



WEEK 13: Gentrification: Displacement & Resistance

November 21, 2022 | Adjunct Lecturer: Erin Lilli | URBST 222: Introduction to Urban Housing
/URBST 723: Dynamics of Housing & Homelessness

- Why is displacement hard to measure?
 - What are the challenges and limitations?
- What are some ways we can try to measure or approximate the degree of displacement?



Displacement

Displacement “occurs when any household is forced to move from its residence by conditions that affect the dwelling or its immediate surroundings, and that:

1. are beyond the household’s reasonable ability to control or prevent;
2. occur despite the household’s having met all previously imposed conditions of occupancy; and
3. make continued occupancy by that household impossible, hazardous, or unaffordable”. (Marcuse, 1985, p. 205)

Forms of Displacement

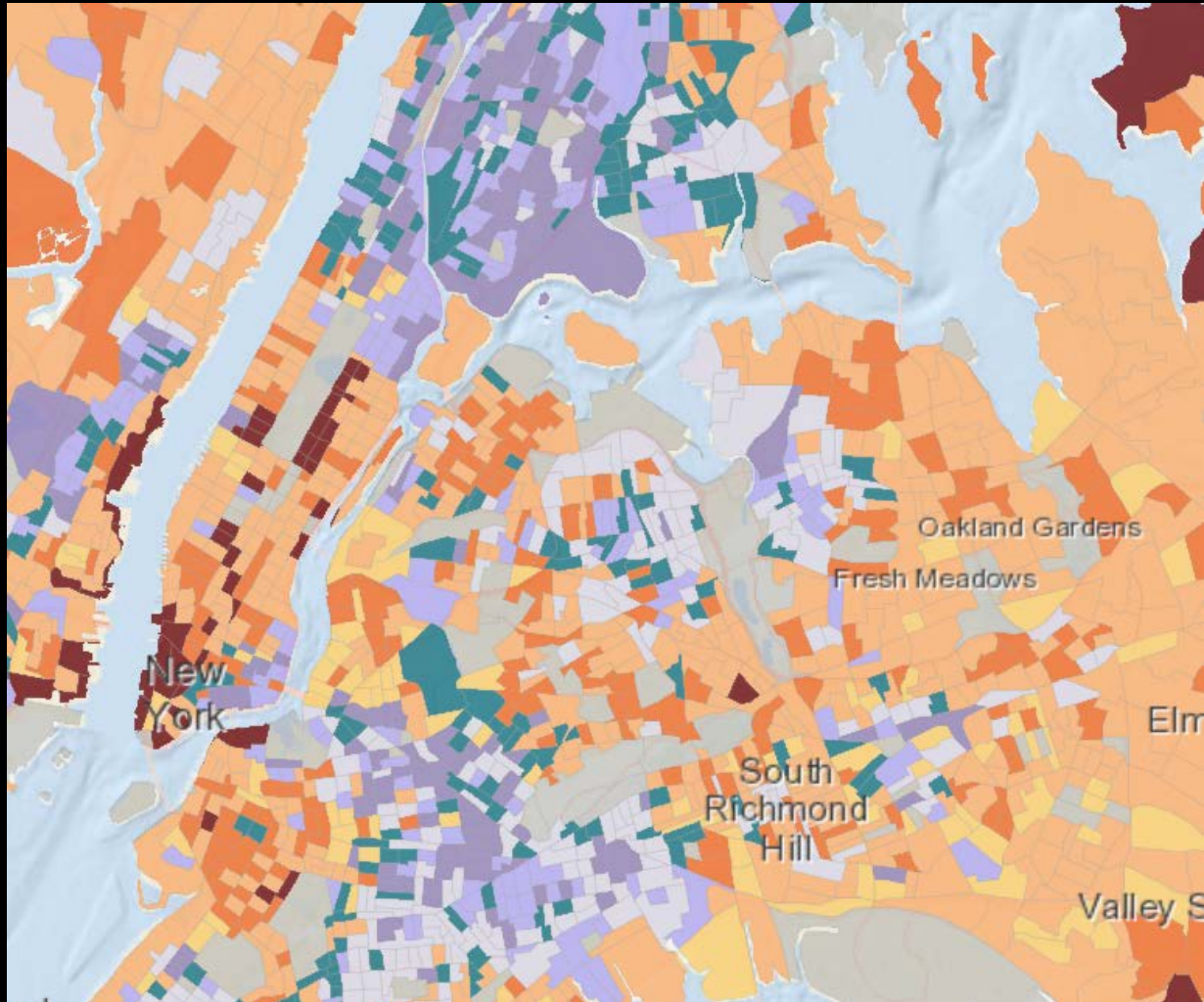
- **Direct:** from a household that is currently occupied, this includes physical and economic forms of displacement.
 - What are some examples of physical and economic forms?
- **Exclusionary:** occurs when any household is not permitted to move into a dwelling, by a change in conditions that affects the dwelling or its immediate surroundings (one can be excluded from a neighborhood because of high rents).
- **Displacement Pressure:** changes in neighborhood and loss of social ties and services.
 - What are some examples that might constitute displacement pressure?
- **Symbolic:** “...sense of subordination, discomfort and unease with trying to stay-put while the visible and sensed changes of the physical and social fabric of the neighborhood and its symbolic order shifted dramatically as rapid gentrification took place” (Atkinson, 2015, p. 382).

Gentrification & Displacement

“... ‘gentrification’ is many things and almost never all at once, and a common position in scholarship and in the public sphere is that the term cannot be stably defined...Yet... the process involves a locale with privileged newcomers and the displacement of marginalized residents”. (Jesse Mumm, 2017, p.104-5)

- Economistic and heavily quantitative studies of gentrification depoliticize the issue with concepts like:
 - “willingness-to-pay” for improved neighborhood quality (Vigdor, 2010)
 - likelihood of exiting a gentrifying area (Vigdor, 2002),
 - relations between mobility and displacement (Freeman, 2005; Ding et al., 2016), and
 - relations between increased property tax and displacement (Martin and Beck, 2018).
- These perspectives ignore the lived experience of gentrification and at best superficially acknowledge negative socio-political outcomes, while at worst reproduce free-market thinking.

Tracking Displacement



<https://www.urbandisplacement.org/maps/ny>

Displacement and Gentrification Census Tract Typologies

Typology (tract income level)	Typology Criteria
Not Losing Low-Income Households (Low Income)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pop in 2000 > 500 • Low Income Tract in 2016 • Not classified as At Risk or Ongoing Gentrification or Displacement
At Risk of Gentrification (Low Income)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pop in 2016 > 500 • Low Income Tract in 2016 • Vulnerable in 2016 (Defined in Appendix) • "Hot market" from 2000 to 2016 • Not currently undergoing displacement or ongoing gentrification
Ongoing Displacement of Low-Income Households (Low Income)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pop in 2000 > 500 • Low Income Tract in 2016 • Loss of LI households 2000-2016 (absolute loss) • Few signs of gentrification occurring
Ongoing Gentrification (Low Income)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pop in 2000 or 2016 > 500 • Low Income Tract in 2016 • Gentrified in 1990-2000 or 2000-2016 (Defined in Appendix)
Advanced Gentrification (Moderate to High Income)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pop in 2000 or 2016 > 500 • Moderate to High Income Tract in 2015 • Gentrified in 1990-2000 or 2000-2016 (Defined by Appendix)
Stable Exclusion (Moderate to High Income)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pop in 2000 > 500 • Moderate to High Income Tract in 2016 • Not classified as Ongoing Exclusion
Ongoing Exclusion (Moderate to High Income)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pop in 2000 > 500 • Moderate to High Income Tract in 2016 • Loss of LI households 2000-2016 (absolute loss) • LI migration rate (percent of all migration to tract that was LI) in 2016 < in 2009
Super Gentrification or Exclusion (Very High Income)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pop in 2000 > 500 • Median household income > 200% of regional median in 2016 • Indicators of Gentrification or Exclusion

<https://www.urbandisplacement.org/maps/new-york-gentrification-and-displacement/>



Pushed Out: Displacement Today and Lasting Impacts




Watch later



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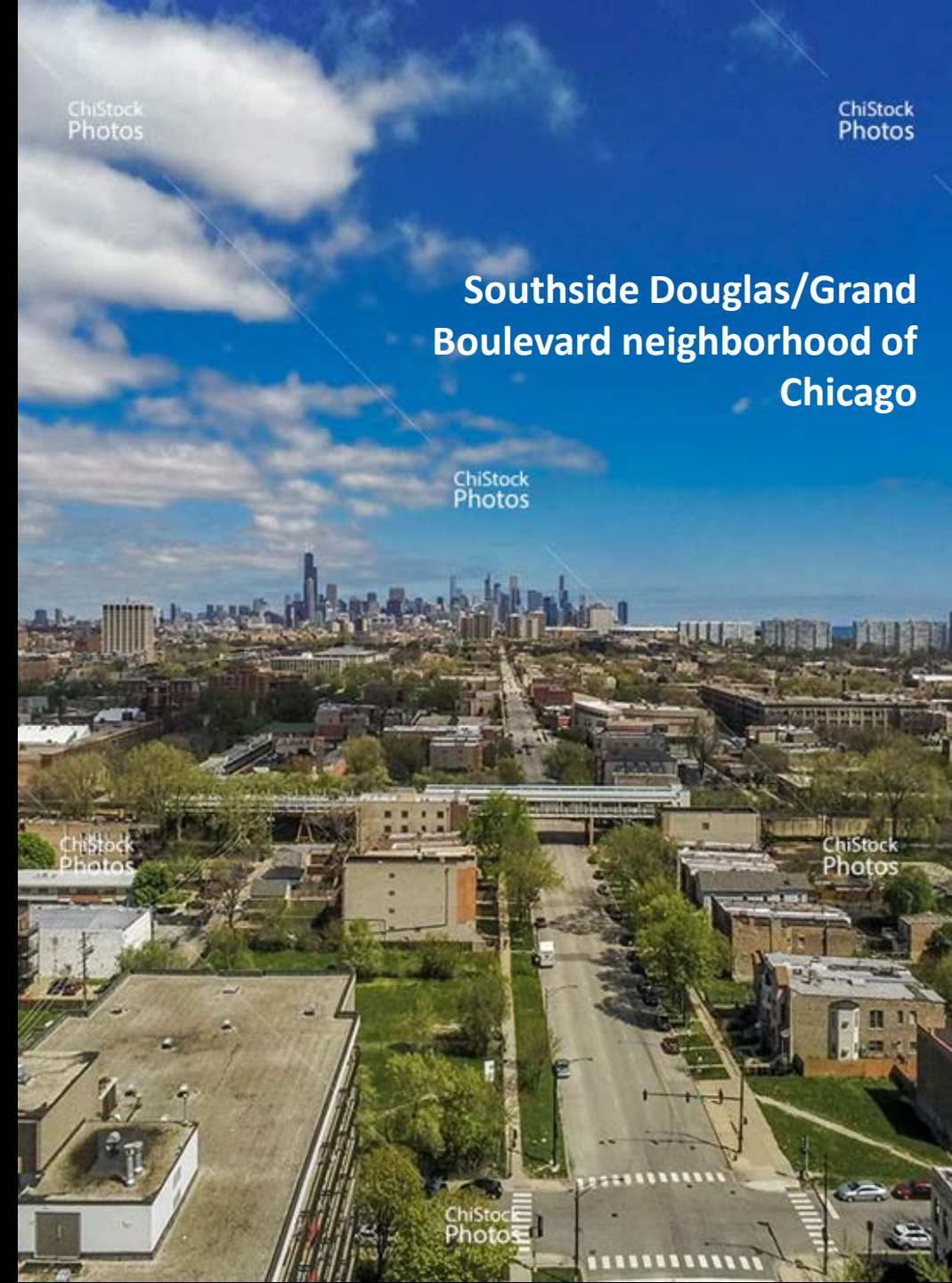


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Resisting Gentrification: Defensive Development

Michelle Boyd's (2005, 2008) research on Black gentrification considers intra-racial class conflict and resistance that uses both race and gentrification as starting points from which desired development would occur.

- Studying Southside Chicago, Boyd's work moves beyond the production-consumption debates to study the role of racial conflict and defensive tactics in this gentrifying neighborhood.
- Using ethnographic techniques and interviews, she questions the notion that Black residents will always resist gentrification. Rather, in this case, they politicize it as an expression of their class position.
- Through the concept of **defensive development**, adopted by Black gentrifiers, and racial order theory, Boyd argues that secondary marginalization is taking place as the poor, public housing residents become alienated while **“community building and economic revitalization strategies designed to protect their neighborhoods from control by White residents”** are deployed by the Black middle-class (2008, p. 752).
- Forms of defensive development by the Black gentrifiers included:
 - a collaborative planning process with the Illinois Institute of Technology as part of the Restoring Bronzeville land use plan, marketing the neighborhood as an African American Heritage tourist destination,
 - the creation of a local Black leadership base to implement economic development.



Resisting Gentrification: Defensive Tactics

James Lloyd's (2016) study of the historically Black Adams-Morgan neighborhood in Washington, D.C. also identifies defensive, rather than resistive, strategies whereby organized communities acted to contest the nature of local gentrification but not thwart or stop it.

Adams-Morgan neighborhood in Washington, D.C.



- Using archival data and oral histories Lloyd found residents took **advantage of a legal opportunity** developed in wake of the 1974 condominium conversions which gave tenants the right of first refusal.
- The right was codified in the **1980 Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act** by which landlords must first offer buildings to tenants before going to market. As whole-block redevelopment threatened the displacement of Adams-Morgan residents, two lawsuits were filed on behalf of twenty-three families who were never given their tenant's rights to purchase.
- This occurred even as the developer racked up over 500 code violations, tried to buy out families for as little as \$250, and later flip the property for at least \$40,000.
- **By invoking their tenant's rights through pro-bono legal services, the tenants were able to stop the evictions**, but to stay in their homes they had to exercise their option to buy and prove they had the funds to do so.
- The Adams-Morgan Organization raised funds for down payments and closing costs but getting the primary loan on a home was still an issue. **Through protesting the opening of a local banking branch, that had historically redlined Adams-Morgan, tenants enforced a set of contractual conditions including the bank's promise to cover homeowner loans up to 90% of the home's value.** challenging the capitalist framework enabling it.



Resisting Gentrification: Black Gentrification

Kesha S. Moore (2009) explores the intersection of race and class in Philadelphia. She argues that Black gentrification is a product of the continued racial exclusion of African Americans and reflects a specific social justice agenda that challenges this system of racial and class stratification.

- Moore finds that **Black gentrification is not driven by the same factors** and does not produce the same outcomes as gentrification observed among White gentrifiers.
- Using ethnographic methods inclusive of participant observation and twenty informal interviews with residents and community-based organizations, Moore found that **most middle-class interviewees wanted to give back to the community** and desired a Black neighborhood **integrated along class lines**.
- The neighborhood's local community development corporation (CDC), with roots in a religious institution advocating for public housing, believed in **staged redevelopment** whereby luxury development could be built to attract more affluent Black residents while taking care to **encourage asset accumulation among low-income residents**.
- For this CDC, **gentrification could be pursued in the neighborhood without displacement**, although there is still some concern given its location near downtown.
- Moore also found that the higher social status of Black gentrifiers doesn't easily transfer to the whole neighborhood because visual signs of social mobility are not clear, and perceptions of it as a poor Black community persist.
 - For instance, compared to patterns in white gentrification, **Black gentrification in parts of Philadelphia had "fewer housing options, fewer economic resources, and lower social status"** (p. 136) than their white counterparts and an expressed social justice agenda in their motivations to gentrify. This exemplifies the complexity of race and class in gentrifiers themselves.



Resisting Gentrification: Co-opting “Mexican-ness”

Winifred Curran (2018) documents instances of Mexican identity being co-opted and commodified for profit through the notion of ‘defining Mexican-ness’ which heavily revolved around debates of who or what was considered Mexican (i.e., who should be in the neighborhood) and the appropriation of Mexican cultural motifs used in luxury condo design.

- To understand the process of displacement and gentrification as it unfolded over thirteen years, Curran (2018) draws on a longitudinal community-research project with the Pilsen Alliance.
- The purpose is to understand how resistance strategies take shape and to what degree developers and other gentrification actors adapt these strategies for their own profit goals.
- Prompted by fears of gentrification by the University of Illinois’ campus expansion and a Tax Increment Financing district designation, the predominantly Mexican community engaged in various resistance strategies including:
 - knocking on doors, attending community meetings, creating ballot measures (a downzoning referendum), and honing media coverage to construct a democratic vision of the neighborhood.
 - These were used to push for incremental zoning changes as residents also utilized community land trusts, historic preservations districts, and property tax caps to slow the gentrification process.



VOICES

GENTRIFICATION &
DISPLACEMENT



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Sources

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