

Making the Just City

Mindy Fullilove, Derek Hyra, Dominic Moulden

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Interdisciplinary Research Leaders
Work-In-Progress Presentation
January 27, 2017

Our Team



Derek Hyra, PhD, American University

Mindy Fullilove, MD, The New School

Dominic Moulden, ONE DC
(Organizing Neighborhood Equity)



Core Assumptions/Hypotheses

- Gentrification often leads to a reduction in affordable housing, displacement, and disruption of social ties
- Gentrification leads to increased stress
- Affordable housing and robust social ties are needed for healthy living
- Community engagement is needed to address housing affordability and repair disruption in transitioning neighborhoods

Research Project

We hope to contribute to the preservation of affordable housing, rebuilding of social ties, and improvement in health by:

- Learning about the stressors that residents experience in gentrifying neighborhoods
- Facilitating exchange of knowledge regarding affordable housing and community building between a late-stage gentrification community (Shaw) and one that is in the early stages (Orange)

Research Questions

1. What are the stressors people experience in redeveloping communities?
2. How can community efforts preserve affordable housing?
3. How do community efforts help to rebuild social ties among different racial, ethnic, religious, and class groups?
4. How can the lessons learned from a community in late-stage gentrification influence one that is in the early stage of the process and vice versa?

Community Demographics (2010)

Orange - Essex County, NJ

- Population: 34,134
- Percent Black: 71.83%
- Median Home Value: \$238,000
- Percent Homeownership: 21%
- Percent BA or Higher: 22%
- Median Household Income: \$40,818

Shaw - Washington, D.C.

- Population: 34,750
- Percent Black: 30%
- Median Home Value: \$587,000
- Percent Homeownership: 35%
- Percent BA or Higher: 61%
- Median Household Income: \$83,302

Community Partnerships

An ideal community partner:

- Respects the stories and life lessons of the residents
- Builds power, capacity, and skills of the people
- Brings resources, interns, and staff to the organization
- Shares mission, vision, and values of the organization

ONE DC

- Established in 2006
- Membership-organized structure
- Resident-led
- Participatory action research guided
- Core Issues: housing, jobs, wellness, and community learning



The University of Orange

- Free people's university in Orange, NJ
- Established 2008
- Mission: Enhance people's ability to solve the problems of the world
- “Everybody has something to teach, everybody has something to learn”



Community-Based Participatory Action

Assumptions include:

- People experiencing an issue are well suited to evaluate their situations
- Information acquired with community participation is accurate and valid
- Data gathered with community “buy in” is more likely to result in action and social change
- Community partnerships are essential

Data Collection

- Participant observation (ongoing)
- Inter-urban exchanges (4)
- Individual interviews (20 per/community, 40 total)

Inter-Urban Exchanges

Exchange and travel of participants between two communities

- Solidify research plan
- Become familiar with two sites
- Compare and contrast late-stage/early-stage gentrification
- Facilitate knowledge transfer

Research Timeline

Spring 2017

Hire research consultants from each site
Host first “inter-urban exchange” in
Shaw

Kick-off participant observation

Fall 2017

Second “inter-urban exchange” in
Orange

Fall 2017 & Spring 2018

With help from research consultants,
complete 20 interviews per
community and transcribe
interviews

Spring 2018

Third exchange in Shaw
Preliminary analysis

Fall 2018

Fourth exchange in Orange

Spring 2019

Finalize analysis and results
Return to communities for
presentation of findings

Potential Outcomes

- Improved knowledge among research consultants on research design and methodology
- Increased interactions between long-term residents and newcomers
- A clearer understanding of the gentrification process by multiple stakeholders
- Published journal articles on gentrification, housing, stress, and health

Group Discussion

- Other hypotheses?
- What else should we be exploring?
- Are there other things we should document and track?
- Given the federal political shift, does anyone have thoughts about effective ways to disseminate our findings?