

## I. Introduction

The literature review will provide an overview of literature that has been written on the issue of gentrification. Ultimately, the objective of the review is to acquaint readers with the various aspects of this subject matter by first showing how the research contained in this report can add value to policy makers and communities dealing with gentrification. The review will address main themes and debates within gentrification research. In doing so, the review will also highlight specific areas where additional research is needed, specifically addressing how the research proposed for this paper can add value. Next, by using existing literature the review will then show how the findings support or contradict the hypothesis for this research. The proposed research methods will then be discussed, drawing upon the strengths and weaknesses used by existing studies.

## II. Review of Literature

### A. How Can Additional Research Provide Value?

In the 1940s and 50s, middle-class households started leaving the city in search of a better life in the suburbs. By the 1960s this left many central cities populated with high concentrations of poor, oftentimes minority households. As property values dropped, many municipalities were faced with declining tax revenues and rising social service costs. Urban renewal programs became the federal government's solution to the problem as ghettos emerged across the nation. In general, these programs did more harm than good to central city communities, leaving urban communities scarred and distrustful of any kind of revitalization effort.

In the 1970s, a more organic form of urban renewal began to emerge—gentrification. The national economic shift from manufacturing to services meant that many working-class residents employed by blue-collar jobs were now in low paying service positions. At the same time, white-collar professionals were on the rise. The decline of familism, the increasing number of professionals without children, and the desire for a reduced commuting time lead many of these professionals to choose to reside in the urban core instead of the suburbs. Thus gentrification was different from traditional urban renewal in that it was initiated by the private sector.<sup>1</sup> For central cities, the gentrification process meant a

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<sup>1</sup> David Melchert, and Joel L. Naroff, "Central City Revitalization: A Predictive Model," *AREUEA Journal* 15, no. 1 (1987): 664.

return of tax-generating middle-class residents to the city.<sup>2</sup> It also signaled an opportunity for racial and economic integration. Middle-class pioneers looking for cheap buildings with architectural appeal purchased and restored properties in central city communities for use as their primary residence.<sup>3</sup> This restoration triggered risk-averse individuals and investors to consider central city communities as viable areas for revitalization. Unfortunately, these investors and realtors did not always have the best interest of existing neighborhood residents in mind. Some realtors actively encouraged more of their own “kind” to move into a neighborhood by buying properties cheaply and then turning around and selling them for a large profit.<sup>4</sup> Investors have also been known to engage in questionable business practices, threatening individuals who refuse to sell their properties in gentrifying communities. While these are some of the more extreme situations, there are many stories of people who find themselves displaced by gentrification. Prices are eventually bid up such that low-income renters and owners cannot compete with middle- and upper middle-income individuals. Many rental units are converted to ownership properties, and existing property owners often cannot afford the increase in property taxes and are forced to move elsewhere. It has become apparent that uncontrolled gentrification could have negative consequences for existing residents, namely displacement and a reconcentration of lower-income individuals in specific parts of the neighborhood.<sup>5</sup> While gentrification holds the potential to benefit communities, the potential downsides have led many theorists to contend that a public/ private partnership that “channels the benefits generated from gentrification to the areas where community services could be more effectively and efficiently provided, while at the same time controlling the intensity and minimizing the disruptive neighborhood changes generated by gentrification” is needed.<sup>6</sup>

For those residents who do remain in the neighborhood, there is often a cultural conflict between new and old residents. This conflict varies in its nature, but is often rooted in a combination of racial and class struggles. Sometimes, new and existing residents have differing beliefs about what type of behavior is acceptable or unacceptable. In some neighborhoods this has resulted in new residents complaining to the police things such as residents “hanging out” on the sidewalk. Interestingly, many gentry cite the diversity of their neighborhood as an attractive and distinctive quality.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, many existing residents feel alienated from their new neighbors and indicate that they experience increased harassment from law enforcement trying to keep the newer neighbors feeling safe.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 665.

<sup>3</sup> John J. Betancur, Isabel Domeyko, and Patricia A. Wright, *Gentrification in West Town: Contested Ground* (Chicago: University of Chicago, Nathalie P. Voorhees Center for Neighborhood and Community Improvement, 2001), 11.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>5</sup> Melchert, 665.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Betancur et al., 38.

Many of the newer residents are also less involved in neighborhood organizations. As a result, many lack the opportunity to get to know their neighbors. In neighborhoods that do have strong neighborhood associations or community development corporations, gentrifying neighborhoods have been more successful at combating the negative aspects of gentrification. A NeighborWorks study found that neighborhood residents in Boston's Jamaica Plain and D.C.'s Shaw felt the gentrification that was taking place in their neighborhood to be an overall positive experience.<sup>8</sup> Neighborhood organizations in Atlanta's Reynoldstown neighborhood also mobilized against some gentrification efforts in their neighborhood to ensure that what was taking place was more in line with the residents' vision of the neighborhood.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to neighborhood organizations, CDCs have also been involved in mitigating the negative effects of gentrification. In the West Town neighborhood of Chicago, the Northwest Community Organization (NCO) worked with other communities affected by Chicago's gentrification efforts to develop a neighborhood plan authored by residents, which emphasized the goal of a working class community, and developed a means of creating moderate-income housing without displacing lower-income residents.<sup>10</sup> While the plan itself was not a success given the political opposition, it did signal a mobilization effort on the part of neighborhoods dealing with gentrification.<sup>11</sup>

CDCs have also been instrumental in developing additional housing units for lower-income individuals in urban, often gentrifying neighborhoods. In the West Town neighborhood, the Bickerdike Development Corporation rehabilitated and developed housing units, and did repair jobs for seniors.<sup>12</sup> In general, CDCs and community organizations have served as a means of pressuring local government for more affordable housing development and financial and legal service programs for renters facing eviction.<sup>13</sup>

Even with neighborhood organizations and community development corporations acting on behalf of residents affected by gentrification, there are often powerful political and economic forces in favor of a "free market" approach to gentrification. In the 1990s, redistricting took place in West Town. According to some, this process effectively diluted the Latino and Black presence and electoral power in West Town.<sup>14</sup> It also provided local aldermen with the power

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<sup>8</sup> NeighborWorks America, *Managing Neighborhood Change: Best Practices for Communities Undergoing Gentrification* (Washington D.C.: NeighborWorks America, 2005), 4.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Betancur et al., 9.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Lance Freeman and Frank Braconi, "Gentrification and Displacement: New York City in the 1990s," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 70 (Winter 2004): 39.

<sup>14</sup> Betancur et al., 24.

to control zoning policies in the ward.<sup>15</sup> In West Town downzoning was consistently used by pro-gentrification alderman in order to “pick and choose the type of development that was allowed to proceed.”<sup>16</sup>

Apart from the negative aspects of gentrification, many believe that an influx of middle-class residents can truly benefit particularly lower-class communities. Proponents of mixed-income living and urban renewal view the effects of gentrification in a more favorable light, recognizing the potential for neighborhood revitalization, increased tax bases, and racial and economic integration.<sup>17</sup> Better understanding the gentrification process can help policy analysts determine how residential diversity in urban markets might be achieved.<sup>18</sup>

Gentrification can also benefit existing residents by attracting investment, retail and cultural services, and by increasing the political power within the neighborhood.<sup>19</sup> Additional retail can contribute to the creation of jobs. Some mixed-income proponents also believe that by having higher-income individuals as neighbors, lower-income adults have an increased opportunity to expand their access to jobs via networking, and children have an increased number of positive role models.<sup>20</sup>

In conclusion, gentrification has a noticeable impact on existing residents and their communities, changing the look, feel, and composition of their neighborhood. While not quite as negative as urban renewal, some of the same patterns are apparent. Having the appropriate policies in place, as well as having effective neighborhood organizations can help neighborhoods experiencing gentrification minimize its negative effects while taking advantage of its more positive elements.

## **B. Main Themes and Debates in Gentrification Literature**

Scholarly interest in gentrification peaked in the early 1980s.<sup>21</sup> However, many believe that the causes and consequences of gentrification are still not well understood.<sup>22</sup> Throughout the past few decades much of the literature has focused on determining why gentrification takes place, if gentrification is significant or sustainable, whether gentrification decreases the well-being of or imposes costs on disadvantaged households, what the equilibrium effects of

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>17</sup> Barrett Lee, Daphne Spain, and Debra Umberson, “Neighborhood Revitalization and Racial Change: The Case of Washington D.C.,” *Demography* 22, no. 4 (November 1985): 581.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Freeman and Braconi, 39.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Jacob Vigdor, “Does Gentrification Harm the Poor?” (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 2001), 133.

<sup>22</sup> Bruce London, Barrett Lee, and S. Gregory Lipton, “The Determination of Gentrification in the United States: A City-Level Analysis,” *Urban Affairs Quarterly* 21 (March 1986): 369.

gentrification are, the nature of displacement, the extent of class conflict, and the positive residential consequences.

### Why Does Gentrification Take Place?

In general, explanations about why gentrification takes place have been ecological, sociocultural, and political-economic.<sup>23</sup> In reviewing previous studies, Helms states that most of them have yielded inconclusive results.<sup>24</sup> Ecological explanations have pointed towards increasing levels of white-collar “corporate” activity in the central city and the reduction in traditional blue-collar manufacturing as the primary reason gentrification takes place in specific areas.<sup>25</sup> Sociocultural explanations have cited changing social values such as the decline of familism and pro-urbanism, as well as the persistent American individualist ideal as the primary reasons gentrification takes place.<sup>26</sup> The political-economic explanations differ and are traditional or Marxist in their nature.<sup>27</sup> Traditional explanations point to supply/ demand and market efficiency, or “invisible hand of the markets” as the guiding forces in gentrification.<sup>28</sup> Marxist explanations point to “power relationships and the uneven costs and benefits of neighborhood change.”<sup>29</sup> Marxist explanations “emphasize the role of economic interests and political power in guiding neighborhood change.”<sup>30</sup> These groups include realtors, developers, political and social elites, financial institutions, and business interests.<sup>31</sup> Bentancur proposes that there is “a close and complex relationship between the politics and economics of gentrification around factors of class and race—a power struggle between contending interests.”<sup>32</sup>

### Is Gentrification Here To Stay?

From its beginnings in the 70s, people have questioned if the gentrification “phenomenon was rare and unique.”<sup>33</sup> When the recession hit in the early 1990s, some saw the renovation activity that took place in the 80s as a temporary occurrence.<sup>34</sup> With gentrification rising again in many cities, it is evident that gentrification is a lasting dynamic in urban markets.<sup>35</sup> Smith

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<sup>23</sup> London et al., 372-73.

<sup>24</sup> Andrew Helms, “Understanding Gentrification: An Empirical Analysis of the Determinants of Urban Housing Renovation,” *Journal of Urban Economics* 54 (2003): 495.

<sup>25</sup> London et al., 372.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 372-73.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 373.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 374.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 374.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> John J. Bentancur, “The Politics of Gentrification: The Case of West Town in Chicago,” *Urban Affairs Review* 37, no. 6 (July 2002): 781.

<sup>33</sup> S. Gregory Lipton, “Evidence of Central City Revival,” *American Institute of Planners* (April 1977): 137.

<sup>34</sup> Neil Smith and James Defilippis, “The Reassertion of Economics in the Lower East Side,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 23 (1999): 638.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

concludes that when gentrification is defined as the rehabilitation of working-class neighborhoods, gentrification is evident at the census tract level, but not within the Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area.<sup>36</sup> In other words, the process has not become significant enough to counteract the national trend of suburbanization.<sup>37</sup> In his study of the twenty largest cities in the United States, Lipton found that half showed signs of neighborhood improvement.<sup>38</sup> Of the 105 neighborhoods studied by Clay, he concluded that 57 were experiencing gentrification.<sup>39</sup> While a majority of neighborhoods did experience gentrification he indicated that gentrifying neighborhoods are a relatively small percentage of any city's housing stock.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, Palen and London deduce that the housing stock gentrifiers are typically attracted to only accounts for a small percentage of total housing stock. In order for gentrification to become a widespread phenomenon, it must expand beyond the original elite areas of the city.<sup>41</sup>

### Who are the Gentrifiers?

In addition to explanations of why gentrification is taking place, existing research has tried to determine who the "gentry" are. While some have suggested that a "back-to-the-city" movement has taken place, pulling people from the suburbs, much of the literature concludes that the gentry tend to be people moving from other parts of the city. In other words, most gentrifiers are already residing in the city, looking for quality buildings at cheap prices.<sup>42</sup> In general, the literature has concluded that gentrifiers tend to first be self-marginalized, "risk-oblivious" people looking for undervalued neighborhoods.<sup>43</sup> Once the transition begins to take place, white-collar workers who are often 25- to 35-years old also see the attractiveness of the neighborhood, as well as others drawn to an urban neighborhood because of its proximity to the central core of the city.<sup>44</sup> In most cases, the gentrifiers are white. While in earlier instances, older neighborhoods in gentrifying neighborhoods tended to be comprised of white, working-class residents,<sup>45</sup> many gentrifying neighborhoods are now comprised of racial minorities.

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<sup>36</sup> Neil Smith and P. Williams, eds., *Gentrification and the City* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1986): 20.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Lipton, 139-40; J. John Palen and Bruce London, *Gentrification, Displacement and Neighborhood Revitalization* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), 11.

<sup>39</sup> P.L. Clay, *Neighborhood Renewal: Middle-Class Resettlement and Incumbent Upgrading in American Neighborhoods* (Lexington, MA.: Lexington Books, 1979); in Palen and London, 11.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid..

<sup>41</sup> Palen and London, 12.

<sup>42</sup> Helms, 476; Betancur, 786.

<sup>43</sup> Andres Duany, "Three Cheers for Gentrification," *The American Enterprise* 12, no. 3 (April 2001): 36.

<sup>44</sup> NeighborWorks America, *Managing Neighborhood Change: Best Practices for Communities Undergoing Gentrification* (Washington D.C.: NeighborWorks America, 2005), 8-9.

<sup>45</sup> Michael Lang, *Gentrification Amid Urban Decline* (Cambridge: Ballinger, 1982)

## Racial and Ethnic Dynamics Within Gentrification

With gentrification increasingly taking place in predominately minority neighborhoods, racial and class conflict has surfaced in gentrification literature. Lee et al. mention that the gentrifiers may use their resources and advantages to hasten the departure of the resident population.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore renovators who are also real estate agents might exclusively market to “their own kind.”<sup>47</sup> Betancur mentions that the “irreconcilable issues of class, ethnicity, and race drive the politics of gentrification.”<sup>48</sup> In looking at gentrification in Chicago’s West Town neighborhood, one study concluded that “gentrification was played out in racial terms.”<sup>49</sup> This conflict occurred in four ways: conflict between new Latino/ black residents and existing European ethnic groups, conflict between “pioneers’ and Latinos/ blacks, conflicts between members of the same class of gentrifiers but of different races, and conflict between Latino/ black homeowners and lower-income Latino/ black renters.”<sup>50</sup>

There seem to be mixed results on the attitudes of the gentry towards their minority neighbors. Many whites point to the diversity of their neighborhood in favorable terms.<sup>51</sup> At the same time, some whites refer to the gentrification process as that of civilizing the area.<sup>52</sup> Existing residents find themselves “marked” by the police in an effort to appease the concerns of the newer residents.<sup>53</sup> Even when gentrification initially temporarily integrates the neighborhood, Lee et al. state that the isolation of blacks from whites will exceed the level reached prior to revitalization, what they call the *segregation hypothesis*.<sup>54</sup> Segregation hypothesis is based upon social and economic reasons. Economically, many black residents will “be forced out” by increases in rent and property taxes or by conversions of rental properties to condominiums.<sup>55</sup> Socially, some new residents may desire socioeconomic exclusivity.<sup>56</sup>

Comment [S1]: May want to describe this hypothesis a bit

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<sup>46</sup> Lee, B.A., Spain D. and D.J. Umberson. “Neighborhood Revitalization and Racial Change: The Case of Washington D.C.” *Demography* 22 (1985): 585.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Betancur, 780.

<sup>49</sup> Betancur et al., 36.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Betancur et al., 38; Betancur, 792; Helms, 486.

<sup>52</sup> Betancur et al., 36.

<sup>53</sup> Gina M. Perez, “The Other Real World: Gentrification and the Social Construction of Place,” *Urban Anthropology and Studies of Cultural Systems and World Economic Development* 31, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 37.

<sup>54</sup> Lee et al., 582.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 585.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

## What is the Extent of Dislocation for Existing Low-Income Residents?

Existing literature concludes that long-term residents also experience dislocation. Lee et al. put forth the *dislocation hypothesis*, for which they assert that the “percentage of black residents in the city and neighborhood will decline as renovation activity proceeds.”<sup>57</sup> Dislocation takes place primarily for economic reasons. Many existing residents are renters. As property values rise, landlords raise their rents to realize greater profits. For those residents who are homeowners, the increase in property taxes makes homeownership unaffordable. Others choose to sell in order to benefit from the appreciation in their homes.

While displacement is a primary concern of both researchers and community activists, much of the research has been inconclusive.<sup>58</sup> Vigdor concludes that of the residents who identified themselves as being displaced, only 2-3% indicated that they were in a worse situation prior to dislocation.<sup>59</sup> And more importantly Vigdor found that gentrification decreased the likelihood of less-educated residents relocating.<sup>60</sup> Newman concluded that, while some neighborhoods do experience a significant amount of displacement, the national rate of displacement from gentrification was only 1% through 1977.<sup>61</sup> In looking at gentrification-related displacement in New York City during the 1990s, Freeman and Braconi concluded that a 1% increase in rent inflation was associated with a 1% decrease in the odds of moving, and that trade-down options exist within gentrifying neighborhoods.<sup>62</sup> DeGiovanni on the other hand found the dislocation of renters was a bit more significant; one-half of new owners surveyed in neighborhoods in six different cities indicated that renters had resided in their homes before they purchased them.<sup>63</sup> In spite of the fact that most research has concluded that gentrification-related displacement only affects a small percentage of neighborhoods in the country, it has still “been prominent enough to reawaken old fears about displacement.”<sup>64</sup>

One of the major problems with any research on displacement is determining how much displacement takes place as a result of gentrification and how much displacement takes place irrespective of the gentrification process.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 581.

<sup>58</sup> Freeman and Braconi, 41.

<sup>59</sup> Vigdor, 170.

<sup>60</sup> Vigdor, 160.

<sup>61</sup> Sandra Newman and Michael Owen, “Residential Displacement: Extent, Nature, and Effects,” *Journal of Social Issues* 38 (1982): 147.

<sup>62</sup> Freeman and Braconi, 48.

<sup>63</sup> F.F. DeGiovanni, M.D. Connelly, B.R. Joyner, and N.A. Paulson, “Private Market Revitalization: Its Characteristics and Consequences,” (Washington D.C.: Research Triangle Institute for the Office of Policy Development and Research, 1981); in Palen and London, 81.

<sup>64</sup> Freeman and Braconi, 40.

<sup>65</sup> Lee et al., 584.



In part this is an unavoidable problem, and in part this is a result of how broad or narrow one's definition of displacement is. Furthermore, it is difficult to make general conclusions about displacement that are applicable on a national level given the regional nature of housing markets.<sup>66</sup>

### What Are the Potential Benefits of Gentrification?

Neil Smith, has looked at the economics behind gentrification. In his research, Smith uses rent gap theory to explain why gentrification takes place in inner-city neighborhoods. Building upon David Ley's rent gap theory, Smith argues that gentrification will take place in areas experiencing a "large gap between actual and potential land values."<sup>67</sup> Gentrification, therefore, brings about a realization of true land values.

While there is not complete consensus on the whether benefits exist within the gentrification process, some argue that the influx of higher-income individuals will provide positive examples to lower-income individuals.<sup>68</sup> Lee et al. cite HUD as a proponent of the development of mixed-income neighborhoods.<sup>69</sup> In his review of Boston, Vigdor states that is too difficult to directly determine if gentrification in fact harms the poor; a more circuitous question and answer process leads him to posit that gentrification is an equity issue more so than a market failure.<sup>70</sup>

In spite of the negative side effects for the poor, some argue that there are "countervailing benefits."<sup>71</sup> The influx of residents with more disposable income creates personal service and retail job opportunities in inner-city communities.<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, the increase in land values can increase the tax base without increasing service demand since most of the gentry do not have children.<sup>73</sup> The net effect is either a lower property tax rate without a decrease in service quality, or an increase in service quality without an increase in the property tax rate.<sup>74</sup> Finally, given that gentrification counteracts the abandonment process that has taken place in many urban neighborhoods over the course of the last few decades, the increased socioeconomic integration can increase the life quality of existing lower-income residents via a decrease in the "urban pathologies" witnessed in many inner-city neighborhoods.<sup>75</sup> Freeman and Braconi suggest that lower-income residents, who they found were more likely to remain in a

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<sup>66</sup> Lee et al., 597; Lipton, 139-144.

<sup>67</sup> Neil Smith, "Gentrification and the Rent Gap," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 77, no. 3 (September 1987): 464.

<sup>68</sup> Duany, 36.

<sup>69</sup> Lee et al., 581.

<sup>70</sup> Vigdor, 172.

<sup>71</sup> Vigdor, 145.

<sup>72</sup> Vigdor, 145.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 146.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

gentrifying neighborhood, might choose to remain in their neighborhood because they like and value the positive changes taking place.<sup>76</sup> The question still remains whether gentrification can in fact be successful for both new and existing residents, and what factors will make for such a success.

### C. Issues in Need of Further Exploration

In trying to determine why gentrification takes place, London et al. conclude that most research on the subject is “myopic” given the tendency to rely upon the authors’ preferred discipline within the study of the urban environment.<sup>77</sup> They go on to conclude that the only way to understand the process is to take a more “eclectic” approach, synthesizing the various causes.<sup>78</sup> In a similar vein, Vigdor states that policy instruments will vary depending upon whether gentrification is in fact a side effect of a larger shift in the labor market.<sup>79</sup> In other words, the policy response to income-induced gentrification should be different from the policy response to preference-driven gentrification.<sup>80</sup> While it might be unlikely to reach full consensus on the cause of gentrification, looking at responses to gentrification by both the public and private sector will better determine which types of responses appear to be most successful in specific types of situations.

There is also a need to further identify the extent of the negative aspects of gentrification, such as displacement and race/ class conflicts, and more importantly how these situations can be minimized. Freeman and Braconi state that social scientists and policy analysts “must do a better job of providing quantifying evidence of the extent and implications of displacement and the effectiveness of strategies to mitigate it.”<sup>81</sup> In part this lies in having effective public policies in place, but it also entails empowering the communities in which gentrification is taking place by understanding how to effectively combat or minimize the negative impacts. In determining the causes of renovation activity, Helms indicates that it would be helpful to better understand how public policies, such as redevelopment programs and land-use/ zoning regulations, play a role in the revitalization process.<sup>82</sup> Freeman and Braconi point to the rent burdens for poor households in gentrifying neighborhoods as evidence that housing policy should address this issue via affordable housing, even if widespread displacement is not occurring.<sup>83</sup> Policies should also be developed that balance both the type and price point of housing in gentrifying neighborhoods.<sup>84</sup> This involves not only understanding the patterns existent in the negative aspects, but

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<sup>76</sup> Freeman and Braconi, 48 & 50.

<sup>77</sup> London et al., 382.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 383.

<sup>79</sup> Vigdor, 144.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 143.

<sup>81</sup> Freeman and Braconi, 40.

<sup>82</sup> Helms, 496.

<sup>83</sup> Freeman and Braconi, 50.

<sup>84</sup> Betancur et al., 38.

also understanding the positive elements of gentrification so that they can be leveraged to the fullest extent possible. In other words, research needs to be conducted to better examine the way residents and community organizations have responded to the various aspects of neighborhood change as well as the effects of gentrification on the perceptions of new and long-term residents.<sup>85</sup> After examining gentrification in West Town, Betancur et al. conclude that there are 8 specific strategies that can help mitigate the negative effects of gentrification, including strong support for CDCs, local and citywide zoning reform, and the production and preservation of low-income rental units.<sup>86</sup>

There is also a need to determine if the benefits that people espouse exist for lower-income residents do truly exist and are taking place. If not, it is important to determine how public policy might be able to assist in the process. Melchert and Naroff indicate that a model of gentrification must first be developed prior to developing public/ private policies to minimize the negative externalities.<sup>87</sup> Much of the research up to this point has focused on developing this model. While it is still difficult to make absolute conclusions, gentrification research has reached a point where it must turn to developing strategies and policies that maximize the positives of gentrification while minimizing the negative effects that arise from the issue of equity or lack thereof that manifests itself in the built environment. Vigdor concludes that public policy should directly address those households that are most vulnerable to the market effects of gentrification.<sup>88</sup>

## **D. Hypothesis**

The hypothesis put forward for this research paper is that there are ways in which the negative effects of gentrification can be mitigated for low-income residents in New York City's Harlem neighborhood.

In general, studies that provide examples of successful mobilization on the part of existing residents will support this research proposal. Literature illustrating the power of local governments, gentrifiers, and business interests to undermine and ignore the voice of existing residents will be contradictory to this paper, in so far as it concludes that there is not much that can be done by existing residents to combat the forces of gentrification.

### Support for Hypothesis

Much of the more recent literature has alluded to fact that there are actions that can be taken to minimize the negative effects of gentrification on lower-income residents. Van Meter believes that CDCs can play an important role in

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<sup>85</sup> NeighborWorks America, 11.

<sup>86</sup> Voorhees, 39 & 40.

<sup>87</sup> Melchert and Naroff, 665.

<sup>88</sup> Vigdor, 173.

“community-controlled development.”<sup>89</sup> In the same article, Van Meter refers to Lance Freeman and Frank Braconi’s conclusion that the depletion of low-income housing in gentrifying neighborhoods is taking place, but at a slower speed than many assume.<sup>90</sup> He builds on this finding by proposing that CDCs can play a role in this process by developing housing, helping residents build skills, and fostering social integration.<sup>91</sup> Vigdor concludes that a targeted demand approach would help mitigate the negative effects of gentrification on the poor.<sup>92</sup> In proposing strategies, Betancur et al. suggest that a mixture of public policies and CDC efforts will assist in alleviating the negative effects of gentrification.<sup>93</sup> In looking at gentrification in the Tenderloin neighborhood, Robinson found that CDCs played a significant role in preserving affordable housing.<sup>94</sup> In a 1990 study, Robinson states that CDCs produced 61% of San Francisco’s affordable housing.<sup>95</sup> Because existing literature demonstrates that there have been communities in which the negative effects of gentrification have been minimized, namely through CDCs, it is possible to identify methods through which neighborhoods can make gentrification a more positive experience through the use of specific practices and policies.

### Contradiction of Hypothesis

There do not appear to be any studies that specifically state that low-income residents will not be able to mitigate the negative effects of gentrification. However, there are many studies that have concluded that low-income residents were unsuccessful with regards to their attempt to have a voice in the gentrification process. In the case of Chicago’s West Town neighborhood, low-income residents found themselves outmaneuvered by political and economic elites. The use of downzoning to control development patterns and redistricting to break-up the power of the black and Latino votes significantly diluted the voice of low-income residents.<sup>96</sup> In several of New York City’s neighborhoods, intense gentrification struggles took place, with the gentrifiers prevailing.<sup>97</sup> Similarly, in Philadelphia’s Society Hill neighborhood, low-income residents’ efforts to combat gentrification and the resulting displacement were blatantly ignored by political and economic elites in the city.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Bob Van Meter “CDCs in Gentrifying Neighborhoods.” *Shelterforce Online* 133 (January/ February 2004).

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Vigdor, 173.

<sup>93</sup> Betancur et al., 39-41.

<sup>94</sup> Tony Robinson, “Gentrification and Grassroots Resistance in San Francisco’s Tenderloin,” *Urban Affairs Review* 30 (March 1995): 502.

<sup>95</sup> I. Chen, “2065 New Housing Units in San Francisco,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 7 June 1991, sec. A21.; in Robinson, 503.

<sup>96</sup> Betancur et al., 23-35.

<sup>97</sup> Neil Smith, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (London: Routledge, 1996).; Neil Smith and James DeFilippis, 638-653.

<sup>98</sup> Neil Smith and P. Williams, eds., *Gentrification and the City* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1986).

These studies suggest that in spite of efforts to organize, low-income residents will not be able to win the battle against gentrification—or even achieve some degree of success—when faced with opposition from local political and economic elites.

## E. Methods Employed

There has been surprisingly little written about gentrification in Harlem. Freeman and Braconi looked at gentrification and displacement in Harlem and six other neighborhoods in New York City by analyzing the New York City Housing and Vacancy survey data for 1991, 1993, 1996, and 1999.<sup>99</sup> In addition to providing vacancy data, the survey also provides housing, socioeconomic, and demographic data.<sup>100</sup> Lipton explored patterns of renewal in central cities. He examined the urban core of New York City—within two miles of the central business district—using data from *The Census of Population and Housing: Census Tract Report*.<sup>101</sup> This data was utilized because of its easy standardization across the other 19 cities that Lipton was examining as well.<sup>102</sup> Smith used the case study method to explore and define gentrification as a struggle within the city. Smith looked at Harlem as well as New York City's Lower East Side and Philadelphia's Society Hill.<sup>103</sup>

Case studies are consistently employed in gentrification literature. These empirical studies are essentially a collection and comparison of descriptive information.<sup>104</sup> In part this is because gentrification is taking place at the neighborhood level. Thus, it is important to understand these dynamics within the context of the place. While these studies explain what is happening, they don't explain why it is happening. Theoretically oriented research emerged in response to this, looking at the underlying causes of gentrification. The drawback to this research, however, is that it often ignores the social aspect of gentrification. Melchert and Naroff looked at 1970 Census data in Boston to develop a set of indices that could be used to determine the likelihood of gentrification.<sup>105</sup> Similarly, London et al. looked at data from 48 of 51 cities in the Permanent Community Sample to determine why some cities were "candidates for gentrification while others were not."<sup>106</sup> Using 2000 Census data for Chicago, Andrew Helms tried to determine what the characteristics are that lend to the likelihood of neighborhood revitalization and renovation.<sup>107</sup> Lipton's analysis of twenty of the largest cities led him to conclude that cities with predominately

Comment [S2]: Cite studies that did that

<sup>99</sup> Freeman and Braconi, 42.

<sup>100</sup> Freeman and Braconi, 42.

<sup>101</sup> Lipton, 138.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Smith 1996; Betancur, 783.

<sup>104</sup> Smith, 462.

<sup>105</sup> Melchert and Naroff, 1987.

<sup>106</sup> London et al., 369.

<sup>107</sup> Helms, 2003.

white-collar central business districts will experience gentrification in their urban cores.<sup>108</sup>

While these studies did contribute to theories and trends within gentrification, they did little to address the social and personal nature of gentrification. Qualitatively oriented research did a better job with this.

In trying to determine best practices for communities experiencing gentrification, NeighborWorks America employed a comparative case study method to better understand the factors and conflicts encountered by communities attempting to address gentrification and the strategies that they employed.<sup>109</sup> The nature of this research is much more qualitative in nature.<sup>110</sup> In their exploration of the MLK Historic District, Mechanicsville, and Reynoldstown neighborhoods in Atlanta, Jamaica Plain in Boston, and the Shaw neighborhood in Washington D.C., they looked at the social aspect of gentrification. More specifically, they compared residents' responses to gentrification and how community-based organizations help residents manage the change taking place in their neighborhood.<sup>111</sup> They found the following:

Communities that understand, address, and manage the potential for and effects of gentrification are better able to contain some of gentrification's negative consequences. Research also suggests that such communities may have less conflict among newer and older residents; and that sources of conflict have less to do with changes in race and age and more with differences in income and lifestyle between older and newer residents.<sup>112</sup>

The authors also found that there are four key factors that play a role a community's ability to manage gentrification. They are community cohesiveness, community collaboration, community building and organizing, and an articulated response to gentrification.<sup>113</sup> The absence or presence of these factors impacted a community's ability to manage the social issues surrounding gentrification.<sup>114</sup>

This research paper will employ the case study method similar to that of the NeighborWorks study, primarily because the purpose of this research is to find solutions to the social consequences of gentrification. A comparative case study method will be employed in order to explore the commonalities of the gentrification process in several comparable locations.

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<sup>108</sup> Lipton, 148-147.

<sup>109</sup> NeighborWorks, 3.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

### III. Conclusion

In conclusion, there is still a need to identify how residents of neighborhoods undergoing gentrification can minimize its negative effects. Existing literature has provided a context in which it is possible to understand who the gentrifiers are and where they come from. The literature has also provided a theoretical understanding of the various issues and considerations associated with gentrification such as race/ class conflict and displacement, as well as a general understanding as to why gentrification takes place.

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