

Spring 2015

Gentrification and Community Development Groups: Boston Area

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Butt, Aqsa, "Gentrification and Community Development Groups: Boston Area" (2015). *Landscape Architecture & Regional Planning Studio and Student Research and Creative Activity*. 43.

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Gentrification and Community Development Groups: Boston Area

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Publication Date: Spring 2015

Keywords: Gentrification, Community Development, Socio Economics, Urban Redevelopment, Boston, Housing Insecurity, Affordable Housing, Social Challenges, Neighborhood Development.

Discipline: Social and Behavioral Sciences

Comments: This case study has previously been accepted for an oral presentation and poster presentation at the upcoming The Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA), Los Angeles International Conference. Given the progress on Aqsa's work, she will be moving forward with presenting in May 2015.

Abstract

Gentrification plays a significant role in the Boston area. Its influx of affluent residents benefits those who are economically stable. There is considerable increase in housing costs and in property value for locals that may contribute to their housing insecurity. Community Development groups assist lower income residents that may lack guidance, social, economic, and political power to address issues that arise with subsidized housing.

An analysis of vulnerable populations in Boston: elderly, poor, minorities, homeless, substance dependents, and the disabled, reveal a challenge for Community Development Groups: gentrification contributes to housing insecurity of local residents. The city needs to redefine the term affordable housing, increase rate of construction for low income housing, and regulate zoning laws.

Literature review defines the research questions, with primary data gathered through the City of Boston's Department of Neighborhood Development. Data is analyzed through non-structured interviews with community development programs: Somerville Community Corporation and Tri-City Community Action Program. Interviews integrate comprehensive information regarding the challenges and impacts of gentrification. The results are analyzed, identifying key themes regarding the social problem. The outcome of this research will propose strategies to mediate the problem and spread social awareness at the international level.

Planning solutions proposed by participant's community corporations include:

- Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance
- Affordable housing linkage fee
- Expiring use plan

Community development groups play a crucial role in society, and more strategies should be developed to increase rate of construction for vulnerable populations, regulate zoning laws, and raise social awareness regarding the social problem.

Publication Status:

A previous version of this abstract has been accepted for publication in the conference proceedings at The Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA), Los Angeles International Conference May 2015.