

Displacement and Development: Conceptualizing Gentrification in a Mid-Atlantic City

by Erik Guercio

B.A. in Sociology, May 2005, Richard Stockton College of New Jersey

A Thesis submitted to

The Faculty of
Columbian College of Arts and Sciences
of The George Washington University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts

January 31, 2012

Thesis directed by

Gregory D. Squires
Professor of Sociology and Public Policy & Public Administration

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

Displacement and Development: Conceptualizing Gentrification in a Mid-Atlantic City

This paper explores the impact of gentrification on a community and which group of people benefits from gentrification. Semi-structured interviews and targeted literature reviews revealed that gentrification has both positive and negative impacts on a community. Several specific reasons, gleaned from both the literature and interviews, are used to explain why and how gentrification impacts people differently and how gentrification is understood differently by particular groups of people. These findings will inform and support a final conclusion: gentrification, when its negative impacts are mitigated through meaningful policy, can be a positive force that is beneficial to the entire community, not just a select few community members.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Abstract of Thesis | ii |
| List of Figures..... | v |
| Literature Review..... | 3 |
| Process of Gentrification | 3 |
| Positive and Negative Impacts of Gentrification | 4 |
| Theoretical Framework | 5 |
| Gentrification’s Process Has Been Actively Planned..... | 6 |
| Gentrification’s Negative Impacts Unevenly Affect the Working Class and Minorities | 7 |
| Gentrification’s Development Cater to the Owning Class | 7 |
| Other Theoretical Framework Considered | 8 |
| Urban Ecological..... | 9 |
| Structural Functionalist..... | 10 |
| Theoretical Framework Summary..... | 11 |
| Data and Methodology | 12 |
| Sample Size and Selection..... | 13 |
| Difficulties Encountered and Solutions..... | 14 |
| Representativeness | 14 |
| Research Site..... | 14 |
| Limitations..... | 15 |
| Standard Follow-Up Questions..... | 16 |
| Analytical Framework..... | 16 |
| Coding Procedure..... | 17 |
| Findings | 19 |
| Negative Impacts of Gentrification | 19 |
| Displacement of Residents..... | 19 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Reduction in Availability of Affordable Housing | 23 |
| Harassment of Existing Residents | 25 |
| Community Conflict | 27 |
| Positive Impacts of gentrification | 30 |
| Reduction in Crime..... | 31 |
| Community Renewal | 34 |
| Increase Employment Opportunity..... | 36 |
| School Improvements | 38 |
| Impacts of Gentrification Section Summary..... | 40 |
| Mitigating Gentrification’s Negative Impacts | 41 |
| Public Policy | 41 |
| Activists Groups..... | 42 |
| Implications for Future Research..... | 43 |
| Discussion..... | 43 |
| Works Cited..... | 46 |
| Appendix A - Coding Process and Procedure..... | 51 |

List of Figures

| | |
|--|----|
| Figure 1: Comparison of Conventional Methods to Grounded Theory..... | 51 |
| Figure 2: Example of Open Coding Procedure..... | 53 |
| Figure 3: Example of Axial Coding Procedure..... | 54 |
| Figure 4: Conceptual Framework | 55 |

Since Ruth Glass first coined “gentrification” in 1964, there have been a number of articles, journals, and debates, across the United States and internationally, on whether gentrification yields a positive or negative effect on the community (Atkinson 2002; Bourne 1993; Tobin and Anderson 1982). Soon after the term was first coined, proponents of gentrification already were claiming that it would revitalize cities and its positive impacts would trickle down to lower income and working class populations (Altshuler 1969; Smith 1971). However, as time passed and more communities started gentrifying, others began noticing that (1) the only trickling down that resulted from gentrification was “in the form of skyrocketing rents, condominium conversions, new construction, and conversions of buildings” (Newman and Wyly 2005), (2) gentrification had “overwhelmingly negative effects” on the community (Lee 2008), and (3) a pattern of racism was associated with gentrification, whereby minorities were adversely affected, due to being displaced from their homes and communities (Briggs 2005; Atkinson, 2004). The debates on whether gentrification is “good” or “bad” continues – with policy makers seeking to resolve the “sharp dividing line between equitable reinvestment in inner city neighborhoods and polarizing displacement” (Newman and Wyly 2006).

The central purpose of this paper is to address the following research questions: (1) What impacts does gentrification have on a community? (2) *Who* is benefiting from gentrification and *why* are these people benefiting from gentrification? (3) How can the negative impacts of gentrification be mitigated through meaningful policy? This paper aims to address those three questions using an insider’s perspective (i.e., those currently experiencing gentrification) on how gentrification impacts the community. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with 23 residents living in, or displaced from,

gentrifying communities as well as local business owners. These interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded using grounded theories analysis (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1994). In addition, a thorough review of relevant literature on gentrification was conducted. Findings from both interviews and literature were used to identify the positive and negative impacts gentrification has on communities and the methods available to mitigate these negative impacts.

In general, the findings indicated that residents were well aware of how gentrification was affecting their community. Many pointed to the fact that gentrification impacted the community in both positive and negative ways. The negative impacts gentrification has on the community include the following: displacement, reduction in affordable housing, harassment and illegal evictions, and community conflict. The positive impacts gentrification has on the community include the following: decreased crime, community renewal, increase employment opportunities, and improvements to schools. The people who benefit most from gentrification are landlords and property owners and the people who benefit least from gentrification are lower-income families. When considering the impacts gentrification has on a community, it is important to keep in mind the differences in *who* is benefiting from gentrification and *why* these people are benefiting from gentrification.

For ease of reading, this paper will be divided into several sections. Section one, the literature review, will provide an overview of the process and impacts of gentrification. Section two, theoretical framework, discusses the neo-Marxist approach that was used to highlight the conflicts between high- and low-income residents. Section three, data and methodology, will inform the reader of the sampling methods and process

used to collect the information used for analysis of findings. Section four, analytical framework, explains how grounded theory was used to analyze interviewees' responses. Sections five and six, discuss both the negative and positive impacts of gentrification. Section seven, impacts of gentrification section summary, is a summary of the findings from sections five and six. Section eight, mitigating gentrification's negative impacts, shows which policies and activists groups can be used to protect at risk populations from the negative impacts of gentrification and ensure everyone benefits from the positive impacts of gentrification. Section nine, implications for future research, provides two options to consider for future research. Section ten, discussion, provides an overview of all the key findings in the paper and explains how, if gentrification's negative impacts are mitigated, making it a positive impact that can be enjoyed by all community members.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Process of Gentrification

Ruth Glass (1964) originally defined gentrification as the “changes that result when wealthier people acquire or rent property in low income and working class communities.” What this means, in a practical sense, is that impoverished areas experience a sudden influx of wealthy residents that change the social and economic landscape of a community. Social changes include new cultures, races, and ethnicities, as well as a change in the “character” of the neighborhood (Kennedy and Lenard 2001). Economic changes include increases in rent, cost of living, and taxes. Gentrifiers often view themselves not as displacing old neighborhood residents, but as replacing outmoded institutions and customs that have shackled progress toward creating a better city or community (Sieber 1987).

There are a number of reasons why gentrification will occur in a particular area. An area typically begins to gentrify if some or all of the following factors are met – job growth has occurred to spur the local economy and interest in property ownership; housing market dynamics, such as constraints coupled with housing market demands; preference in urban living; public incentives, for example tax incentives to develop in a particular neighborhood; and quality of life issues, such as a desire to move closer to one’s place of employment to avoid traffic congestion (Kennedy and Leonard 2001). Gentrification usually occurs when new capital and other incentives are provided to developers, landlords, business owners, and other key stakeholders to “renew” an urban area under decay or when capital gains can be maximized.

Positive and Negative Impacts of Gentrification

Gentrification has both positive and negative impacts on a community. The positive impacts of gentrification include: increased property taxes adding to a city’s revenue (Lee 2008), reduced concentration of poverty, increased property values and outside interest (Kennedy and Leonard 2001), local service improvements, such as schools and policing (Hegin and Gale 1987), new construction and development (Wagner 2008), decreased crime, and community stabilization in the form of reduced vacancy rates (Atkinson 2002). However, gentrifying communities also suffer from: displacement of working class, elderly, and minority residents (Newman and Wyly 2005 & 2006; Palen and London 1984; Atkinson 2002), increased homelessness (Roseburg 2010), community conflicts between old and new residents (Kennedy and Leonard 2001), illegal harassment and evictions of residents, sudden increases in property value/rent (Newman and Wyly 2005 & 2006), and undesired social mixing between differing races and class (Lee 2008).

Displacement is such a pervasive reality in gentrifying communities that residents often dread complaining about poor housing conditions for fear of being forced out of their homes. Low-income residents can only live in a gentrifying community for a limited period of time because the supports for low-income renters are steadily dismantled (Newman and Wyly 2006). Minorities and working income groups receive the brunt of the negative impacts of gentrification, while affluent middle-to-upper income groups, generally whites, receive more of the positive impacts of gentrification (William and Smith 1968).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study's theoretical framework is based on a Neo-Marxist political economic approach. This approach argues that the owning class' interest to increase their own personal capital is the driving force behind the process of gentrification. More specifically, gentrification often serves the owning class in the form of increased capital and adversely affects the working class and minorities in the form displacement (Smith 1979 & 1982). As shown by Lee (2008:2449) "the gentrification literature tells us...gentrification is part of an aggressive, revanchist ideology designed to retake the inner city for the middle classes." A neo-Marxist analytical framework will help researchers better understand, and study, gentrification by highlighting how capital is the driving force of gentrification.

Based on a review of the literature, it was discovered that (1) gentrification has been actively planned to increase the capital of the owning class, (2) working class and minority residents receive the brunt of gentrification's negative impacts, and (3) gentrified commercial and housing development cater to the owning class. These three

discoveries reveal how gentrification has been planned to increase the owning class personal capital, at the cost of lower-income residents and minorities, creating conflicts between displaced residents and those who replace them; making a neo-Marxist approach ideal for understanding gentrification.

Gentrification's Process Has Been Actively Planned

The process of displacing lower income residents is important to the owning class because it allows them to sell or rent property at a much higher price. As described by London and Palen (1984), American gentrification has been...

[A]ctively planned...the implication is that powerful interest groups follow a policy of neglect of the inner city until such a time as they become aware that policy changes could yield tremendous benefits. Then, policies change accordingly, with little regard for those powerless inner-city residents who will be displaced from their homes. All this is legitimated by references to public interest and predictions of the end of the urban crisis (p. 17-18).

Most people, not just policy makers, are often well aware of which neighborhoods are in dire need of revitalization. Many neighborhoods in the city researchers studied often suffer from urban blight for years, possibly even decades, before any efforts are made to improve the area by developers and city officials. This process makes particular neighborhoods so blighted that property is easily obtained for a very low price. Then, when developers and city officials feel they can maximize their profits, they suddenly show an interest in improving a particular area. Essentially, this allows upper-income property owners to buy cheap and sell high.

Gentrification's Negative Impacts Unevenly Affect the Working Class and Minorities

As discussed by Rowland Atkinson (2002:9) “gentrification related displacement has been shown to affect poor white and non-white households (to a lesser extent), the elderly, female headed households and blue collar/working class occupational groupings.” Furthermore, gentrification illustrates capital expansion and reclamation of the inner-city and marginal business areas that are in the neighborhoods of the working class and minorities (Zukin 1987). Gentrifiers often target working class and minority neighborhoods, causing community conflicts between gentrifiers and those displaced from gentrification. These conflicts revolve around the owning classes’ attempt to increase their capital by displacing working class and minority residents with affluent renters/buyers who can afford to pay high rent and mortgages.

Gentrification's Development Cater to the Owning Class

Gentrification leads to commercial and housing development that caters to the tastes of the owning class. Gentrification's development provides upscale living opportunities and socio-cultural commercial qualities, such as expensive restaurants, delicatessen stores, and other high-end retail stores, aimed at pleasing the wealthy (Zukin 1987, 1989). In addition, high end stores/markets make it difficult for low-income residents to afford their pricy goods, which also make it difficult for them to remain in the community. The renewal and development in a community is developed focused on the needs of the upper-income residents, not the needs of lower-income residents.

Other Theoretical Framework Considered

Choosing a theoretical framework for this study was not an easy task, given the wide range of competing perspectives – all of which highlight different/important aspects of gentrification and ways in which “urban space is continually patterned and re-patterned” (Schaeffern and Smith,1986:350). As discussed by Hamnet (1991:174), gentrification “represents one of key theoretical and ideological battlegrounds in urban geography...[Gentrification] is one of the main arenas of conflict between the proponents of culture, preference and human agency, and the proponents of the imperatives of capital and profitability.” Choosing a theoretical framework that best highlights key aspects, relationships, and experiences related to gentrification is pivotal, especially considering that it is an “ideological battleground” between several different theoretical frameworks.

In addition to the debates between different theoretical frameworks, there are numerous competing perspectives within the *same* theoretical frameworks that attempt to explain gentrification. Within a Neo-Marxist framework, for example, there are several different branches (i.e., Analytical, Cultural, Humanist, etc.) that may view gentrification differently, even though they are all based on a Neo-Marxist perspective. Rather than milling through all these different branches, researchers chose to focus on one of the core aspects of neo-Marxism: political and social power structure’s impact on society (Landman, 2009). Focusing on these core aspects of Neo-Marxism will best highlight how gentrification impacts people differently, specifically in terms of race and class.

Two other theoretical viewpoints were considered for this paper: urban ecological and functionalist. Only these two alternative perspectives were considered, even though there are numerous other options, because each one attempts to explain the causes and

impacts of gentrification in different ways from each other and the Neo-Marxist perspective selected for this study.

Urban Ecological

An urban ecological theoretical framework was considered for this study. This approach uses a process orientated method that focuses on the interrelationship between people and their environments (Dooling 2009) and couples ecology with gentrification, viewing the city as an urban environment (Grimm et al 2000; Pickett et al 2001; Alberti et al 2003). For example, an urban ecologist may explain urban sprawl as follows:

...urban sprawl (scattered low-density development) can be understood by a complexity of interactions and feedback mechanisms between social and biophysical processes. Its main drivers are demographics (e.g., increases in the number of households), socioeconomic trends (e.g., housing preferences, industrial restructuring), and biophysical factors (e.g., geomorphologic patterns and processes), which are then reinforced by infrastructure investment choices (e.g., development of highway systems) and land and real estate markets (Foster, 2006:539).

Essentially, this perspective would try to explain “who gets what, when, how, why and where” based on “interactions and feedback mechanisms between social and biophysical processes” (Foster, 2006:539-540). This perspective differs from a neo-Marxist perspective because it focuses on the interrelationship between people and their environment, not people and their economic class.

Structural Functionalist

A functionalist approach was also considered for this study. This framework would essentially attempt to highlight the function of gentrification in the establishment of a social order (Coser, 1977); in other words, gentrification's "function for society" is to, for example, renew areas of urban blight. Aoki (1993:721) provides a historical timeline and analysis of the function of housing design and architecture to ameliorate housing and social problems related to gentrification:

The goal of social functionalism was to create architectural designs that responded to housing problems and their attendant social problems. This American trend ran parallel to architectural modernist developments in Europe, but tended to work on a smaller and less programmatic scale than its European counterparts.

Another practical example of this functionalist approach includes efforts to socially mix and gentrify public housing as a means to renew areas of urban blight, as seen with The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Hope VI programs (Lee, 2008). This functionalist perspective can be extended into other areas as well – understanding gentrification "function" as a means to reduce crime, improve schools, etc. This perspective is clearly different from the Neo-Marxist perspective, which views gentrification not as a "function for society," but as a "function to serve the needs of the owning- and upper-class."

Both the urban ecological and functionalist approaches were not used for this study because they are overly simplistic, not taking into account the intersectionality between gentrification and class, race, gender, and ethnicity. Furthermore, in order to use

either of these approaches, a number of quotes that showed how displacement, and gentrification's other negative impacts, were causing community conflict would have to be excluded. These two limitations make an urban ecological and functionalist perspective less than ideal for studying gentrification.

Theoretical Framework Summary

Based on what was gleaned from a review of the literature, the information gathered during in-depth interviews, and the shortcomings of other theoretical approaches described above, a neo-Marxist approach is the best option for examining gentrification. I would not argue that the urban ecological or functionalist theoretical perspectives are “wrong”, per se. As Hammet (1991) points out, differing theoretical perspectives can be complementary, not competitive, offering valid insight into gentrification. However, viewing gentrification from the standpoint that various individuals and subgroups within a society serve only their needs and desires, rather than the needs of society as a whole, provides useful insight into *why* gentrification negatively impacts underserved populations. Furthermore, the desire of the owning class to serve its own economic interests is *why* gentrification often displaces impoverished residents, rather than offering them a chance at upward mobility.

A neo-Marxist theoretical framework will enhance the discussions in this paper by highlighting the conflicts between differing groups of people experiencing gentrification; explaining, in part, *why* gentrification impacts lower-income residents differently than landlords and property owners.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Qualitative methods were chosen for this study because they provide effective tools for collecting information, from an insider's perspective, on how gentrification impacts the community. In order to understand the story of gentrification, or how people experience the impacts of gentrification, in-depth interviews were conducted with people displaced due to gentrification, those moving into gentrifying neighborhoods, and local business owners. Qualitative methods allow researchers to thoroughly explore how gentrification is experienced by the community, which is not possible with quantitative methods.

In addition, qualitative methods were used because quantitative methods have proven problematic for measuring displacement, which is an important part of this research. As discussed by Rowland Atkinson (2005):

The use of quantitative data is problematic. Imputing problematic migration (i.e. displacement) through the use of cross-sectional data has been used where gentrification is known to have occurred and where flows exceed city-wide averages (Hamnett and Williams 1980; Gale 1980). A classic example of this kind of wrangling over definitions and the scale of displacement was made between the US HUD's researcher Sumka (1979) and the academic planning researcher Hartman (1979).

Displacement's affects are difficult to measure using quantitative methodology because it is nearly impossible to identify, and then track, every resident who moves out of a neighborhood. Often, displaced residents are quickly replaced by new residents interested in living in a gentrifying neighborhood. As a result, a neighborhood's population may

appear static on paper; when in fact, there are a number of people moving in and out. On the other hand, the qualitative methodology used for this study – in-depth interviews with people displaced due to gentrification – allows researchers to understand how displacement impacts the community because they are getting data from those who experienced displacement. Simply put, qualitative methods allowed me to interview people who were displaced due to gentrification, which provides meaningful data on how displacement impacts the community.

In summary, qualitative methods were selected for this study for two reasons: (1) qualitative methods provide effective tools for collecting information on how gentrification impacts residents and (2) quantitative methods are not able to accurately measure displacement, which is a central concept for this paper.

Sample Size and Selection

A total of 23 people were interviewed for this study. Initial interviewees were selected via a sample of convenience and additional interviewees were selected using snow-ball sampling. Interviews typically ranged from 45-90¹ minutes in length. After completing an interview, each respondent was asked to provide names/contacts of people they know who may be interested in being interviewed and could provide valuable insight. Samples of convenience and snow-ball samplings were used to reduce problems of accessing interviewees and to help identify future respondents. A sample size of 23 respondents was chosen because researchers were hearing redundant information and had reached theoretical saturation (Bloor & Wood 2006). Throughout the entire data collection process several measures, such as destroying all records after interviews were

¹ One interview lasted 2 hours; another ended in less than 5 minutes

coded and using faux names in reports, were used to ensure respondent's identities remained anonymous.

Difficulties Encountered and Solutions

Among all the interviews conducted, three interviewees' responses were not transcribed because of technical difficulties and environmental noise that made it impossible to clearly understand a majority of their responses. Information they provided, that was audible and transcribed, was used when applicable. One interviewee left only moments after the session began, so their response was not recorded, nor transcribed, and will not be used in this report. One interview was only partially recorded due to a battery failure in the recording device and their responses were transcribed and used in the study.

Representativeness

The sample size and selection process used for this study ensured researchers obtained the *breadth* and *depth* of peoples' experiences with gentrification and the impact it had on their lives. More specifically, by interviewing people who were displaced due to gentrification, people moving into gentrifying neighborhoods, and local business owners, researchers obtained the *breadth* of how gentrification impacted various groups of people living in the community. The *depth* of knowledge on this topic was achieved by conducting enough interviews to reach theoretical saturation, ensuring that nearly all the possible information on this topic was collected.

Research Site

There were several characteristics of this city make it an ideal site for studying gentrification. First, there is a significant demographic and cultural shift taking place; more specifically, the number of minority residents is dwindling and the number of white

residents is increasing. Second, the city has a history of being the epicenter for political and social activism for minority groups. Third, several policy think tanks and community activists operate in the city's limits, increasing resident's awareness of how social issues, such as gentrification, may impact their community. Fourth, the city's population has a significant number of out-of-state residents, which provides perspectives from several different communities and regions. Fifth, many neighborhood are being redeveloped and the city's population is increasing, causing property values to skyrocket, in turn, displacing residents. These five reasons make the research site selected appropriate for studying gentrification. Note that the name of the large east coast city used in this study will not be identified in order to protect the identity of respondents.

Limitations

Several limitations were encountered during the research and should be considered when examining the findings presented in this paper. First, this study does not equally represent both sexes because more females (n=14) than males (n=9) were interviewed. Second, only a few business owners (n=4) were interviewed, and these interviews were typically shorter than other interviews. Third, few people with children (n=5) were interviewed for this study. Given several time constraints, and despite several efforts to find additional interviewees, researchers were unable to locate enough males, business owners, and people with children to make the sample more even.

As a result, the findings in this study are more representative of females, people without children, and non-business owners. Therefore, information in this report may be less relevant to people with children and the services their children receive as well as how gentrification affects local businesses.

Standard Follow-Up Questions

Several follow-up questions were developed throughout the data collection process and used in nearly every interview. The most commonly used follow-up questions were “can you provide a specific example,” “do you know of anyone else who has had a similar experience,” “how has this impacted you, your friends, and/or family,” “what do you plan to do next,” and “have you experienced any types of harassment from building management or staff.” Often, respondents were able to answer these follow-up questions – providing researchers with a rich blend of experiences and examples that helped further their understanding of how gentrification was impacting the community.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Grounded Theory is a rigorous qualitative methodology used to form theories and explanations of certain phenomena, such as gentrification, based off of data that are systematically gathered and analyzed. As more information is gathered, theories and explanations will evolve, due to the interplay between data collection and analysis phases (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1994). Following grounded theory guidelines, transcriptions were examined and coded line by line in order to identify the interviewee’s thought patterns, feelings, and actions related to how gentrification impacted their lives (Barker, Jones, and Britton n.d.). All codes were compared and verified to ensure that they were *grounded* in the data provided by interviewees.

In addition, grounded theory is used to meet four key research criteria: fit, understanding, generality, and control. “*Fit* entails that the theory fits the substantive data. *Understanding* entails that the theory be comprehensible to all involved in the area of study. *Generality* entails that the theory is applicable in a variety of contexts. *Control*

implies that the theory should provide control with regard to action toward the phenomenon” (Strauss and Corbin 1990; Barker et al). Essentially, the purpose of Grounded Theory is to provide a systematic, iterative process, used to “ground the theory, or relate it to the reality of the phenomenon under consideration” (Scott 1996).

Coding Procedure

The three step coding procedure used for this study was based on open, axial, and selective coding procedures, as shown below:

1. Open Coding: the process of selecting and naming categories from the data analysis. It is the initial stage in data acquisition and relates to describing overall features of the phenomenon under study. Variables involved in the phenomenon are identified, labeled, categorized and related together in an outline form. The properties of a category are described at this stage. This involves placing or locating the property along a continuum within a range of possible values. For example, a code “building change” was developed based on comments that were received about how buildings were being re-developed, such as improvements to courtyards around apartment buildings.
2. Axial coding: the next stage after open coding. In axial coding, data are put together in new ways. This is achieved by utilizing a coding paradigm (i.e., a system of coding that seeks to identify causal relationships between categories). The aim of the coding paradigm is to make explicit connections between categories and sub-categories. It involves explaining and understanding relationships between categories in order to understand

the phenomenon to which they relate. For example, the code “building change” was understood differently based on which group a person was a member of. Specifically, people displaced from gentrification and local businesses spoke differently about how building improvements impacted the community. This led to the understanding that there were additional sub-categories within “building change” that relate to how people experience gentrification.

3. Selective coding: involves the process of selecting and identifying the core category and systematically relating it to other categories. It also involves validating those relationships, filling in, and refining/developing those categories. Categories are integrated together and a *grounded theory* is arrived at (i.e., gentrification impacts groups differently). The core category is the central phenomenon around which all other categories are based. Once this has been identified, the storyline is generated as a restatement of the project in a form that relates to the core category. Validation is done by generating hypothetical relationships between categories and using data from the field to test these hypotheses. Categories may be further refined and reclassified and the storyline may be further refined. This completes the grounding of the theory.

The three-stage process described above was used to systematically examine and code the transcriptions and literature included in this study. A detailed discussion of the specific coding used for this research can be found in the negative and positive impacts of gentrification sections.

FINDINGS

Negative Impacts of Gentrification

Negative impacts due to gentrification is one of the two major categories identified using the analytical framework discussed earlier in this paper (the other being positive impacts of gentrification). Within this category, four sub-categories were identified: displacement of residents that often targets underserved populations, loss of affordable housing, harassment of existing residents, and community conflict between incoming and existing residents. Each of these sub-categories contain findings from both interviewees and the literature review, which highlights (1) which group of people are benefiting from gentrification and (2) why these groups are benefiting.

Displacement of Residents

Almost every respondent indicated that gentrification had adversely displaced residents from their homes. In particular, they spoke of how the social and economic changes taking place in their neighborhoods – as a result of more affluent people moving in and new development – were factors in residential displacement. New development, construction, and other “community changes,” as many put it, led to a real fear of residents having to “move out because everything is more expensive” or “getting kicked out” for more affluent residents to move in, which is often referred to as exclusionary zoning or flipping (Atkinson 2002). In a number of cases, residents spoke not only of the fear of being displaced, but the reality of people they knew being displaced from their homes.

Numerous interviewees noticed new developments and improvements being made to existing structures in their community. They were aware that the area was becoming more “expensive” and speculated on how much longer they could live in the community:

More and more I’m seeing construction and looking at more expensive buildings. And I asked myself, who is moving in to those? Who can afford those? I know it’s a nice building, but can I afford to live there? If that building was here, where I live now, can I live here; I cannot pay the rent. Where do I go? Who will live here...just look around.

Another respondent indicated a very similar experience; discussing the casual observations made while walking through the neighborhood:

I walk down these streets and they aren’t what they used to be a couple of years ago, it is not the same, and it is changing. Change is not bad, but when I am looking at all this development I know these changes affect where I can live. I don’t mean just that the stuff is changing, but the people too. And what this change means for me is not going to be good. I cannot afford these changes; neither can my friends or families. That means we are going to have to move again.

An additional interviewee revealed that the gentrification taking place a few blocks from her apartment had real consequences for a friend:

[She] is not there anymore...[She] was there for a number of years, good friends, nice to walk by. Good person to, you know, have nearby in case you needed someone. Building got some construction, you know, make it

nicer for folks. Made it more expensive. Now she's gone, can't live there no more, got kicked out...Don't ask why because you know why.

A follow up question to this respondent's answer pinpointed the reason costs were increasing, showing community members are well aware of how gentrification affects the community:

We know why, and you know why, but I will tell you. *Nice* costs more, expensive buildings, fancy little things. These things are good, I like having better [stores] down the street nearby. I like that they are fixing [my building]...but who is paying for this, it costs more. I got a little on the side, but that doesn't mean I can afford it.

Interviewees identified the groups of people they felt were responsible for "bringing gentrification" to the community. Often, these groups of people were identified by class/age and rarely by race²:

The ones moving in can afford these homes and the ones moving out cannot. We are not your [high income community], we are a [lower income community]. [The community] is getting better, but the people who lived here longest are being replaced by younger, more privileged, people moving into *our* community. They get to live in the improved places, we don't. It is pretty obvious who is moving out and who is moving in.

² Race was avoided in many conversations. Sensing it causes discomfort to respondents, or causing potential harm, direct questions relating to race were avoided.

One local business owner described how his clientele had changed and how he had not seen some of his regular costumers:

My workers and I see a lot of people come in and out during lunch time, but we know the people who come in here regularly. We know names and faces. We have good customer service...I definitely notice a change, new faces coming in a lot. Faces I wouldn't expect to see in this community. Some regulars aren't around as much. Heard some moved or couldn't stay anymore.

Displacement of residents was one of the negative impacts associated with gentrification. Even though there is debate among scholars on how to measure gentrification, the scale of its impacts, and whether the positive impacts of gentrification outweigh the negative impacts, most agree that gentrification leads to displacement of residents (Atkinson 2002; Schill and Nathan 1983; Slater 2004). Almost every interviewee either (1) feared that gentrification would displace them from their homes or (2) said that gentrification displaced residents from their homes. Several reasons for displacement were identified by respondents, including, but not limited to, increased costs resulting from expensive construction or more luxurious building renewal, new and improved commercial development, and changes in the social and economic makeup of the community. Displacement is not only a major concern for residents living in gentrifying communities, but a stark reality; often affecting underserved residents for the benefit of property owners and landlords.

Reduction in Availability of Affordable Housing

Once displaced, many residents find it difficult to locate affordable housing; or landlords willing to accept Section 8 housing vouchers in gentrifying communities. Gentrification often results in a reduction in the availability of affordable housing in the community it is impacting. This reduction occurs for two reasons: (1) fewer landlords are willing to accept Section 8 vouchers in communities that are gentrifying and (2) fewer rent controlled units are available (Rotem 2010). Often, rent controlled apartments are “lost to vacancy and luxury decontrol, which enable landlords to remove units from the regulated housing stock under certain conditions” (Newman and Wyly 2005). Many times, displaced residents are only able to remain in a community by moving in with a friend or relative, causing overcrowding; a particular problem for immigrant communities (Newman and Wyly 2006). Several respondents discussed how they were unable to move to particular neighborhoods because there were “no places they could afford” or “no one would accept their voucher.”

One interviewee was unable to find affordable housing recently, even though just a few months ago several affordable units were available in the area:

I wanted to get out of my old place, you know. When I was looking to move into [that neighborhood] a few months ago there were a lot of places to live. Had lots of options. [The building] had places to live with low rent, rent control units, things I can afford. Checked the same places I checked months ago, nothing to rent. Said they are building new rooms and constructions or something, so they don't have much available.

Two other respondents mentioned how they could not afford to move into a neighborhood that was gentrifying because the rent was too expensive:

I cannot afford to move to the parts of the neighborhoods that are getting better. I am doing alright, but I was surprised on how few places were available that fit my budget. I was really looking forward to moving...having the chance to be closer to my friends and my job. Not moving too far, but just where it is a bit nicer.

I looked through the [local] apartment guide to find places closer to where I work. I figured I could move there, pay less rent, and be closer to work – maybe even not have a roommate. But, when I looked, there was not anything I could afford...it wasn't like I was looking to move into some great place that should have cost that much.

Another person, with a Section 8 voucher, discussed the difficulties trying to move into a gentrifying neighborhood:

I didn't believe this at first. I was looking to move to [a new neighborhood]. I have that [Section 8 voucher] that pays some of my rent. I know some people 'round there, so I looked to move there. Not many taking my voucher in that [neighborhood]. Looked online, nothing nearby taking this voucher.

The loss of affordable housing in a gentrifying community ensures residents who were displaced cannot remain and makes it nearly impossible for lower-income people to

move into gentrifying areas. This, in turn, ensures that the highest possible price is paid from those who can afford to live in a particular community. Surprisingly, even some middle-income respondents found it difficult to move into some, not all, gentrifying communities; showing just how expensive it is to live in a gentrifying community. Loss of affordable housing and fewer landlords willing to accept Section 8 vouchers is another negative impact of gentrification.

Harassment of Existing Residents

Residents in gentrifying communities are not only displaced, but are often the targets of various forms of harassment from a building's staff and/or owners. Newman and Wyly's (2006) research found that residents in gentrifying communities have been known to "receive threatening notices to leave the regulated units, stop providing services, threaten to look at immigration papers, convert units illegally to drive our residents, or buy them out." Often, harassment is used to drive existing residents out of a particular location to allow for more affluent renters to move in at a higher rent (Slater 2006), thereby increasing the capital of the property owner.

Interviewees experienced several types of harassment, ranging from "being yelled at to leave" to "my stuff being left outside my door." A question specific to harassment was not included in the original interview outline; however, since it was a very important topic, a follow-up question about specific experiences residents had with harassment was included in several interviews. This additional follow-up question provided numerous examples of the types of abuses residents in gentrifying communities' experience, which are discussed below.

Two respondents indicated very similar experiences regarding how building management were treating residents. Residents often noted that the way they were treated had “changed in the last few months,” more specifically:

I was coming back from work and was talked to about my rent by some people who worked in the building. [They] told me I was late paying my rent and they could evict me. [They] were lying and I told [them] I paid on time and they were wrong. [They] then got mad and started yelling. Why they were yelling, I never know, but I paid my rent.

The entire attitude of the place has changed. The staff is not friendly, they would not fix the problems I had, and they often are just downright nasty. The building is run by just a few people, who also fix the place when you need them to...They just started letting it go, not like the place was perfect to begin with...Whenever I say something to them, they just get nasty and yelled. It's unpleasant.

One person explained that some of her “stuff was just left outside their door.” She had previously put in a work order to get her kitchen sink fixed, and when she returned to her apartment at the end of the day, numerous personal belongings were placed outside her door. She did not know why her stuff was left outside her door:

I came home from work and some of my stuff was outside. I just thought there was an emergency or something happened. I didn't see a note, so I wasn't sure. I went in and the sink wasn't fixed and no note was left. My

stuff was just outside my door. Not sure why...no clue on why it was done.

Two respondents indicated that they received questionable notices from building management regarding rent increases and eviction notices.

They knew that I knew that they couldn't raise my rent by that much. But, they tried to send me a letter saying they could. Printed it up, trying to make it look *official*. Said I got to pay \$500 or so more a month. I know I don't. Threw it in the can. Gave them same amount last month.

Yeah, they put the notice on my door. Said I was being evicted. Reason was bogus. I am still here. They couldn't throw me out for no reason when I have been paying the rent. I have been good to them, not sure what their problem is.

Residents are often the victim of various types of harassment as gentrification takes root in a community. Even though interviewees never directly stated the intent of this harassment (i.e., respondents never directly said they were being harassed so wealthier residents can move in), the intent of the harassment seems clear: to drive out lower-income residents to make way for wealthier residents to move in to increase their capital.

Community Conflict

Gentrification creates conflicts between existing and incoming residents in a community. These conflicts occur due to the fear of new residents displacing them from their homes (Atkinson 2002). Many existing residents are resistant to incoming affluent,

white, residents moving in and “changing the place.” Many people moving into gentrifying neighborhoods felt they “did not fit in” or “were not welcome.” This feeling of alienation caused incoming residents to be frustrated with existing residents, who “had just as much right to be there as they do.” Respondents, who were displaced due to gentrification, and those moving into gentrifying neighborhoods, provided very clear examples of how gentrification is causing community conflict.

Upon moving into a gentrifying community, one respondent described how she felt alienated from the community and the hostility she experienced:

I just do not feel welcome. In the other places I lived I talked a lot with my neighbors, I am still friends with one as a matter of fact. Here, people don't want to talk to me. They don't seem to like me. I can tell I am not welcome. It is just strange. I moved here because I can afford it. But, when people see me, they think I am affluent. That's not the case. The nasty looks, comments, and negativity directed towards me just are not fair.

Follow-up questions with this respondent revealed her reasons for choosing to live in a particular community and the problems she encountered with “being accepted”:

I wanted to live here because I like the culture of the neighborhood. I like the small shops, I like the community feel, I like the houses, and I like the parks. The sad thing is a lot of these stores are being replaced by larger commercial places. I did not move here for that. Still, even though I moved here to be a member of the community, I feel like I will never be fully accepted because of how I look...or how I am perceived.

Other interviewees reported a similar experience, feeling “not welcomed” by community members:

I just don't get the same, friendly, treatment from other people in my building. I always see the front desk person talking with people. I often try to talk to them, but they are short and don't want to have a conversation. I know I don't *look like* most people in this community, but I am still here. I just want to be treated like I belong.

A long-time resident in a gentrifying community explained that new residents were not welcome because he felt that they were responsible for displacing people from their homes and communities:

They are a part of the changes. When they move in, someone has left. Where do you think they moved into? Why are they moving here? Whose place did they take? Why should we welcome someone who wasn't asked to come? We just want to be able to stay in our homes, and those people moving in aren't going to let that happen.

Another reason incoming residents were not welcome was existing residents felt there was a large cultural difference between the two groups (existing residents versus incoming residents):

They are not the same, different experience, lives, values, and other stuff. We are all people, don't get me wrong, we just are different. I don't feel the same as them, I don't act the same as them, and I don't look the same

as them...I just feel different and it is just not easy to welcome such *differences* into a community you lived in for so long.

One respondent's reaction to follow-up questioning turned hostile, revealing the sensitivity of this issue and how some residents feel about gentrification:

They are not welcome, got it. I am not welcome in their neighborhoods.

You think people like me are moving into their neighborhoods, no. We know what is happening, we aren't ignorant to it. We see it, we know it, and we *know* who causes it, people like that. They move it; we all got to move out. I am tired of having to move for them, they should move for me for a change.

When the concept of community conflicts was being discussed, interviewees often changed their tone, becoming defensive or hostile in many cases. Clearly, the tone respondents took when asked about community conflict is indicative of how sensitive residents in gentrifying neighborhoods are to incoming residents. Furthermore, incoming residents were well aware of the fact that they "were not welcome." Existing residents felt, justifiably, that incoming residents would change the community and displace people from their homes. These community conflicts could likely be averted if the negative impacts of gentrification were mitigated through meaningful policy that controls displacement.

Positive Impacts of gentrification

Positive impacts of gentrification is the second major category identified using the analytical framework discussed previously. Within this category, four sub-categories

were identified: reduction in crime, community renewal, increased employment, and local school improvements. Lower-income residents, because they are displaced, often do not receive the positive impacts associated with gentrification. On the other hand, affluent, higher-income residents moving into these neighborhoods often benefit from gentrification; living in a community that is much safer, newly developed, and with plenty of opportunities for employment. Most importantly, gentrification's positive impacts on a community make it a more desirable place to live, which allowed property owners and landlords to charge a much higher rent and increase their capital.

Reduction in Crime

Crime becomes less of a problem for a community as it gentrifies. More specifically, communities experience less violent and drug-related crimes than they did prior to gentrification (McDonald 1986). Interviewees were aware of the large reduction in the amount of crime in their neighborhood. Many residents noticed fewer “drug dealers” and “other trouble makers” on the streets. As a result, they felt safer “walking around and going to parks, especially at night.” They also felt safer because they noticed an increased police presence, which likely served as a crime deterrent. This reduction of crime is beneficial to the residents who are able to remain in the community (i.e., not displaced from gentrification) as well as a boon to property owners and landlords.

One respondent discussed noticing less overt drug dealing taking place, as well as fewer drug dealers, in the community:

There are just less drugs around and the people selling the drugs are gone too. I used to see the same car roll by my house every day, early in the

morning, and I knew what they were up to. Haven't seen that car in a while. Better that they don't come around, anyways.

Another interviewee, prior to the community gentrifying, was offered drugs when walking through a particular part of town:

Few blocks down on the [cross-street] I used to be offered weed a lot. First thought it was kids joking since they weren't trying to be sneaky about it. Then I saw them again and they asked me again. They were around there a bunch, now I don't see them there a lot...they come around a bit, but not like it was.

A third person discussed noticing less criminal activity because fewer "trouble makers" were present in the neighborhood:

The people are just your typical *trouble makers*, you know. The types that you can tell are up to no good and they are doing something wrong. I see less of those types. I am glad, probably moved someplace else. All these changes taking place, like we have talked about, has done a lot of good for cleaning up this place.

Several respondents reported feeling safer; not fearing burglaries, muggings, and other crimes as they did in the past:

I don't have to leave my house worried I am going to come home to a busted window and stuff stolen. I feel much less worried about my car; windows got busted on people I know and their phone stolen right from

their car. I see that less, hear it less...this makes me feel much safer.

Streets are safer also, less people getting beaten up and robbed.

It is so much better than it was a few months ago. I have not been here too long, but I have seen a difference since moving in. I liked the community before, mind you, but now I like it even more. Not saying it was a bad place before, just much better now than it once was.

One interviewee also noticed an increased police presence, which made the neighborhood “safer”:

I just see more cruisers driving by and feel like I could find a cop if I needed one. It wasn't always easy to find a cop, let alone see cruisers coming around as much as they do now. It wasn't like they wouldn't come if you called, but they certainly are around now.

The reduction in crime residents discussed during the interviews resulted from the urban renewal, and increased police presence, typically associated with gentrification (Fraser 2007). Residents were aware of the reduction in crime taking place, pointing out that they saw less drug dealing and generally felt the community was much safer. This reduction in crime made the area safer and more desirable; in turn, increasing the cost (i.e., rent) of remaining in the community, which displaced some residents. Simply put, many residents who lived in the community prior to it being gentrified did not directly benefit from this reduction in crime and property owners were able to charge a premium on the price of rent because their buildings were in a “safe neighborhood.”

Community Renewal

Another benefit of gentrification is community renewal. Community renewal refers to the process by which neighborhood buildings and vacant lots are maintained, rebuilt, and/or improved. Buildings in lower-income communities suffer from poor upkeep, often leading to problems with health, crime, and urban blight (Eisen 2004). In addition to poorly maintained buildings, there are several empty buildings or vacant lots that attract all types of criminal activities (Branas et al 2011). Many landlords and property owners are disinterested in improving buildings or developing in lower-income neighborhoods because they do not think it is a valuable investment. But, when a community starts to gentrify, landlords and property owners have the opportunity to increase their capital, and will show a sudden interest in fixing a building that may have long been neglected or developing on a piece of property that has long been vacant. Several respondents noticed the sudden improvements being made to their neighborhood.

Discussions with two interviewees revealed that several new improvements were being made to buildings throughout the neighborhood:

In all my time here I haven't ever seen so much busy construction going on around here; not just in my building, but others. They are fixing some stuff that was broken since I got here, and I have been here a long time. It is not just the *needed stuff* [the building] might get in trouble for not fixing, but the nice things I wasn't expecting...specific stuff is like the new furniture in the lobby and nice tables there too. I wasn't expecting them to put new furniture in.

There's more *luxury* moving in...the buildings are getting nice, you know. Places are more decorated, owners make the place look nicer outside by putting in new grass and planting flowers. They just make it look more luxurious for people living here.

A different respondent mentioned how a vacant lot, which was often used as a makeshift play ground by the local children, was fenced off for development:

The lot down [the road] has always been a place where the younger kids will play. It's just a grassy empty area where I guess a building used to be. It isn't a park, no park signs, no benches, nothing like that. Just a lot that has been empty for a while. They put up a new fence around there, also some pictures of the building being put there. Nice building, you know, not like other ones around here.

Buildings that had long been abandoned were also being developed, as noted by one person:

Finally buildings down [the block] are getting fixed. I was tired of having to walk by those places. Places were sick, people that don't belong there just hanging out. Broken pieces of it on the sidewalks...now they are starting to fix it, saw some of those white sheets around the building and they fenced in some other one on the corner. Some other ones got fixed down [the road] a while ago. Look nicer, better place to live now.

As revealed by the interviews, as gentrification takes place, landlords and property owners will improve buildings they own. This results in less urban blight, which

has several benefits to everyone living in the community. However, similar to the previously discussed positive impacts of gentrification, few low-income residents receive the full benefit of urban renewal. The new development and improvements to existing buildings increases the cost of living, forcing many lower-income residents to relocate or move in with friends/families. When these residents relocate, they often have to move into neighborhoods that have not been renewed, leading to a constant cycle where they continuously reside in a blighted neighborhood.

Increase Employment Opportunity

Another positive impact gentrification has on the community is it increases the number of jobs in the area (Byrne 2003). New property development increases the demand for construction workers and other manual labor. New commercial development opens up many opportunities for people to work in retail positions. Gentrification does, at times, bring new office building development into the community; but, these jobs are rarely filled by the lower-income residents of the community for a variety of reasons. The increase in the need for construction, retail, and office related work positions is beneficial to the community. Interviewees spoke of how the development provided them with full-time or part-time employment.

One respondent indicated finding work with a local building agency mixing and laying cement for sidewalks:

I mostly worked making or fixing sidewalks with a [construction agency].

With the economy, they did not have work or contracts, so I had to look elsewhere for pay. Lucky for me some places around here are getting the

work. They needed some new sidewalks put in for some new buildings going up.

Another interviewee indicated picking up some extra work as a part-time salesperson at a local retail chain:

Needed a little extra and went in to do the register at [a store]. They hired me right away, said they needed a lot of people, and I had experience, so they were happy I could start right away. They built the place not too long ago and were still looking for people...It is a few stores in one building, so I am sure they have a lot of jobs they need people for.

Jobs had also opened up at nearby office buildings as a result of some new tenants renting some empty space, as indicated by a respondent:

I work at an apartment building as the super, but I had to do a lot of the non-super work. Keep the building nice and make it look good for the folks living there. It doesn't pay good, so I am looking for work – have been for a while. Found some office building who got some new people to rent space they had on the first floor...they are looking to hire someone so I filled out an application last week.

A business owner described how an increase in the number of people living in the community increased sales, in turn allowing him to hire additional help:

With all the new places being built more people are coming in for lunch. I usually had one person helping me by running the register. Now we have a lot more people and I get a line of people waiting usually around lunch

time. Going to hire someone part time to help take orders and do some other things.

Gentrification positively impacted several residents by increasing the number of employment opportunities in the neighborhoods in which they lived. Many construction and retail jobs opened as a result of housing and commercial buildings being improved and developed. However, few of these jobs offered a high enough salary to allow residents to remain in gentrifying communities; therefore, the jobs created by gentrification do little to ensure residents are able to remain in a gentrifying neighborhood.

School Improvements

Schools in neighborhoods that are gentrifying improve as a result of increased tax revenue. New development, urban renewal, and the influx of high-income residents increase the tax base of an area (Atkinson 2002), thereby increasing local schools budgets. This increase in the tax base allows schools to renew aging buildings in need of maintenance and hire new teachers. Several respondents noted that gentrification “made schools better,” saying “teachers are more available” and the students “are getting better.” Both existing and incoming residents provided information on how gentrification has had a positive impact on their schools.

One respondent discussed how the buildings around the local high school were being rebuilt and how this impacted the area around the school. A follow up question revealed why these improvements made to the surrounding area “mattered”:

The kids don’t have to walk by abandoned buildings any more or broken schools. They just are being fixed, and that matters...it matters because

fixing those buildings means they care. The kids need to walk by nice places, not busted, empty, homes or messed up schools.

Another respondent indicated a similar experience about schools being improved in the area:

The schools weren't getting anything done to them. Several parts were nasty, had bugs and other things when I went there years ago...went back to take a look and they re-did a lot of the building. New front entrance with glass entry, new wing where the gym used to be, new stuff all around...it just isn't nasty anymore. The whole community has gotten better.

Another interviewee mentioned that the parent-teacher night was much better this year than prior years when asked to provide a specific "example of how schools have improved":

The parent-teacher night was much better. The teachers seemed more engaged, told me more about my son and daughter. Last few year it was like I was hassling them, you know, giving them a hard time when I just wanted to know about my kids. This year, they were very open. I think we are getting a *good school*.

Schools in gentrifying neighborhoods were often renovated, repaired, and/or renewed, with interviewees pointing out specific improvements being made. Increased tax revenues allow schools to put more resources towards renovation and hiring new teachers. While these improvements made to schools are certainly positive, few children

in lower-income families are able to remain in gentrifying neighborhoods and reap the benefits of having a “good school.”

Impacts of Gentrification Section Summary

Interviews with residents and local businesses owners provided valuable insight into ways gentrification impact a community. In a number of cases, gentrification displaced residents from their homes – many of whom were unable to find affordable housing or landlords that accepted Section 8 vouchers. Those who remained while gentrification was occurring were often harassed, treated poorly, or receiving illegitimate eviction notices. These negative impacts created a conflict between residents already living in the community and incoming residents.

On the other hand, gentrification also has several positive impacts on the community, such as reduction in crime, urban renewal, and increased job opportunities. Many interviewees spoke of the positive impact gentrification has had on their community. These positive impacts are not to be taken lightly, as they show how gentrification can be an engine for reducing crime, urban renewal, improving employment opportunities, and making schools better. The problem arises when residents, who lived in a community prior to gentrification taking place, are displaced and unable to enjoy the positive impacts of gentrification. All too often, lower-income residents do not receive the benefits of gentrification, which may offer them the opportunity to break free of poverty; however, landlords and property owners almost always see an increase in their personal capital when a community gentrifies. Meaningful policy could be implemented to mitigate the negative effects of gentrification and ensure that existing residents get to enjoy the positive impacts of gentrification.

MITIGATING GENTRIFICATION'S NEGATIVE IMPACTS

Gentrification's negative impacts can be mitigated through meaningful policy and community activists' groups. Public policies that are aimed at controlling the negative consequences of displacement and allow residents to find affordable housing in gentrifying communities will ensure that everyone has an opportunity to benefit from gentrification's positive impacts (Kennedy 2001). Activists groups can ensure that existing laws aimed at protecting renters are followed and gentrification's negative impacts on the community are not left unchecked. This will essentially make gentrification a positive force by reducing the negative aspects associated with gentrification. Policies that can be used to mitigate gentrification's negative impacts, and the types of activists groups that can help control the affects of gentrification, will be discussed below.

Public Policy

Meaningful policy can be implemented to mitigate the negative impacts gentrification has on a community. These policies should include measures that allow residents to remain in gentrifying communities and protect low-income residents, as they are at the highest risk of being displaced. Policies to consider when trying to reduce the negative impact gentrification has on a community include, but are not limited to, the following: (1) *Rent Control* to increase the supply of low-income housing and ensure property owners are not able to unfairly raise rent in a short period of time (Harvard Law Review 1988). (2) *Displacement Free Zone*, such as the Fifth Avenue Committee's policies that protected Lower Park Slope residents of Brooklyn from displacement (Rose 2001). (3) *Inclusionary Zoning*, which sets aside a certain amount of affordable housing

units when a new building or vacant lot is developed, such as New York's 80/20 Housing Program, which offers tax-exempt financing to multifamily rental developments in which at least 20% of the units are set aside for low-income residents (Homes and Community Renewal 2011). (4) *Fueling Homeownership* by educating to people in gentrifying communities about the advantages of ownership over renting and using policies such as limited equity cooperation and lease to purchase agreements (Damewood and Young-Laing 2011); which are often more effective if inclusionary zoning policies are in effect (Newman and Wyly 2006).

By focusing on these four core categories, gentrification's negative impacts will have less of an effect on the community and allow for a greater number of people, specifically lower-income residents, to reap the benefits of gentrification.

Activists Groups

Activists groups are pivotal for ensuring gentrifications negative impacts are mitigated by (1) educating residents on existing laws to protect renters and underserved populations; and (2) ensuring meaningful policy to control for gentrification is enacted and enforced. Groups such as Concerned Citizens of Point Breeze, whose motto is "profit over people", proposed legislation to limit developers efforts to construction of three-story dwellings and any third story additions or roof decks (Gates 2011), which often increases the costs of living thereby displacing residents; and Whose Food / Whose Community, who advocate for locally-owned business that serves low- and moderate-income families (Whose Food n.p). These groups, and other similar groups, are often at the forefront of the battle to ensure that gentrification's negative impacts are controlled and do not harm lower-income residents. Essentially, meaningful policy is the *means* by

which gentrification's negative impacts can be mitigated and activists groups act as the *driver* for this means.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

As stated in the limitations section of this report, males, people with children, and local businesses were underrepresented in this study. Future research could be conducted with these three groups in order to get a more thorough understanding of how gentrification impacts the community. This would ensure that the findings in this study more evenly represent all groups of people. In addition, interviews can be conducted with those who work in, but do not live in a gentrifying neighborhood (e.g., police, firefighters, teachers, elected officials), in order to make the findings more robust.

Additional research can also be conducted to measure how effective particular public policies and activists groups are at mitigating the negative impacts of gentrification. By measuring public policy's and activist group's effectiveness, other researchers and elected officials will be able to recommend and implement methods to ameliorate the negative impacts of gentrification. In turn, both high- and low-income groups will be able to reap the benefits of gentrification.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to (1) identify the impacts of gentrification, (2) explore how groups of people are impacted differently, and (3) identify meaningful ways to mitigate gentrification's negative impacts. This study revealed that gentrification has both positive and negative impacts on a community and these impacts affect people differently. Gentrification's negative impacts often harm lower-income residents, while the positive impacts often benefit landlords and property owners in the form of increased

capital. Low-income residents are resistant to gentrification because they know it puts them at risk of being displaced from their homes. Displacement and the other negative impacts of gentrification, causes conflict between community members who live in a gentrifying community and those who are moving into a gentrifying community.

The content for this paper was derived from two sources: semi-structured interviews with 23 respondents and a targeted literature review. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded using a grounded theory approach. A targeted review of relevant literature was used to corroborate the information that was gleaned during interviews and to support the codes that were developed.

The limitation of this study was that more females were interviewed than males and researchers had difficulties obtaining interviews with local business owners and people with children. Future research should be conducted with these groups, and those who work in, but do not live in a gentrifying neighborhood, in order to more thoroughly identify ways that gentrification impacts the community.

The essential finding from this study is that gentrification has both positive impacts and negative impacts on the community that affected people differently. Rather than focusing on whether gentrification is “good” or “bad” for the community, researchers could instead look at *who* benefits from gentrification and *why* these people benefit. Interviews with people displaced from gentrifying areas, people moving into gentrifying neighborhood, and local business owners in these communities revealed that particular groups of people were reaping the benefits of gentrification, while other groups were suffering as a result of gentrification. Usually, the groups benefiting from gentrification are landlords, property owners, and high-income residents looking for a

developed neighborhood to move into, or to maximize their personal capital. The groups that typically do not benefit from gentrification are underserved populations, typically minorities, the elderly, and low-income residents. The reason landlords and property owners benefited from gentrification is it displaced low-income residents from their homes which paved the way for high-income families who could afford to pay a much higher rent. Implementing meaningful policy to reduce the number of people displaced, such as rent regulations, will ensure that underserved populations also enjoy the benefits of gentrification. In other words, the negative impacts of gentrification can be mitigated through policy, making it a much more positive force for the community.

Then, when asked *who* benefits from gentrification and *why* these people benefit, one can say: “everyone benefits from gentrification because everyone deserves to live in a good neighborhood.”

Works Cited

- Alberti, M., J. Marzluff, E. Schulenberger, G. Bradley, C. Ryan, and C. Zumbunnen. 2003. "Integrating Humans Into Ecology: Opportunities for Studying Urban Ecosystems." *Bioscience*. 53(12):1169-79.
- Altshuler, A. 1969. "The Potential of Trickle Down." *Public Interests*. 15(Spring):46-55.
- Aoki, K. 1993. "Race, Space, and Place: The Relationship Between Architectural Modernism, Post-Modernism, Urban Planning, and Gentrification". *Fordham Urban Law Journal*. 20(4):699-829.
- Atkison, R. 2002. "Does Gentrification Help or Harm Urban Neighborhoods? An Assessment of the Evidence-Base in the Context of the New Urban Agenda." *ESRC Centre for Neighborhood Research*. 5:3-23.
- Atkison, R. 2004. "The Evidence on the Impact of Gentrification: New Lessons for the Urban Renaissance." *European Journal of Housing Policy*. 4(1):107-131.
- Barker, T., Jones S., and Britton C. "Introduction to Grounded Theory." (----) (http://homepages.feis.herts.ac.uk/~comqtb/Grounded_Theory_intro.htm.)
- Bloor, M. and Wood, F. 2006. *Keywords in Qualitative Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing.
- Bourne, L. S. 1993. "The Demise of Gentrification? A Commentary and Prospective View." *Urban Geography*. 14(1):95-107.
- Branas, C. et al. 2011. "A Difference-in-Differences Analysis of Health, Safety, and Greening Vacant Urban Space." *American Journal of Epidemiology*.
- Briggs, Xavier de Souza. 2005. *The Geography of Opportunity: Race and Housing Choice in Metropolitan America*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.
- Byrne, J. P. 2003. "Two cheers for gentrification." *Howard Law Journal*. 46(3):405-432.
- Coser, L. 1977. *Masters of Sociological Thought: Ideas in Historical and Social Context*. New York, NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Damewood, R. and Young-Laing W. 2011. *Strategies to Prevent Displacement of Residents and Businesses in Pittsburgh's Hill District*. Regional Housing Legal Services.
- Dooling, S. 2009. "Ecological Gentrification: A Research Agenda Exploring Justice in the City." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. 33(3):621-639.

- Eisen, A. 1994. "Survey of Neighborhood-Based, Comprehensive Community Empowerment Initiatives." *Health Education and Behavior*. 21(2):235-252.
- Frase, J. 2007. "Beyond Gentrification: Mobilizing Communities and Claiming Space." *Urban Geography*. 25(4):437-457.
- Fotser, S. 2006. "The City as an Ecological Space: Social Capital and Urban Land Use." *NELLCO Legal Scholarship Repository*. 4(1):527-582.
- Gates, K. P. 2011. "Bill That Advocates Say Would Protect Point Breeze is Held. Critics Argue it Would Stifle Development." *Plan Philly*. March 23.
- Glaser, B. and Strauss, A. 1967. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Glass, R. 1964. *Introduction: Aspects of Change, In Centre for Urban Studies (ed)*. University College, London: Centre for Urban Studies.
- Grimm, N., Grove J., Prickett S., and C. Redman. 2000. "Integrated Approaches to Long-Term Studies of Urban Ecological Systems." *Bioscience* 50(7):571-84.
- Hamnett, C. 1973. "Improvement Grants as an Indicator of Gentrification in Inner London Area." *JSTOR*. 5(4):252-261.
- Hamnett, C. and Williams, P. 1980. "Social Change in London: A Study of Gentrification." *Urban Affairs Quarterly*. 15(4):469-487.
- Hartman, C. 1979. "Comment on 'Neighbourhood revitalization and displacement: A review of the evidence'." *Journal of the American Planning Association*. 45(4):488-491.
- Henig, J. R. and Gale, D. E. 1987. "The Political Incorporation of Newcomers to Racially Changing Neighborhoods." *Urban Affairs Quarterly*. 22(3):399-419.
- Kennedy, M. & Leonard, P. 2001. *Dealing with Neighborhood Change: A Primer on Gentrification and Policy Choices*. Washington, DC: Brooking Institution Press.
- Kennedy, M. & Leonard, P. 2001. *Gentrification: Practice and Politics*. The LISC Center for Home Ownership and the LISC Knowledge Sharing Initiative.
- Jones, M. 2005. "'Lights... Action... Grounded Theory': Developing an Understanding for the Management of Film Production." *Rhizome* 1(1): In Print.
- Landman, T. & Robinson, N. 2009. *The SAGE Handbook on Comparative Politics*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

- Lee, L. 2008. "Gentrification and Social Mixing: Towards and Inclusive Urban Renaissance." *Urban Studies*. 45(1):2449-2470.
- Lenski, G. 1966. *Power and Privilege: A Theory of Social Stratification*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- McDonald, S. 1986. *Does gentrification affect crime rates?* *Communities and Crime*, A. J. Reiss, Jr., and M. Tonry, eds. Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Newman, K. & Wyly E. 2005. "Gentrification and Resistance in New York City." *National Housing Institute: Shelterforce*: 142(July/August).
- Newman, K. & Wyly E. 2006. "Gentrification and Displacement Revisited: A Fresh Look at the New York City Experience." *Centre for Urban and Community Studies*. 31(July).
- Palen, J & London, B. 1984. *Gentrification, displacement, and neighborhood revitalization*. State University of New York Press: Albany.
- Patricia, Y. M. & Turner, B. 1986. "Grounded Theory and Organizational Research." *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*. 22(2):141.
- Pickett, S., M. Cadenasso, J. Grove, C. Nilon, R. Pouyat, W. Zipperer and R. Costanza. 2001. "Urban Ecological Systems: Linking Terrestrial Ecological, Physical, and Socioeconomic Components of Metropolitan Areas." *Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics*. 32:127-37.
- Rose, D. 1984. "Rethinking Gentrification: Beyond the Uneven Development of Marxist Urban Theory, Environment and Planning." *Society and Space*. 47-74.
- Rose, D. 2004. "Discourses and Experiences of Social Mixing in Gentrifying Neighborhoods: A Montreal Case Study." *Canadian Journal of Urban Research*. 13(2):278-316.
- Rose, K. 2001. "Beyond Gentrification: Tools for Equitable Development." *National Housing Institute: Shelterforce*: 117(May/June).
- Roseburg, M. "Gentrification: The Controversial Topic of Gentrification and Its Impact on the Urban Core." 2010. (<http://geography.about.com/od/urbaneconomicgeography/a/gentrification.html>).
- Rotem, R. 2010. "Using Disparate Impact Analysis in Fair Housing Act Claims: Landlord Withdrawal From the Section 8 Voucher Program." *Fordham Law Review*. 78(4):1971-2008.

- Schaffer, R. and Smith, N. 1986. "The gentrification of Harlem?" *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. 76:347-65
- Schill, H. & Nathan R. 1983. *Revitalizing America's Cities: Neighborhood Reinvestment and Displacement*. Urban Public Policy. SUNY Press.
- Scott, D. & Usher, R. 1996. *Understanding educational research*. Psychology Press.
- Sieber, T. 1987. "Urban Gentrification: Ideology and Practice in Middle Class Civic Activity." *City and Society*. 1:52-63.
- Slater, T. 2004. "Municipally-Managed Gentrification in South Parkdale Toronto." *The Canadian Geographer*. 48(3):303-325
- Slater, T. 2006. "The Eviction of Critical Perspectives from Gentrification Research." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. 30(4):737-757.
- Smith, M.F. 1971. *Filtering and Neighborhood Change*. Internal Struggles of the City. New York: Oxford Press.
- Smith, N. 1979. "Toward a Theory of Gentrification: A Back to the City Movement by Capital not People." *American Planning Association Journal*. 46:538-548.
- Smith, N. 1982. "Gentrification and Uneven Development." *Economic Geography*. 58(2):139-155.
- Smith, N. 1987. "Gentrification and the Rent Gap." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. 77(3):462-465.
- Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. 1990. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing.
- Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. 1994. *Grounded Theory methodology: An overview*, In: *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Denzin, N., K. and Lincoln, Y.,S., Eds. London: Sage Publishing.
- Sumka, H. J. 1979. "Neighborhood Revitalization and Displacement. A Review of the Evidence." *Journal of the American Planning Association*. 45(4):480-487.
- Tobin, G. & Anderson, B. D. 1982. "Will Public Schools Benefit from Urban Redevelopment?" *Urban Education*. 17(1)(April):73-96.
- Wagner, G. 2008. "Gentrification, Reinvestment, and Displacement in Baltimore." *Journal of Urban Affairs*. 17(1):81-96.

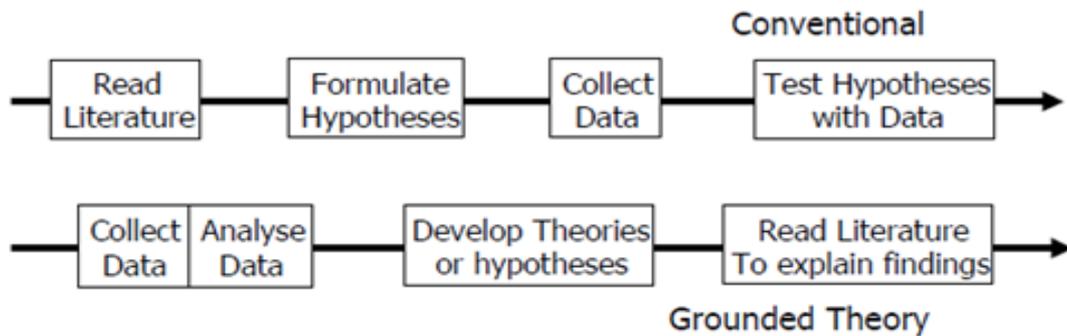
- Williams, P. & Smith, N. 1986. *Renaissance to Restructuring: the Dynamics of Contemporary Urban Development*. Albany, NY: State University of NY Press.
- Zukin, S. 1987. "Gentrification: Culture and Capital in the Urban Core." *American Review of Sociology*. 13:139-147.
- Zukin, S. 1989. *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- "Whose Food, Whose Community." Retrieved December 7, 2011(<http://whosefoods.org/>).
2011. "Homes & Community Renewal: Partnering to Improve and Preserve Our Homes and Communities." Retrived December 8, 2011 (www.nyhomes.org/Developers/MultifamilyDevelopment/8020HousingProgram.htm).
1988. "Reassessing Rent Control: Its Economic Impact In a Gentrifying Housing Market." *Harvard Law Review*. 101(8): 1835-1855.

APPENDIX A - CODING PROCESS AND PROCEDURE

Overview of Coding Process and Procedure

In this appendix, I will explain the iterative process and procedure used to code the data provided by this study's 23 respondents. The coding used for this paper followed Glaser's (1967) approach, the basic idea of which is to read and re-read a textual database (e.g., transcripts) to label variables (e.g., coding interviewees' quotes), which reveal interrelationships between the coded categories (e.g., building renewal increases cost of living and displaces lower income residents). The ability to perceive variables and relationships is termed "theoretical sensitivity" and is affected by a number of things including one's reading of the literature, which is used to explain findings (Jones 2005), and one's use of techniques designed to enhance sensitivity (e.g., re-coding variables and structure of interview guide).

Figure 1: Comparison of Conventional Methods to Grounded Theory



Source for Figure 1: Jones, 2005

I used Microsoft Excel and One Note to sort, code, refine, and organize quotes from interviewees. Microsoft One Note was used to initially code transcripts, using various pre-set symbols that allow you to easily navigate to coded quotes. After this

initial coding, select quotes (which are associated with codes) were copied from One Note into Excel. After transferring these select quotes, additional refinements were made and new codes emerged as a result, as per grounded theory. Then, all quotes used for this study were re-coded a second time to ensure their accuracy and further refinements, where needed, were made. Only the one person interviewed respondents and coded the data.

A detailed discussion on the steps used to code the data for this study can be found below:

Step One – Open Coding, Broad Theories and Hypothesis

Software Used: Microsoft One Note & Transcript Print-Outs

Codes Identified: Approximately 314

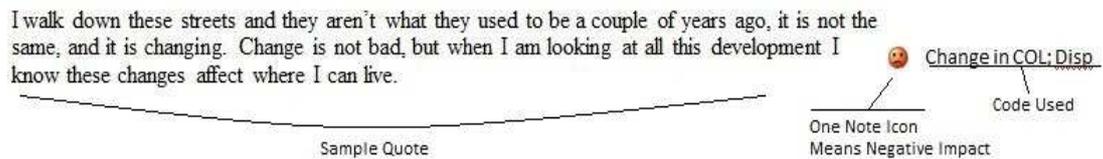
Purpose: Discovery of broad theories and hypothesis via initial coding.

Summary: Reviewed transcripts in order to identify broad codes, marking *key words/concepts* important to understanding gentrification.

In this step of the coding process, I went through all the transcripts and did some very broad coding. They marked, using symbols and colors, various keywords (e.g., luxury, crime, improvements, etc.), and concepts (e.g., cost of living increases, new job development, etc.) that related to the literature previously reviewed. Several codes were identified (approximately 314); however, this number is inflated because the codes used had not yet been refined. This meant that the same concept, in this initial step, may have been coded using different words (e.g., “fewer drug dealers” and “safer streets” were coded as *reduction in crime* after refinement, but in this initial step, they were separate codes). Due to this, the 314 codes discovered should not be considered “unique” values.

Example: An entire interviewee’s transcript was reviewed. Symbols, with short notes, were used on the right margins (see screenshot).

Figure 2: Example of Open Coding Procedure



Step Two – Axial Coding, Selecting Categories and Quotes

Software Used: Microsoft One Note & Excel

Codes Identified: 2 Major Categories, 10 Sub-Categories, and 46 Codes Related to Direct Quotes

Purpose: Refine codes from step one and move select quotes to Excel.

Summary: The initial codes identified in step one were refined. In addition, quotes I felt should be included in the paper were moved from Microsoft One Note to Excel.

The core purpose of step two was to identify, from a list of refined codes, the quotes I felt may be included in this paper. These *select quotes* were moved to excel in order to make filtering and organizing easier (see example below). From there, they were further refined under cross-cutting *major categories*. This was done in order to make explicit connections between codes discovered in step one and umbrella categories in step two.

Example: Columns were labeled in list format in order to allow for simple filtering. For example, if I just wanted to look at quotes related to “displacement,” they could select “displacement” from a check list, which would filter out all other codes.

Figure 3: Example of Axial Coding Procedure

| Respondent Surname | Major Categories | Minor Categories | Select Quotes |
|---------------------------------|--|---|---|
| 3-Letter Surname for Respondent | 1.Negative Impacts 2.Positive Impacts | Displacement, Harassment, etc. Renewal, Employment, etc. | I walk down these streets and they aren't what they used to be a couple of years ago, it is not the same, and it is changing. |



Step Three – Selective Coding, Selecting Quotes

Software Used: Microsoft Excel

Codes Identified: Same as Step Two; codes integrated together to form a *grounded theory*.

Purpose: Develop a grounded theory, core categories, and validate coding.

Summary: In the final coding procedure, unused codes/quotes were removed for easier review and to generate a storyline.

To make the process simpler and more efficient, codes and quotes not used in this paper were removed from the excel spreadsheet. Then, all the quotes were re-coded to ensure that they were accurately coded and grounded in the theory. After this, all the codes and quotes were used to form a storyline about how people are experiencing gentrification and the impacts it has on the community (e.g., lower-income residents receive the brunt of gentrification's negative impacts).

Example: See the conceptual framework below for an example of the storyline revealed from the grounded theory analysis of gentrification (see next page):

Figure 4: Conceptual Framework

