighbourhood



D.C. Council policy and right to shelter not addressed

BID celebrated

Homelessness Rights unheard

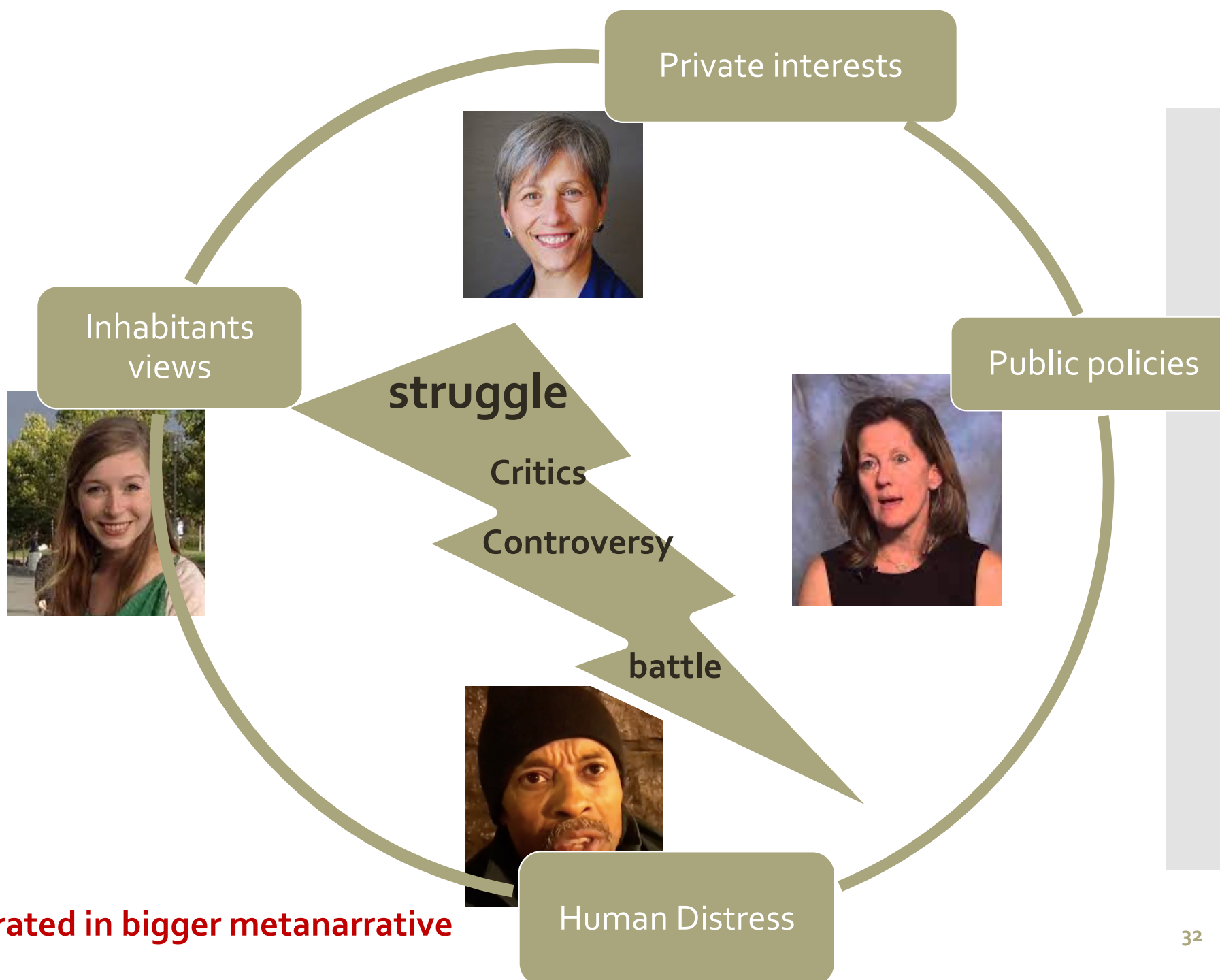


ANTISYSTEMIC SOLUTION
Emancipatory groups de-legitimed

Part 5

Narrative
asymmetries
Or
Common
interests ?

In search of
a metanarrative



Narrative asymmetries integrated in bigger metanarrative

No spatial / temporal continuity with former public fights

Part 5

Dehistoricization



Source : Rusk, D., 2017, Once upon a time NoMa. D.C. Policy Center.<https://www.dcpolicycenter.org/publications/once-upon-time-noma>

NoMa stands where «Urban league headquarters and 70's public debates took place» 33

Don't believe the haters. In the District, friendly neighbors are everywhere.

Part 5

Just another
tribe

in (gentrified)
community ?



No more collective struggles, place to generous initiatives

Part 5

Corporate Press Is A Gentrification agent

SHADOWING & MARGINALIZING

- Civil right association
- Governmental agencies

ENLIGHTENING & SUSTAINING

- BID homeless management mix
(Police + Social)
- « New » community responses

Conclusion



A Human-Capital Mobile Assemblage

Bradley Michael Rink (2016)

Mobility and the City
Improvement District:

Frictions in
the Human Capital
Mobile assemblage

Mobilities, 11:5, 643-661,

In order to **create an urban landscape** that **resonates positively** with **elite identity** and that is **attractive for capital investment** and conducive to its continued accumulation, **aesthetics** often become the guiding principle of the elite/capital-led form of urban regeneration espoused by BIDs.

This fixation on aesthetics translates practically into the attempt to **clean up public spaces** by **removing** the elements that supposedly detract from the propertied classes' ideal of a landscape.

While this 'cleaning up' project largely refers to **restoring and upgrading the physical urban environment**, it also entails a **social dimension**. In this case it is people whose presence and demeanour aesthetically detract from the elite's ideal landscape.

These strategies embody 'assumptions about the **desirability of clean, class-homogeneous neighbourhoods**' that are accompanied by the understanding of '**community as a collection of stakeholders – merchants and property owners**'

Conclusions

- **Socio-Technical public space & Discursive sphere reciprocity**
- **Underpass = locus of friction** intersecting
 - **obduracy** of existing built environment (mass transit infrastructure)
 - **urban realm** / new mobility policies fix
- **“The bike wars are over, and the bikes won”** (J Sadik-Khan)
 - Complete street programmes
 - Compassional movement = ultimate step in gentrification
- **Mainstream and corporate media sideline political debates**
 - Over Public policies orientation and performance
 - Over Neoliberal exclusionary urban agenda
 - Over the incompatibility between smart urban and social agenda

Questions ?

nacimabaron@gmail.com

Davidson, M., Lees, L. 2009. New-build Gentrification: Its Histories, Trajectories, and Critical Geographies. *Population, Space and Place*. 16, 5, 395- 411.

Frey N. 2017 Equity in the distribution of urban environmental amenities: the case of Washington, D.C., *Urban Geography*, 38:10, 1534-1549.

Gales, D.E., 1987. Washington D.C. : inner-city revitalization and minority suburbanization. Temple University Press, 496 p.

Gibson Timothy A. (2015) The rise and fall of Adrian Fenty, Mayor-Triathlete: cycling, gentrification and class politics in Washington DC, *Leisure Studies*, 34- 2, 230-249.

Hall C. M. Rame Y. 2018, "Walk score® and its potential contribution to the study of active transport and walkability: A critical and systematic review" *Transportation Research Part D* 61: 310–324.

Hoffmann, Melody L. 2016 *Bike Lanes Are White Lanes : Bicycle Advocacy and Urban Planning* University Press of Nebraska

Hongwei D. 2017. Rail-transit-induced gentrification and the affordability paradox of TOD. *Journal of Transport Geography* 63, 1–10.

Howell K.L. 2018 "For the kids": Children, safety, and the depoliticization of displacement in Washington, DC", *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 40-5: 721-739.

Huré Maxime, 2019, *Les mobilités partagées, régulation politique et capitalisme urbain*, Paris, Presses de la Sorbonne

Hutson, M., A., 2016. Chocolate city is changing, in Hutson M., A., *The Urban Struggle for Economic, Environmental and Social Justice: Deepening Their Roots*, Earthscan Routledge. 120- 149.

Jackson, J. 2015 "The Consequences of Gentrification for Racial Change in Washington, DC", *Housing Policy Debate* 25- 2:353-373.

Madanipour, A. 2010. *Whose public space ? International case studies in urban design and development*, Abingdon, Routledge

Mc Cleery, R., Tarr, J., 2012. NoMa: The Neighborhood That Transit Built. *Urban Land*. 29. <http://urbanland.uli.org/Articles/2012/Jan/MacCleeryNOMA>

Modarres, A., Dierwechter, Y., 2015 Infrastructure and the shaping of American urban geography *Cities* 47, 81–94. Morris, L., 2019. The Last Stages of Gentrification: Washington, DC, Mayoral Elections and Housing Advocacy. [Social Work in Public Health.](#) 34, 1, 39-60.

Nikolaeva A., Adey P., Cresswell T., Yeonjae Lee J., Novi A., Temenos C., 2019 "Commoning mobility : toward a new politics of mobility transitions", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 44: 346-360.

Padeiro M., Louro A., Marques da Costa N. 2019 "Transit-oriented development and gentrification: a systematic review", *Transport Reviews*, 39:6, 733-754.

Quastel, N. 2009. Political Ecologies of Gentrification. *Urban Geography*. 30,7, 694-725.

Rink Bradley Michael, Gamedze Asher Simiso (2016) Mobility and the City, Improvement District: Frictions in the Human-capital Mobile Assemblage, *Mobilities*, 11-5, 643-661.

Smith, N. 1979. Toward a Theory of Gentrification: A Back to the City Movement by Capital, not People. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 45,4, 538–548.

Stehlin, J., 2020. *Cyclescapes of the Unequal City: Bicycle Infrastructure and Uneven Development*. University of Minnesota Press.

Schaller S. F. 2019 *Business Improvement Districts and the Contradictions of Placemaking : BID Urbanism in Washington, D.C.* Book University of Georgia Press.

Stehlin Justin 2019, *Cyclescapes in the unequal city : bicycle infrastructure and uneven development*, University of Minnesota Press.

Van der Staay Steven L. 1994 Stories of (Social) Distress: Applied Narrative Analysis and Public Policy for the Homeless, *Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless*, Vol. 3, No. 4.

Wells Katie J. (2020) Policy-failing: a repealed right to shelter, *Urban Geography*, 41:9, 1139-1157