**AN EXPLORATORY LOOK AT
DISPLACEMENT IN HIGHLAND PARK**

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In honor of all the indigenous, low-income, immigrant, and working-class families who have violently been displaced. This study is to highlight your stories of trauma and resilience in hopes to create a reality where future generations have a right to housing and the ability to live in a better world.

ABSTRACT:

Gentrification is a growing epidemic in many urban communities, often leading to mass displacement of working-class populations. However, renter displacement becomes undermined because renters who have become displaced are no longer part of the conversation when it comes to gentrification, and often not included in the development of housing policies.

This research will center the experiences of renters who are being displaced due to gentrification. By conducting an exploratory case study of renter displacement in the community of Highland Park, this research can provide a glimpse of how displacement has intersecting social and health implications. To do this research, interviews were conducted with people that work for organizations in Highland Park that either resist displacement or provide support to renters being displaced. In addition, online archives were utilized to gather people's personal experiences of gentrification and displacement. Lastly, quantitative data was collected to further explore the demographic shifts that contribute to the context of gentrification and displacement in Highland Park.

This research found that support systems and grassroots organizing often fill a void for renters that lack renter protections, educational resources and legal services. This research also found that as people get displaced from a community they are pushed further from their support systems, which can create lasting effects for renter's quality of life. Equally as important, this research found

that a lack of support systems tend to create unstable conditions for renters that often end up perpetuating health disparities in low-income renter populations.

By understanding the intersections between the social and health impacts of displacement through qualitative interviews. This research highlights the need to view renter displacement through a public health lens of prevention and intervention. Furthermore, this research identifies planning and policy recommendations that address this social illness of renter displacement that can impact support systems and perpetuate health disparities.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Gentrification is a growing epidemic in major cities like the city of Los Angeles. Much literature has been developed on the topic of gentrification focusing on cities such as; New York[1], Seattle[2], London[3], and Chicago[4]. Studies highlight the positive attributes of gentrification such as "increase in property taxes, reduction [in] poverty, increase [in] property values, decrease [in] crime," (Guercio 4). However, there is substantial literature that discusses gentrification and highlights the negative impacts, such as renter displacement[5]. Although there has been research on the topic of displacement, very few centers the lived experiences of those affected by it.

Highland Park was used as a case study because of its status as a community facing gentrification. According to an LA Times article published in 2016,

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[1] Lawrence, D. "Community Development: Can Communities Effectively Fight Displacement Caused by Gentrification? Journal of Affordable Housing & Community Development Law, 11(4), 357-373.2002. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org.proxy.library.cpp.edu/stable/25782567 Accessed 12 Jan. 2019.

[2] Hwang,J."Gentrification in Changing Cities: Immigration, New Diversity, and Racial Inequality in Neighborhood Renewal". *The Annals of the American Academy*.2015

[3] Atkinson, R. "The hidden costs of gentrification: Displacement in central London". *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment,* 15(4), 307-326.(2000).Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org.proxy.library.cpp.edu/stable/41107148. Accessed 15 Dec. 2018.

[4] Kirkland, E."What's Race Got to Do With it? Looking for the Racial Dimensions of Gentrification". *Western Journal Of Black Studies*, 32(2), 18-30. 2008.

[5] Levitt, Z. (2015). Gentrification Is Making Us Sick: Envisioning Healthy Development without Displacement. Race, Poverty & the Environment, 20(1), 87-93.

"rents and real estate prices have been rising dramatically in recent years, Highland Park has become the latest front in the wave of gentrification that has swept nearby communities such as Echo Park and Atwater Village, uprooting working-class Latinos from neighborhoods they have called home for decades. Highland Park is now ground zero, not only in L.A. but in the whole country," said Peter Dreier, professor of Urban and Environmental Policy at Occidental College in Eagle Rock (Smith, LA Times).

Gentrification can be defined as an increase in investment that creates "a dramatic shift in the demographic composition toward better educated and more affluent residents in a community" (Freeman 39).

However, to understand the complexities of gentrification and its by-product, displacement, one must first understand the historical context of residential redlining. Residential redlining was an institutional practice that impacted many communities of color that were "denied mortgage loans or were given higher interest rates based on race or socioeconomic status" (Mendez, Dara, et al 480). The implementation of the Fair Housing Act in 1968 eliminated this discriminatory practice. However, the practice of redlining left a system of neighborhood disempowerment for many communities of color in inner cities.

To this day, many low-income communities of color still feel the impacts of unregulated practices, investor driven development, and a lack of renter protections. Literature has noted that "gentrification is tied to historical patterns of residential segregation; segregated neighborhoods experience the "double insult-

- a 'one-two' knockout" of neglect and white flight in the 1950s through 1970s followed by the forces of gentrifying revitalization since the 1980s (Zuk et al. 2).This research argues that displacement induced by gentrification is a resurgence of similar unregulated practices and denial of rights that disproportionately impact low-income and marginalized renters of color (Powell et al. 2002).

Historically, communities of color have settled in neighborhoods that are "likely to be gentrified for several reasons, including low rents, low property values, proximity to private and public services … all which entice high-income individuals to invest in the neighborhood (Lawrence 359). This issue of displacement has become so rampant that Proposition 10 was added on the November,2018 California State ballot. The proposition would have repealed the Costa Hawkins Act, which would allow for many cities and counties to implement and update their rent control policies. Thus, creating stronger renter protections for communities facing gentrification and displacement. Unfortunately, this proposition did not pass; for this reason, it is crucial that local jurisdictions recognize displacement as a growing concern that, if not addressed, can have major social and health impacts on renters. Furthermore, what is happening in Highland Park foreshadows what can happen in many marginalized communities in Los Angeles and across the world.

1.1.   Research Question:

This research explores the health and social impacts that gentrification causes on residential renters who have been displaced. This research will collect in-depth interviews with community experts, service providers and advocates to get a thorough understanding of the renter displacement phenomenon. Therefore, the research question is how are residential renter's health and support systems being impacted by displacement in Highland Park?

1.2.   Hypothesis:

This research will highlight the trauma renters experience while being displaced and how displacement can lead to a loss in support systems or often utilize support systems as a sign of resistance and resilience.

This research will explore how displacement can lead to fragmentation and when fragmentation occurs, it pushes people away from their support system which can lead to long-lasting negative effects (Matsuoka et al. 2017). These experiences can contribute to trauma that impacts a family or individual as displacement is occurring. Lastly, this research will identify recommendations to intervene and prevent renter displacement.

1.3.   Highland Park Context:

Highland Park is a neighborhood located in Northeast Los Angeles, originally home to the indigenous Kizh, the native people who inhabited this area due to its ephemeral river known as the Arroyo Seco river (KCET 2010). As

settlers started to inhabit the area, indigenous peoples were forcefully relocated to Missions and pushed out of their native villages. The city of Los Angeles began to grow as entrepreneurs and speculators began to purchase land that is now Highland Park (KCET 2010). At first, the land was used for cattle grazing and eventually the development of haciendas made Highland Park one of Los Angeles' first suburb communities (KCET 2010).

To further spur development, the Pacific Rail Line would be built to bring residents of Highland Park to Downtown Los Angeles (KCET 2010). Situated between what was then the county's two largest population centers—Los Angeles and Pasadena—Highland Park provided residents with convenient transportation options for their commute (KCET, 2010). It was not until the 1970s and 80's that there was a sudden increase of the Latinx population and the decrease of white/Anglo population, known as *white flight*[6] (KCET, 2011). Eventually, Highland Park would become a majority working-class Latinx renter community and economic development efforts were focused elsewhere.

According to Delilah Lawrence, gentrification along with urban renewal and neighborhood revitalization were terms used to describe a change in the neighborhood (page 357). In recent times we are seeing a resurgence of the revitalization of inner-city neighborhoods of Los Angeles. In the past years, Highland Park has experienced an increase in private investment, as part of

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[6] The white flight phenomenon centers around post-WWII federal housing and highway programs, deteriorating urban housing stocks, the application of mass manufacturing techniques to home construction, and the in-migration of populations of color to urban areas. These factors collectively made suburbanization attractive to and possible for white middle-class families, who consequently left cities and urban public schools (Schneider 996).

revitalization efforts, which are some of the characteristics of gentrification. The photo on Figure 1.1 shows how investors see themselves in this process of gentrification.

Figure 1.1 Highland Park Sign Extolling Gentrification

Various media outlets have covered how renters in Highland Park feel the pressures of gentrification. For example, in a 2014 Los Angeles Times article the reporter covered a community protest that highlighted resident experiences with gentrification. Many community members shared personal testimonies of not being able to afford to live in a community they grew up in (Logan, LA Times). There is no shortage of media coverage on the topic of gentrification in Highland Park and it is evident this community has felt the burdens of gentrification and

displacement. Again, in 2016 another Los Angeles Times reporter covered a story of an apartment complex that was facing a 50% rent increase (Smith, LA Times). These are just examples of the visibility of gentrification in Highland Park.

Figure 1.2 Highland Park Rent- Strike at The Avenue 64 Apartments

(Igauler 2018)

1.4 Community Profile:

For this research Highland Park's geographic boundaries are based on zip code; 90042. This zip code encompasses 12 census tracts: 183510, 183520, 183810, 183820, 183610, 183620, 183701, 183701, 183220, 183101, 183103, 183104 (Census, 2000). Highland Park is a community located within Los Angeles, California.

Figure 1.3 Map of Los Angeles

(Google Maps, 2018)

Figure 1.4 Map of Highland Park
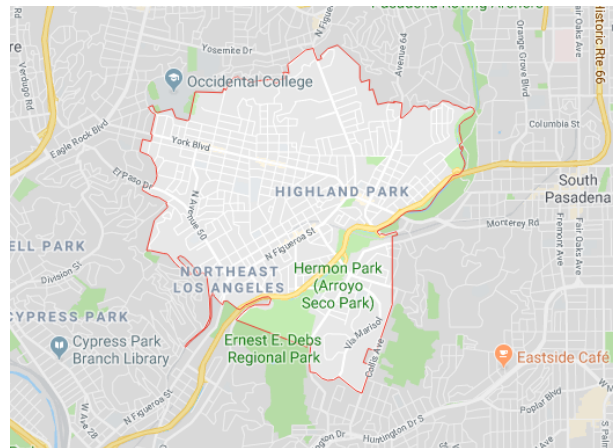
(Google Maps, 2018)

According to the 2012-2016 American Community Survey, the total

population of Highland Park is made up of 63,109 residents where 67.5% of its

population is Latinx. The median income for this community is $51,444, with a

majority of its residents (55%) being renters (US Census 2016). Highland Park is

within the City of Los Angeles boundaries. Los Angeles is one of the few cities in Southern California that has rent regulations - the Rent Stabilization Ordinance (RSO). For units to be covered under the RSO, units must be built before October 1978 and the structure must have two or more single family dwelling units on the same parcel[7].Moreover, roughly half (49.9%) of Highland Park's renter population are cost burdened and spend more than 35% of their income on housing (US Census).

Due to a lack of affordable housing options residents often find themselves in overcrowded conditions just to afford rent. According to the Federal Government, overcrowding occurs when a dwelling unit is occupied by 1.01 or more persons per room. Severely overcrowded units are defined as those occupied by 1.51 persons or more per room. By looking at Table 1.1 one can determine that renters have higher rates of overcrowded conditions compared to home owners in Highland Park.

Table 1.1 Overcrowded Units in Highland Park

Occupied Units:	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied
Overcrowded	6.2%	11.4%
Severely Overcrowded	2.2%	8.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 ACS 5-year estimates: Tenure by Occupants per room

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[7] https://hcidla.lacity.org/RSO-Overview Accessed 15 Dec. 18

According to California's Health Disadvantaged Index[8], more than half of the census tracts in Highland Park are considered disadvantaged when it to health outcomes. This Health Disadvantaged Index defines disadvantaged communities using demographic information such as social and economic status, educational opportunities, environmental hazards, and other social determinants of health[9]. Since this community has historically been disenfranchised and low-income, the lack of resources and services contributes to residents poor health outcomes.

Figure 1.5 Health Disadvantage Index of Highland Park
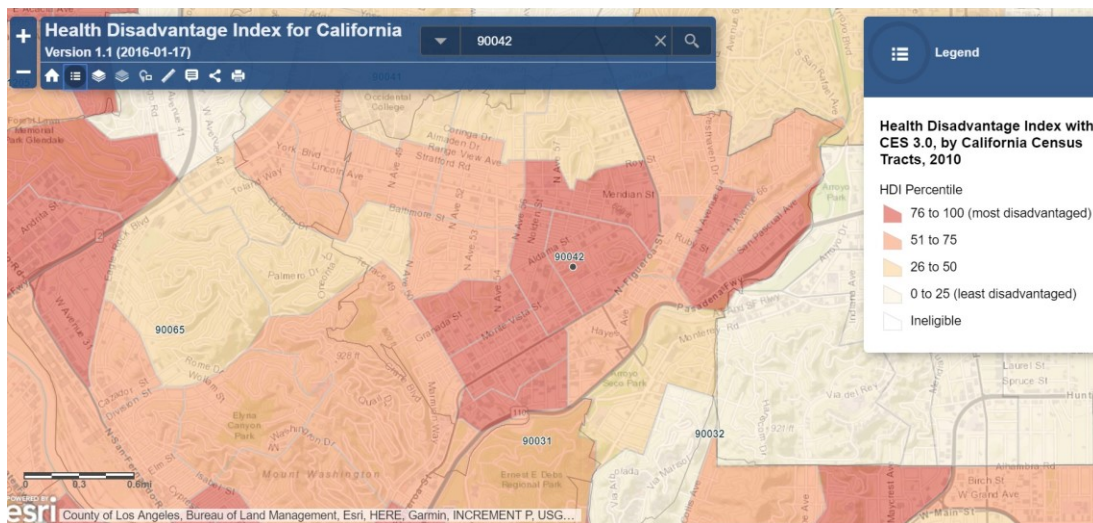
Health Disadvantage Index, (2018)

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[8] The purpose of this Health Disadvantage Index (HDI) is to prioritize public and private investments, resources and programs. HDI includes diverse non-medical economic, social, political and environmental factors that influence physical and cognitive function, behavior and disease. These factors are often called health determinants or social determinants of health and form the root causes of disadvantage. Indicator data used for HDI comes from publicly available sources and is produced at a census tract level. HDI materials are freely available online for use by communities and public and private agencies.

[9] Bhatia,R. Maizlish, N. "California Health Disadvantage Index" *Public Health Alliance of Southern California*.2018. https://phasocal.org/ca-hdi/ Accessed Jan 15. 2019

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

To understand the topic of gentrification, its connection to displacement, and the impact it has on renters. This research will use an extensive literature review to explore the impact of displacement on working-class and immigrant communities. The literature supports the research methodology and guides the recommendations. The themes that arose from the literature research were the following:

- Gentrification and Demographics

- Support Systems in Communities

- Public Health and Displacement

- Anti-Displacement Strategies

- Local Publications: Highland Park

2.1. Gentrification and Demographics

2.1.1 Gentrification and Immigrant Communities

Author Jackelyn Hwang makes the connection between immigrant (undocumented) populations and gentrification in her research "Gentrification in Changing Cities: Immigration, New Diversity, and Racial Inequality in Neighborhood Renewal". She found a positive correlation between communities facing gentrification with the rates of migration patterns. Hwang explains how undocumented populations migrate to communities with low housing prices, but,

because these communities have affordable housing they become susceptible to gentrification. In addition, the author discussed the presence of the undocumented population as being an indicator of gentrification in a community.

This literature helped understand why majority Latinx communities, such as Highland Park, whose composition has a high foreign-born population, are now facing the harsh impacts of gentrification. The research at hand will explore and further contribute to the literature of how majority foreign-born communities, like Highland Park, became susceptible to gentrification.

2.1.2 Gentrification and Homeowners

In Freeman and Braconi's article on "Gentrification and Displacement", the authors explored why gentrification might benefit disadvantaged populations that stay in their community of origin. They argued that gentrification is part of the normalcy of cities. Their research centers homeowners, thus, one can argue that these authors neglect the perspectives of those that have been affected by displacement like renters. They made it a point to discuss why those that homeowners that stayed can gain social mobility.

This research neglects the consequences of gentrification on renters, such as displacement, which is often a factor missing from the discussion of revitalization. Therefore, this research will focus on renters experiencing displacement in a community going through gentrification. In addition, this will contribute to literature that captures the perspectives of renters being impacted by gentrification and displacement.

2.1.3 Gentrification and Educational Attainment

In "Gentrification and Displacement within Cities: A Comparative Analysis", author Henig explored variables specific to neighborhood characteristics such as housing, commercial/business, head of households and other characteristics. He compared these variables with the inflow of professionals entering a neighborhood predominantly occupied by low-income Blacks and Hispanics. He concluded that there was no correlation between professionals entering a minority-majority community that is being gentrified. The author suggested that this information should have been collected in the late stages of gentrification to see the shifts in demographics over time.

Therefore, I find the current research to be relevant because gentrification has been visible in Highland Park for the past decade and can be in its later stages, which will allow for this research to see the significant shifts in demographic data when it comes to educational attainment and income levels.

2.1.4 Gentrification and Communities of Color

In the article "What's Race Got to Do With it? Looking for the Racial Dimensions of Gentrification", the author Kirkland addressed the lack of research on gentrification and race. Race is a crucial component in understanding how gentrification plays out in low-income communities. The author argued communities that are at risk of gentrification happened to be low-income minority-majority, and often experience the detrimental effects of displacement.

For this reason, the author explained the importance of using qualitative methods to capture the experiences of those being affected by displacement. This literature highlighted the need to understand the complexities of gentrification on community cohesion. This article also highlighted the importance of community resistance as way to respond to gentrification. Much of the approach and recommendations sited in this paper will be employed in the current research.

2.1.5 Gentrification and Public Investment.

In the article "Gentrification, Displacement, and the Role of Public Investment", the authors Miriam, Ariel, Karen, and Karolina showed that urban renewal exacerbated residential segregation in the 1970's. This phenomenon influenced how gentrification is manifesting in communities now. The authors identified different levels of displacement by splitting them into two categories: responsive and forced. The authors further explored the causes and effects of displacement on vulnerable communities.

By showing the relationship between public investment and gentrification, the authors found that "displacees were more likely to be African American, less educated, poor, renters, elders and living alone…" (Zuk et al. 6). This literature was helpful in analyzing this research, and how cities plays a role in allowing for landlords to displace renters in communities with no accountability on their implications. Therefore, this literature supports how renter displacement will be

framed and how cities can better respond to the types of displacement that are occurring.

2.2. Support Systems in Communities:

2.2.1 Immigrant Communities and Social Networks

In his thesis James Rojas conducts a study of the Mexican American population in East Los Angeles and found that this community had a strong relationship with place. The author elaborates that this relationship to place has been developed over time by social networks that are created in the community. Through his observations and personal interviews, he describes how immigrants establish themselves in communities and create networks of support, which begins to shape a neighborhood culture.

This study is insightful because it touches on the social relationships that develop within a community, as communities establishes themselves they become more cohesive. This literature is relevant to the research in understanding how low-income and immigrant renters' social networks react to displacement. In addition, this research will explore what happens to renters as they are pushed away from their networks due to displacement. In turn, this research will contribute to the existing literature on social networks in Latinx communities, and the role they play for renters facing displacement.

2.2.2 Place Attachment and Community Displacement

In "It was like leaving your family: Gentrification and the Impacts of

Displacement on Public Housing Tenants in Inner Sydney", author Alan Morris conducts a case study of a community facing mass displacement. He discusses much of the psychosocial aspect and introduces the term "place attachment" to describe how people become attached to place. "Residents that have lived in a community for a long time tend to have more place attachment to people who had just moved there" (page 155). In addition, the author describes how place attachment is a sign of well-functioning communities. However, when displacement occurs he mentions the consequence in the disruption of community ties.

This article is relevant to the research because many of the renters who are being displaced in Highland Park are low-income residents that have been in the community for decades according to the people interviewed. This research can further elaborate how place attachment is more correlated to support systems rather than the actual location. This research aims to see how support systems can help renters when going through displacement. Furthermore, this research will also highlight how support systems are impacted as displacement occurs.

2.2.3 Social Cohesion and Displacement

In "Power, Place, and Public Health a Review of the Literature on the Health Impacts of Displacement & Promise of Inclusive Community Development" authors Martha Matsuoka, Jennifer Lucky, Alex Desautels conduct a literature review that highlights how gentrification and displacement result in

weakened social networks and social cohesion which they associate to health

benefits for community residents that are rooted in an area. The authors discuss

how,

> "Social Cohesion is one of the primary factors that enables people to
> develop a sense of belonging in their environment and encourages
> positive community interactions and a general sense of safety and well-
> being" (6).

This report is crucial for planners and decision makers to understand

displacement and how it hurts communities. This report influenced how this

research explored social networks in renter communities. In addition, helped to

understand how social networks are often the best resort to fighting

displacement.

2.3. Public Health and Displacement

2.3.1 Mental Health Impacts of Gentrification

In Fullilove's book "Root shock: how tearing up city neighborhoods hurts

America, and what we can do about it" she addressed the complex issues of

displacement by stating, "...displacement is a 21-century phenomenon that is

plaguing cities across the country" (page 5). As a psychologist, she connected

issues of mental health to a lived experience of people facing displacement

during the era of urban renewal. She argued that people who are being pushed

out of their communities of origin are cut from their social support system and

experience root shock, which heavily impacts the way people view themselves.

The use of ethnographic interviews in Fullilove's literature influenced the current research and highlighted perspectives of those who have faced displacement. By gathering stories and experiences of people who resist gentrification and work with renters who are displaced. This research will contribute to the existing literature of on how people are impacted by displacement or experience root shock.

2.3.2 Housing and Health

In "Housing and Health in Los Angeles County" report developed by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, the report described how housing insecurity impacts people's health. The report focused on unaffordable housing and exposed some of the realities that people face with housing insecurity. The report revealed that people spend less money on their own health due to the high cost of housing. This report found that LA County residents that have experienced housing instability have a higher chance of becoming homeless.

The report also found that unhealthy housing conditions exacerbate health disparities, especially in low-income communities. This report indicated that housing instability leads to poor physical and mental health. Therefore, this report assisted in understanding how health and housing are connected and how housing insecurity impacts renters. In turn, this research will add to the existing literature by gathering experiences of renters in Highland Park that face similar disparities in housing and health.

2.3.3 Health and Displacement

Author Zoe Levitt addressed the connection between gentrification, displacement and health in his article, "Gentrification Is Making Us Sick: Envisioning Healthy Development without Displacement". The author found that seniors that experienced higher rents were forced to make tradeoffs between paying for rent, meeting their necessities, or paying for services that positively impact their health. For instance, the author found that the elderly chose to not use air conditioning on hot days to avoid paying a higher electric bill, and as a result these conditions impacted a person's access to a healthier environment. This report also showed that the elderly residents experienced higher rates of isolation because of gentrification and displacement. Many times, the elderly got displaced to communities where they had no social ties and resources, or services needed to support their livelihood.

The report also found that, when low-income populations ask for improvements on their units, landlords threatened them with eviction or their concerns were not addressed (page 87). This report ended with strategies for healthy development without displacement and emphasized planning tool kits, that support community engagement in the development of housing policies. This article is relevant to the research and supported in the identification of recommendations on how communities should be engaged in the housing policies.

In "Displacement in San Mateo County, California: Consequences for Housing, Neighborhoods, Quality of Life, and Health" authors Marcus and Zuk examined gentrification in San Mateo County. They found that "displacement was a significant disruption and trauma for respondents and their children. "Two out of three children in displaced households had to change schools" (page 5). They also found "one in three displaced households reported some period of homelessness or marginal housing in the two years following their displacement" (page 5). In addition, the authors found "Several of these households remained homeless even months after they were displaced" (page 2).

Their findings provided important aspects of housing instability that often get neglected and overlooked in the context of gentrification and neighborhood revitalization. This article also mentioned that many of the populations that are displaced experienced a higher burden of inequities, especially when discussing the power dynamics between landlords and renters. This literature was crucial in the development and framing of interview questions, which this research used to interview organizers and service providers.

In the "Impact of Residential Displacement on Healthcare Access and Mental Health among Original Residents of Gentrifying Neighborhoods in New York City" authors Sungwoo Lim, Pui Ying Chan, Sarach Walters et al. examined the correlation between gentrification and mental health. They did so by examining emergency room visits in communities experiencing gentrification. This research discovered that communities facing gentrification and

displacement have higher rates of emergency hospital visits that are linked to mental health issues.

Gentrification and displacement have shown to impact health in a negative way, it is important that gentrified communities look at emergency hospital data to determine the health implications of gentrification. This exploratory research can contribute to the existing literature in making the connections between gentrification, displacement and mental health. More importantly this research will collect stories from the community that quantitative data cannot fully explore.

2.4. Anti-Displacement Strategies

In "Rent Matters: What are the Impacts of Rent Stabilization Measures?" authors Manuel Pastor, Vanessa Carter, and Maya Abood exposed how different rent control policies impact communities and debunk rent control perceptions. They argued that rent regulations create greater societal well-being in forms of physical and psychological wellness. The authors discuss how low-income, elderly, immigrant, and communities of color often do not benefit from current regulations. The populations that typically reap the benefits are the wealthier and younger renter populations. Although, these regulations do not provide equity for intended populations, the authors explored strategies to address the out-of-control rent increases. Moreover, the authors discuss how rent control policies have the potential to provide relief to vulnerable renter populations, but other renter populations will also reap the benefits. The researchers discuss the need

to create equitable policies that support renter populations that are the most vulnerable to displacement.

In "Community Development: Can Communities Effectively Fight Displacement Caused by Gentrification?" author Delilah Lawrence argues that the burden of displacement outweighs the positive effects of gentrification. In her article Lawrence proposed strategies to prevent displacement and suggested equitable housing for communities of color. She mentions possible recommendations such as rent control, development of community land trusts, and implementing a low-income housing tax credit. Nonetheless, the author points out that among the many recommendations, the use of collaboration and grassroots community pressure is needed to move the agenda forward on housing justice.

In addition, the author emphasized the influence private capital has on gentrification. This article was useful in understanding why low-income communities become susceptible to gentrification. With no type of market regulation or private investment alternatives, cities are vulnerable to displacement. It doesn't help that cities welcome private investment but fail to regulate inequitable practices that play out in communities experiencing gentrification and displacement. Therefore, it becomes crucial to include education that highlights different anti-displacement strategies that communities can be advocating for.

In "The Right to Stay put, revisited: Gentrification and Resistance to Displacement in New York City" authors Newman and Wyly argued that

displacement is due to a lack of political will that favors mixed-income redevelopment. The authors also discuss how redevelopment often leaves low-income or working-class communities out of the picture due systemic processes in our housing policies. The article proposed creative ways of resisting displacement in the current housing policy climate. I found this literature to be useful in highlighting the importance of the renter community to organize and apply pressure on elected officials to address housing needs for vulnerable renter populations. Lastly, the authors recommended public interventions and private strategies that can be utilized to address displacement. These identified strategies supported the importance of engaging renters and advocates in the development of community-driven policy commendations, which this research also includes.

In an op-ed " We Cannot Plan From Our Desks" Jonathan Bell emphasized the importance of planning within communities by engaging community members through a stakeholder process that is inclusive and convenient for them. In Bell's "Embedded Planning" praxis, the work of planners is done on the street level. He explained that the conventional stakeholder processes alienate residents and disconnect planners from the communities they are supposed to be planning for. Bell coined the inclusive process as "Embedded Planning" to show how planners can engage communities without creating further marginalization.

This approach views residents as experts of their community needs. Embedded Planning allows the engagement process to be accessible and

participatory. The article gave examples such as attending existing community events, being a regular presence at community meetings, engaging residents on street corners and meeting them in the community rather than at city hall. All these efforts attempt to engage community members where they are. I found this article to be useful in addressing displacement, where this type of planning is necessary when crafting policies and understanding community dynamics. This planning process can give planners a different perspective when it comes to engaging renters on issues such as community development or displacement.

2.5. Local Publications: Highland Park

In a Los Angeles Times article Doug Smith covered a protest by community members and renters in Highland Park. The renters in an apartment complex received a 50% rent increase making their living situation unaffordable, inaccessible, and uninhabitable. The residents expressed that they could no longer afford rent so were pushed out by the new landlord. The owner was adamant about allowing more affluent people into the apartment versus low-income renters.

It is evident from this article that not until the low-income renters move out that landlords start revitalizing the apartment complex to appeal to higher income populations. Landlords often highlight and embrace the positive impacts of community revitalization because it makes their apartments more profitable and marketable to the higher income populations. Sadly, the low-income renters never get to reap the benefits of revitalization in their apartments because they

are pushed out before these renovations begin. This article provides background context to the current situation of gentrification and displacement in Highland Park.

In a 2018 LA Taco article, a local media outlet covered another apartment complex that received a 50%-70% rent increase. The reporter discussed how renters of the apartment complex organized a rent strike and shared personal testimonies of how the rent increase impacted their ability to find secure housing in the community. One resident said, "I'm already spending most of my paycheck on rent. I can't afford this. I really can't." Renters hoped that the strike could help them negotiate a fair rent that did not push their families out of the community. This article discussed the importance of organizing rent strikes as a strategy to bring the landlords to the negotiating table when they refused to listen to tenants individually. This organizing strategy is an effective way of creating collective power among tenants and putting pressure on landlords that are often responsible for mass displacement.

In a local publication called Eastsider LA reporter Nathan Solis covers a community protest in Highland Park. In this article Solis interviews organizers as they discuss the importance of having grassroots groups bring awareness to the issue of displacement. In addition, the reporter quotes various residents while they share their experiences with gentrification in Highland Park. Organizers create this platform and provide an opportunity for people to mobilize. "Once someone leaves their home they become invisible, so we're trying to share these testimonies now," Romo said. He added, "there is a trauma involved when you're

asked to leave your home, so it means a lot for these people to have a place to talk." (Solis, Eastsider LA)

Public events help residents talk about the topic of displacement that if often seen as taboo. This preventative strategy of public events ameliorates the effects of gentrification on low-income communities and has the potential of changing community perceptions of revitalization and gentrification in a community. This platform can also be used to uplift the stories that often go unspoken of people that are going through displacement or experience the burdens of gentrification.

In "Taking Back the Boulevard: Art, Activism and Gentrification in Los Angeles", author Jan Lin discusses the activism that is occurring in Highland Park as it relates to gentrification. He highlighted various community groups such as Northeast Los Angeles Alliance, Los Angeles Tenants Union, and other community organizations that are working to address gentrification in a community that is facing an increased investment in housing development. He featured the strategies used to protect community members from displacement. This article explained how activism has surfaced because of the hyper gentrification of Highland Park and nearby cities. I found this literature to be of use in this research in identifying the organizations that are on the frontlines and supporting anti displacement efforts in Highland Park.

In an NPR series, "York & Fig" cover gentrification in Highland Park. However, the reporters skew the understanding of the topic and shy away from

the discussion around displacement. They neglect to address the severe implications of forcing low-income renters out of their homes. They interviewed homeowners, business owners and real estate agents to get their views on gentrification in Highland Park. This series creates a false snapshot of the gentrification climate that exists between original residents, new residents and renters in Highland Park. For this reason, it is necessary to capture testimonies and second-hand stories from those who are on the frontlines, to understand the complexities and impacts that displacement has on renter communities.

Chapter 3

Research Methods

This case study employed a mixed methods approach to understand how renters are being displaced in Highland Park and explore the health and social implications it creates. Qualitative data in the form of open ended and structured interview questions were conducted with service providers, community organizers and advocates. To supplement the qualitative interviews, various stories were utilized from publications that covered the effects of gentrification and displacement of residents in Highland Park. To give more meaning to the qualitative context, quantitative data was used to provide a descriptive analysis of the changing demographics of Highland Park and further elaborate on the issue of gentrification.

Interviews were collected with community experts who work in organizations that support renters who are being displaced. The interviewees consisted of lawyers, homeless outreach workers, tenant rights organizers, community organizers, and mental health professionals. By using this qualitative approach this research provides a comprehensive overview of the lived experiences of a community currently affected by displacement that quantitative measures cannot completely comprehend, which makes this study unique and exploratory.

3.1. Rationale for Case Study:

According to the Urban Displacement Index, Highland Park is a community that has experienced gentrification over the last two decades[10] (Urban Displacement Project Website). The Urban Displacement project map breaks gentrification into two periods: 1990- 2000 and 2000-2015. Based on this mapping tool, there are census tracts in Highland Park that have been gentrified in both time periods. Given this context, Highland Park is a good location to conduct an exploratory case study to get a glimpse of how gentrification has impacted renter displacement over a period.

Figure 3.1 Urban Displacement Map of Highland Park
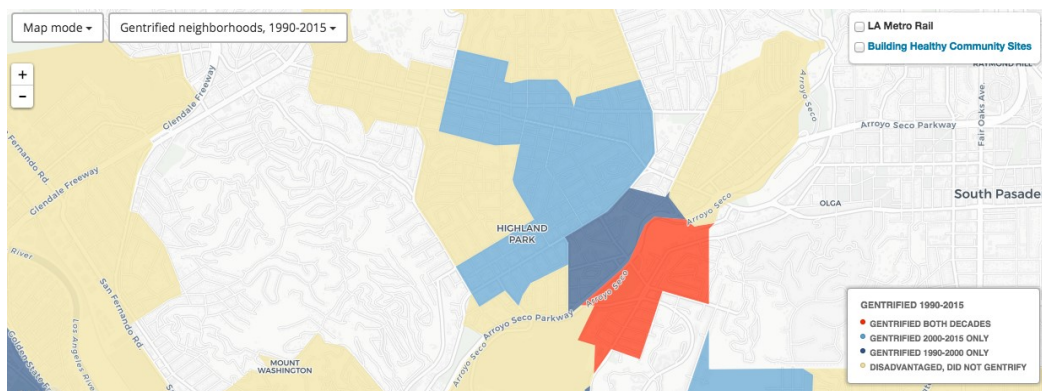
(Urban Displacement Project, 2016)

Renters in Highland Park and residents across Los Angeles continue to be pushed out by private investment as developers buy properties and increase rents. Rent increases often make working-class communities choose between

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[10] http://www.urbandisplacement.org/map/socal. Accessed 15 Dec. 18

paying for rent or meeting their necessities like food or health care (LACDMH, 8).

In a publication that discusses a rent increase in Highland Park, residents were

asked for their experience and how this rent increase impacted their family. For

residents like Rudy Rosales, a "50% increase [in housing] would be the same as

an eviction notice. [He] is a cook who works double shifts in West Hollywood

[and] lives with his children, ages 3, 5 and 7, in a one-bedroom apartment costing

$1,000 a month" (Smith, 2016). This serves as an example of how people are

being displaced in Los Angeles within the legal confines of the current rental

market.

To mitigate the burdens of displacement due to gentrification, many

organizations have formed in Highland Park ready for mobilization to protect and

support working class renters experiencing displacement. To get a thorough

understanding of this phenomenon, in-depth interviews were conducted with

community experts and various service providers that work with renters who

have been displaced. Therefore, this research focused on the "qualitative

aspects because of the complexities that occur in communities facing

displacement and gentrification, which quantitative data cannot capture alone"

(Kirkland 20). Furthermore, capturing qualitative data it can provide insight to the

intersections between the social and health components of displacement. Author

Mindy Fullilove's research on the mental health impacts of displacement

influenced this research for its ethnographic approach to understand what is

happening in communities facing displacement. This research engages with

community organizations that are on the frontlines of anti-displacement efforts.

This research focused on renters because they have fewer rights and experienced higher rates of housing instability. According to the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LACDPH), "renters were more likely to report housing instability (8.3%) compared to those who owned their homes (1.0%)" (LACDPH,11). As research has shown repeatedly, renters are the first to experience the burdened of displacement. However, to get an exploratory understanding, a closer look is needed into policies like Costa Hawkins Rental Housing Act[11] and Ellis Act[12]. Both laws favor homeowners in the State of California and undermine the rights of renters. The lack of rights for renters creates unanticipated consequences, especially for renters with low socioeconomic status. Considering the increased private investment in the community of Highland Park, renters have become susceptible to landlord's push-out tactics. Equally as important, this exploratory case study contributes to the existing research on renter displacement.

Furthermore, this methodology also looks at social networks to understand the complexities of displacement and how it intersects with health which very few studies explore. Therefore, this research will contribute to the existing literature on how support systems are used within the situation of displacement.

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[11] The **Costa–Hawkins Rental Housing Act** ("Costa–Hawkins") is a California state law, enacted in 1995, which places limits on municipal rent control ordinances. First, it prohibits cities from establishing rent control over certain kinds of residential units, e.g., single family dwellings and condominiums, and newly constructed apartment units; these are deemed exempt. Second, it prohibits "vacancy control", also called "strict" rent control.

[12] https://hcidla.lacity.org/Ellis-Act. Accessed 15 Dec. 18

3.2. Qualitative Data:

Nine individuals were interviewed that represent different organizations that work with displaced renters or renters who are in the process of being displaced. These individuals are community experts when it comes to understanding experiences of renter displacement, as they provide necessary services and support for these renters. All the interviews will be kept anonymous and names will be kept confidential for privacy purposes. The qualitative data collected through the interviews will correspond to the organization that the individual is affiliated with. In addition, these interviews will help understand the gaps in policy and planning to better inform anti-displacement strategies. Qualitative methods drive the research, because previous "literature on gentrification has failed to quantify accurately the negative impacts of gentrification… questions about how gentrification affects low-income residents remain in the absence of strong evidence" (Newman et al, 20).

To analyze the responses from the interviews, all responses were recorded and transcribed. After transcription, responses were organized into a spreadsheet and placed into themes specific to the health and social implications. This process informed policy and planning recommendations that prevent or intervene in the renter displacement process (see table 4.1 and 5.1 for themes that were present during the interviews).

3.3. Snowball Sample:

The snowball sampling technique was employed to identify the organizations and individuals that engage with renters who have been displaced. Many of these people are the first line of response and support for renters. These service providers and organizers work for organizations that support people during the displacement process or after they have been displaced. The sample is composed of lawyers, tenant organizers, mental health professionals and homeless outreach workers, all who currently work or have worked in Highland Park. From the literature review, researchers discussed the difficulties of finding a sample of displaced renters to interview due to mobility issues. "Researchers often turned to tenant rights workers to understand the hidden costs of gentrification" (Atkinson 309). Therefore, I chose to interview individuals based on their experience of providing resources and services to displaced renters. In total, 9 individuals were interviewed that work or have experience working with displaced renters in Highland Park.

3.3.1 Recruitment Technique:

Interviewees were recruited through the engagement of local tenant rights organizations. Organizers were then asked to identify any other key informants that engage renters who have been displaced. Key informants can be lawyers, mental health professionals, or any other individuals that engage with displaced renters. Through the connections made with the local community organizations, this method identified different stakeholders such as homeless outreach workers,

eviction lawyers, tenant organizers, and a mental health expert. The intention of these interviews was to a get an understanding of those people who are on the frontlines of displacement. To protect the identity of these organizers and service providers, they will be referred to by the organization they are affiliated with. The following are organizations that were represented in the interviews:

Los Angeles Tenants Union:

The LA Tenants Union is a diverse, tenant-led movement, fighting to make housing rights a human right. They demand safe, affordable housing, and universal rent control. They organize against landlord harassment, mass evictions, and displacement. They mobilize to repeal the Ellis Act and Costa-Hawkins Act. Their mission is to strengthen the tenants' political power through education, advocacy, and direct action[13].

Northeast Los Angeles Alliance:

The Northeast Los Angeles Alliance is a group of local Northeast Los Angeles residents committed to documenting the changing socio-economic landscape of NELA. The group is committed to understanding the full effect of gentrification on immigrant, working class, and poor communities. They understand that these stories are the ones that are often neglected; for this reason, they present narratives and record voices of those who are not given the

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[13] https://latenantsunion.org/en/ Accessed 15 Dec. 18

platform to speak. In addition, they engage in education, organizing, visual and performing arts, and ongoing scholarship[14].

Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health:

Their mission is to optimize the hope, wellbeing, and life trajectory of Los Angeles County's most vulnerable populations through access to care and resources that promote not only independence and personal recovery but also connectedness and community reintegration[15].

Los Angeles Community Center for Law & Action:

The Los Angeles Center for Community Law and Action ("LACCLA") is a community-based organization in Los Angeles. Their team organizes buildings and neighborhoods to push back against the displacement of low-income residents. They also provide free legal services to support organizing campaigns. They create an environment where lawyers, organizers, and members of the public collaborate on coherent strategies to sustain healthy, affordable, and united neighborhoods[16].

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[14] https://www.facebook.com/NELAAlliance/ Accessed 15 Dec. 18

[15] https://dmh.lacounty.gov/about/. Accessed 1 Jan. 19

[16] http://www.laccla.org/about-us/. Accessed 15 Dec. 18

Exodus Recovery:

The Exodus Recovery mission is "to bring the tools for the best possible quality of life to our clients." They use a total health care concept that incorporates the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the client. Their program strives to create an environment which promotes the dignity of all participants and develop services maximizing clients' self-determination[17].

Eviction Defense Network:

Eviction Defense Network (EDN) is a network of trial lawyers, advocates and tenants dedicated to defending the right to affordable housing and ensuring access to justice in housing matters to tenants in Los Angeles County. EDN is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides legal assistance and representation to tenants facing eviction[18].

3.4. Interview Questions:

The literature review assisted in the development of the interview questions and helped understand the intersections between the social and health impacts of displacement. The literature also provided a glimpse of the complexities of gentrification as it relates to displacement. However, to make sense of what the literature was saying, open ended and structured questions were developed to better explore the intersections between the social and health

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[17] https://www.exodusrecovery.com/. Accessed 15 Dec. 18

[18] https://www.facebook.com/evictiondefensenetwork/. Accessed 15 Dec. 18

impacts of displacement. Questions were asked regarding barriers people facing

displacement expereinced. Again, using literature and local publications,

questions were created based on the topics of social cohesion and health

impacts. The interview instrument can be seen in Appendix A.

3.4.1 Defining Renter Displacement

        For this research, renter displacement will be defined as any account

where; a renter has been removed from their housing or denied housing due to

circumstances beyond their control. In addition, interviewees were asked to

describe the different types of displacement that people face in Highland Park to

explore the current conditions of how people are being displaced. Existing

literature and interviews this explored and provided more context of renter

displacement that has occurred in Highland Park (see table 4.1 for results and

identified types of displacement).

3.4.2 Understanding Health Impacts

        As a community is being gentrified, low-income renters begin to get

pushed out further from their resources and support systems. This has

undesirable health effects on low-income populations. There have been various

articles that addressed the health impacts on renter populations. However, very

little research centers on the lived experience of renter communities after

displacement, and the impact it has on their health. Existing research has shown

that displacement and evictions "negatively affect the health and quality of life [of displacees and this often leads to] long term consequences" (Zuk et al.1).

To understand this dynamic, service providers such as mental health professionals and community organizations were interviewed to determine how displacement affects renters. Interviewees were asked to speak on issues that were found in the literature such as; overcrowding, physical, mental and environmental health. When the opportunity presented itself, questions about social determinants of health followed. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention social determinants are defined as;

"The complex, integrated, and overlapping social structures and economic systems that are responsible for most health inequities. These social structures and economic systems include the social environment, physical environment, health services, and structural and societal factors. Social determinants of health are shaped by the distribution of money, power, and resources throughout local communities, nations, and the world".[19]

By asking questions related to structural and societal factors the research further explored how displacement perpetuates health inequities from the social context. From the interview responses, themes were developed on the health impacts of displacement (see Table 5.2 for health impacts that were collected through the interviews).

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[19] https://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/socialdeterminants/definitions.html. Accessed 15 Dec. 18

3.4.3 Understanding Social Impacts

To understand the social impacts of renter displacement, interviewees were asked if serial displacement was an issue and if so how it worked in Highland Park. In addition, they were asked if renters who were being displaced wanted to remain in the community and why people want to remain. Moreover, interviewees were asked if displaced renters come back to the community and for what reasons. Questions were also asked about how support systems were used when people were facing displacement. They were asked if renters were aware of the resources when facing displacement and if they used any services, such as seeking legal support or protesting an eviction or rent increase to prevent displacement. These questions were used to understand the gaps in services or understand how people receive information. Through the various responses' themes were developed and can be seen on table 5.2.

3.4.4 Identifying Anti- Displacement Strategies:

The interviews were used alongside the literature to identify and discuss possible anti-displacement strategies. The interviews aimed to understand the current strategies and identify gaps in services to renters who were being displaced. Through these methods, service providers and organizers proposed policies that prevent or intervene in the displacement process. To see the list of strategies that were identified in this process please see table 6.1.

3.5. Archival Research/ Publications:

To support the qualitative data, archival research was conducted to collect photos and additional stories that discuss the impact of gentrification on renters in Highland Park. These stories and experiences were used to give a better context of renters who are being displaced or have already been displaced. By conducting an online search, I found articles that talked about gentrification in Highland Park from the following sources; The Los Angeles Times, Eastsider LA, LA Taco," Taking Back the Blvd" by Jan Lin*,* Sin Turistas Photos, KCET Departures, Enclave LA and National Public Radio, Market Place.

3.6. Quantitative Data:

For this research US Census, American Community Survey, Public Health and Los Angeles Housing Services Authority (LAHSA) data was collected to get demographic, housing, health, and homeless information on Highland Park. Literature indicated that one of the major predictors of gentrification are demographic changes that relate to educational attainment, household income levels, and foreign-born populations. For this reason, the research analyzed community's demographics to see changes which gentrification and displacement could have contributed to. Moreover, homeless data was collected and juxtaposed with income levels to see the rising inequality in the community. Lastly, this research used a health data mapping tool that was developed by the Public Health Alliance of Southern California to understand the existing health disparities in the community of Highland Park.

3.7. Key Findings:

Using a mixed methods approach of using qualitative interviews along with quantitative data further explored the complexities of displacement. For example, in the qualitative interviews this research found that there are types of renter displacement that are not being systematically tracked. Many of the methods that renters are being displaced is due to unregulated practices that end leaving renters with few rights and end up falling through the cracks of landlord displacement tactics.

Through the literature review and qualitative analysis, this research found that support systems played a vital role in how renters' dealt with displacement and how renters reestablish themselves in a community after displacement. The research also found that renters at risk of displacement use these support systems as a form of resiliency. Often, individuals relied on their networks for support to seek refuge when being displaced. Moreover, this research found that fellow residents, along with their social networks, and grassroots organizations established strategies to prevent displacement and secure housing for those at risk of being displaced. Many times, residents worked alongside advocacy organizations to form tenant unions and put pressure on property owners to address concerns relating to displacement.

Although social support systems and community organizing was present in Highland Park, this was not always the case. There were residents who didn't have their immediate family living within proximity to them, so they were either

pushed out to a different community or city. This research also found that after renters were displaced and social support networks remained in Highland Park. Renters often came back to visit family, friends, or to access services and resources that were familiar to them. However, over time this cut in social ties or distance can lead to isolation and loss of resources and services (Matsuoka et al. 6).

Although community members' level of resiliency had them engaged in preventative measures, this research found that families became too overwhelmed with the thought of being displaced, which limited their perception. They often felt that they didn't have a support system to rely on and became paralyzed with the fear of becoming homeless. Through the qualitative interviews and literature this exploratory research found that renter displacement contributed to the destabilization of residents' mental and emotional wellbeing. Interviewees shared that when renters were going through the displacement process it would increase their anxiety, stress, depression, and worsening their social isolation. The literature supports the qualitative findings by showing that displacement perpetuates health disparities in already marginalized communities.

In addition, this methodology explored the intersections between the social and health impacts of renter displacement. For example, this research revealed that residents who faced displacement often ended up in overcrowded homes with multiple families living in one unit. Those that could afford housing in Highland Park after being displaced ended up in substandard housing, which the literature has shown to worsen health disparities (Marcus 2). Moreover,

interviewees discussed how those who became homeless due to renter

displacement became isolated engaged in alcohol and drugs to cope with their

stressful situation. This also leads to worse health outcomes including further

isolating individuals from their support networks and any type of help.

Lastly, this research found that community experts, service providers and

renters' often developed strategies of their own to address displacement in

Highland Park. Some of these strategies include tenant rights workshops, legal

clinics, protesting, and the creation of tenant unions all which bring attention to

the lack of rights that renters have.

Chapter 4:

Findings: Displacement in Highland Park

Through interviews, community organizers and service providers were asked about the demographics and populations that were most vulnerable to renter displacement in Highland Park. Most of the responses pointed to immigrant and communities of color as populations that were being impacted the most in Highland Park. Through much of the archival research and quantitative data of Highland Park, several demographic shifts showed significant changes in household income, educational attainment and poverty levels by race that could have been a result of displacement and gentrification. For example, there was a 7.6 decrease in foreign populations (see Table 1.6) and decrease of communities of color such as the Latinx, Black, and American Indian (see Table 1.4). The changes in demographics and the interview responses aligned with the qualitative information from the interviews as to the demographics that were being impacted by displacement.

To better understand the unique experiences of gentrification and displacement for renters in Highland Park, front line responders answered open ended and targeted questions, to further explore the current types of displacement that have occurred in Highland Park. This research identified various types of renter displacement, many which are unnoticed or go through a method that is difficult to collect data on. The following are some of the findings from the interview responses: see table 4.1 for all types of displacement identified during the interviews.

Table 4.1 Types of Displacement in Highland Park

Interviewees:	Types of Displacement
LACCLA Lawyer(T)	- Harassment - Rent Increase - Eviction - Poor housing conditions
LATU Organizer (S)	- Harassment - Ellis Act - Rent Increase
Mental Health Case Worker	- Rejecting section 8 - Rent Increase - Landlord Harassment
LATU Organizer(M)	- Rent Increase - Cash for Keys - Evictions
NELAA Organizer (M)	- Rent Increase - Evictions - Cash for keys - Poor housing conditions
NELAA Organizer (J)	- Cash for keys - Rent Increase - Landlord Harassment
Homeless Outreach Worker(J)	- Rejecting section 8 - Rent Increase - Eviction
Homeless Outreach Worker(M)	- Rejecting section 8 - Rent Increase
Eviction Defense Network:	- Rent Increase - Eviction - Landlord Harassment

4.1. Rent Increase:

According to the qualitative interviews, a consistent method to displace

renters in Highland Park was through a rent increase. Interviewees also shared

that a drastic rent increase typically happened to people living in units that are

not covered by the Rent Stabilization Ordinance (RSO). For units to be covered under the RSO, units must be built before October 1978 and the structure must have two or more single family dwelling units on the same parcel[20]. Under the RSO landlords cannot raise a person's rent more than 3% yearly. Therefore, for the apartment complexes built after October 1978 landlords often raised rents way beyond 3% and in some cases as much as 50%. For example, in a local publication, Rosemary Serena a resident of Highland Park mentioned getting "a $700-dollar rent increase without any repairs or renovations to [the] units" (Iglauer, LA Taco). When interviewing a tenant lawyer, he stated that "rent increases are usually because a corporation just bought the building" (LACCLA Interview). This was supported by a tenant rights organizer response as he mentioned how new landlords created additional charges in renters' utilities to justify large rent increases (NELAA Interview). For low-income communities that are living paycheck-to-paycheck, this creates unbearable pressures that affect renter's quality of life. In 2016 49.9% of Highland Park's population spent more than 35% of their income on rent (US Census 2016). According to US Department of Housing and Urban Development, people paying more than 30% are considered cost burdened[21]. Therefore, many renters in Highland Park are having to decide whether to pay for rent or meet their family's basic needs like food, health care, etc. Often rent increases became impossible to pay and

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[20] https://hcidla.lacity.org/RSO-Overview . Accessed 15 Dec. 18

[21] https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/affordablehousing/. Accessed 15 Dec. 18

tenants ended up being pushed out of their homes. An organizer gave an example of a story:

> "There was a building, on Avenue 57, on [Media] Drive, where they (renters) ran out of time with their 30 day notice, they couldn't pay the rent increase and they left cars behind in the lot, they left all their personal belongings in the lot, there was TV's, there were kids toys, kids clothing because they couldn't find a replacement home to take their things to and they got locked out of the lot" (NELAA, M Interview). see figure 4.1 of photos of the aftermath of mass displacement that occurred on Media Drive.

4.2. Eviction:

Another identified method that landlords used to displace renters was by serving renters with an eviction notice for violating a rental agreement. According to the interviewees, landlords would often evict residents because they knew they could make more money by renting their units to people who were willing to pay more. Interviewees also shared that often landlords had no validated reason to issue the eviction to the renters, "landlords found reasons to displace renters and used excuses such as violating the lease or contract agreement and/or issue a three day pay or quit notice" (NELAA (J) Interview). In turn, the threat of eviction which frightens renters can create stress, anxiety, and panic. (Lim et al 2017).

Figure 4.1 Media Drive in Highland Park

(Urquiza, 2017)

To makes matters worse, this research found that renters often did not know their rights or understood that they had access to resources. By not knowing their rights, many low-income renters felt they did not have the financial resources to get a lawyer involved. Matthew Desmond and other researchers have concluded that evictions are becoming an epidemic that can have devastating effects for families and communities (Desmond & Shollenberger 1753). As a result, this will have unanticipated consequences not only in the short-term but for generations to come. If renters do decide to fight the eviction and end up losing, the eviction stays on their record. Thus, making it difficult to secure housing and if they don't fight they end up being forced out. Therefore, many renters end up accepting the eviction before getting into legal eviction proceedings.

4.3. Ellis Act:

Another form of displacement that was mentioned in the interviews was the Ellis Act. The Ellis Act (California Government Code Chapter 12.75) is a California state law that allows landlords to evict residential tenants when landlords want to "get out of the rental business"[22]. "Between 2001 and 2018, almost 25,000 units - over 3% of the total rent-controlled housing stock (which makes up roughly 75% of rental housing in Los Angeles) were taken off the rental market using the Ellis Act"[23].

As an unregulated law, Ellis act evictions are used to displace residents (NELAA Interview). Another organizer mentioned, "property owners use this act to get rid of renters and make way for new renters that can pay more than what is currently getting paid" (LATU, Interview). When interviewing another tenant organizer, she shared that "landlords would use the Ellis act to remove renters, demolish the rent-controlled unit and then build other rental units, which the landlord would be able to charge market rate and no longer be under rent control" (LATU(S), Interview). According to the interviews this loophole in unregulated housing policy is frequently used to displace renters in Highland Park and Los Angeles.

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[22] https://latenantsunion.org/en/ellis-act-evictions/. Accessed 15 Dec. 18

[23] All Data Provided by the Los Angeles Department of Housing & Community Development.http://www.cesinaction.org/MapofEllisActEvictions.aspx. Accessed 15 Dec. 18

4.4. Landlord Harassment:

During the interview process, this research found that renters experienced harassment and/or threats to the point where renters do not feel welcome or are frightened to stay in their homes. According to the LACCLA lawyer,

"landlord harassment often happens when the relationship between the landlord and the tenant is deteriorated because the landlord wants to sell the building and think that it'll be easier to harass the tenant and force them to leave rather than work with the tenant or the tenant has rent control so it's harder for the landlord to evict the tenant. So the landlord realizes that they can informally evict the tenant by just harassing them very aggressively and getting them to leave." (LACCLA, Interview).

According to the responses, renters who got harassed were often comprised of vulnerable populations such as the immigrant, monolingual foreign speakers, or residents with lower educational attainment. These populations are often not aware of the laws that protect them or know their rights as residents. Landlords used harassment and threats as a scare tactic to push renters out and avoid paying the relocation assistance.

In one study the authors found that "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" (Guercio,5). Harassment tactics vary from case to case, however, through the interviews, this research found the following tactics were used in Highland Park:

1. Refusing to conduct repairs on the unit
2. Cutting off the renters' utilities
3. Threaten renters with immigration/ law enforcement
4. Surveillance of tenants
5. Stealing personal mail

When interviewing the tenant rights lawyer, he stated that "about two thirds of the displacement that happens is not through an eviction but some other method." This point is important, because this means renters that are being displaced without having a legal process of a formal eviction. All these types of harassment tactics created a hostile environment for tenants and makes many renters leave their homes without due process.

4.5. Rejecting Section 8 Vouchers:

When conducting interviews, a reoccurring experience that displaced renters was the rejection and denial of Section 8 vouchers. Section 8 is a federally funded program that provides housing assistance to low-income renters. According to the homeless outreach workers, the population they work with rely on Section 8 and suffer from mental illness. "Many time clients experience a lapse in section 8 services which result in an eviction" (Exodus, (J) Interview). After an eviction occurs, the landlords no longer accept section 8 vouchers and refuse housing to Section 8 renters. The mental health expert talked about the challenges for service providers to find housing for their clients in Highland Park due to landlord's refusal to accept section 8 housing vouchers. This trend is picking up not just in Highland Park, but all over Los Angeles. A

recent pilot study was developed that examined landlord's willingness to accept

section 8 voucher, the researchers found that;

> "About 76 percent of Los Angeles landlords refused to accept vouchers.
>
> An additional 9 percent placed conditions on voucher use or was unsure
>
> of their voucher policy. Denials were even more common in low-poverty
>
> areas (with poverty rates below 10 percent) compared with high-poverty
>
> areas (poverty rates above 30 percent): the denial rate was 81.5 percent
>
> in low-poverty areas compared with 66 percent in high-poverty areas"
>
> (Cunningham 2018).

This harsh reality exposed the systemic failure of ensuring Section 8

renters with protections and secure housing. Section 8 groups are often the most

marginalized and most susceptible to mental illness. Sadly, when it comes to

gentrification not even Section 8 residents are able to escape it.

Figure 4.2 Homeless Man in Highland Park
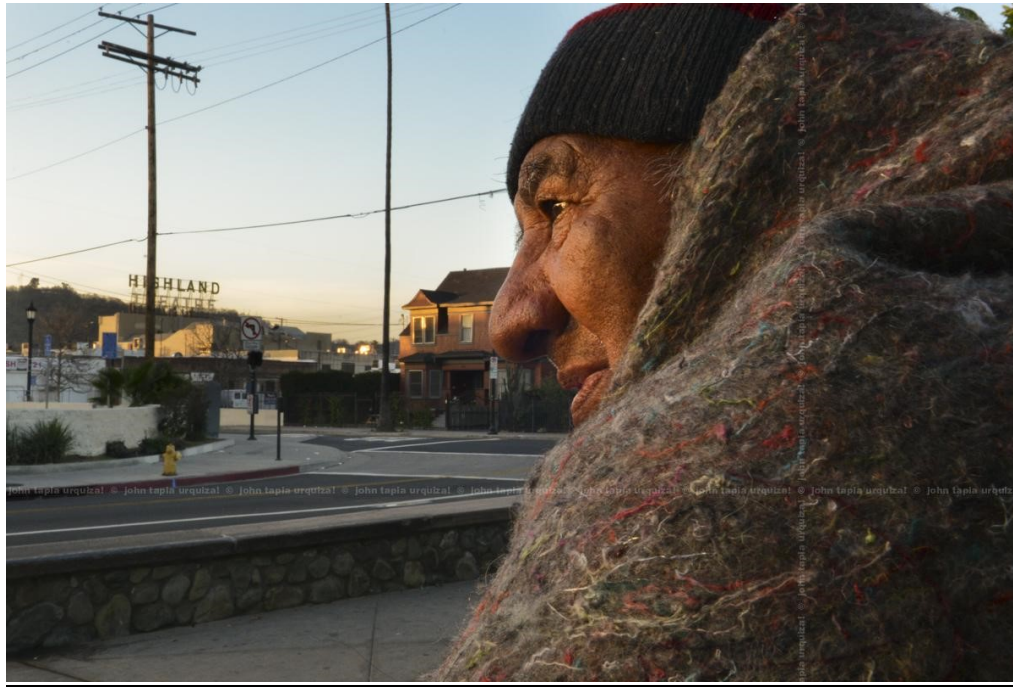
(Urquiza,2016)

4.6. Uninhabitable Housing Conditions:

This research discovered that landlords often intentionally avoided fixing units as a way of forcing tenants to leave their property. Often renters fix things using their own income just to avoid conflict with the landlord. Many organizers shared that "landlords repair and renovate units after unwanted tenants would leave" (NELAA, Interview). Given the increasing cost of rent and pressures from the housing market in Highland Park renters are pushed into poorer communities that often have worse housing conditions.

In an interview an organizer recalled:

"A mother showing me her baby's body and it was full of bumps, which

looked like bed bugs. She had been constantly telling the landlord that

they were infested, and the landlord wasn't taking any measures to

address this issue and this poor baby, they had to have been maybe less

than a year, just full of these bumps and it's extremely itchy and they're

like low income and they didn't have any guidance on what to do"

(NELAA, Interview).

When landlords neglected to fix housing conditions renters got fed up with the

situation and decided to look for housing even if it meant being in a precarious

situation.

Figure 4.3 Renter Showing Habitability Issues

(Urquiza, 2019)

4.7. Cash for Keys:

When conducting the interviews, multiple respondents spoke about the process of a property being sold to new landlords. Many times, the new landlords would offer current residents' money in exchange for them to leave their unit. This sentiment was shared among many respondents that work with renters who lived in rent control units. However, organizers shared that "People would be offered a lump sum of cash to leave but in many cases, residents were not offered the full amount under the city's relocation assistance program" (LATU (S), Interview). The city has a relocation assistance program that allows renters to know how much money they should be receiving if they are being evicted, whether that be through the Ellis Act, or if the units will be demolished. Renters are entitled to money, but many times were not compensated fairly through this tactic. Therefore, landlords enticed renters to take a small lump sum of cash to replace the renter with someone who was willing to pay more for the unit.

4.8. Changing Demographics in Highland Park (Quantitative Analysis)

To understand the dramatic changes that have occurred in Highland Park, demographic data was compared from the US Census and American Community Survey between the years 2000 and 2016 and other time frames where data was publicly available. By analyzing the data over a 16-year span, one can better explore how gentrification might have contributed to changes in demographics. This research analyzed basic demographic data such as housing, socioeconomic status, educational attainment, race, and poverty level to make the connection to neighborhood changes. By using UCLA's Gentrification Map, this research

identified a time frame where gentrification was occurring in Highland Park

between the years 2000 and 2016.

By looking at housing occupancy one can see a slight change with a 1%

decrease in renter-occupied housing and a 1% increase in owner-occupied

housing units (*see Table 4.2*). Which can be attributed to more people owning

homes with higher incomes (*see Table 4.4*) that are settling in Highland Park.

Table 4.2 Highland Park Occupied Housing Units

Population:	2000 Percentages	2016 Percentages	Change
Owner-occupied housing units	43.4%	44.4%	+1%
Renter-occupied housing units	56.6%	55.6%	-1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 &Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

In addition, through the analyzed US Census data between 2011 and

2016 on gross rent as a percentage of income, one can determine a significant

7.6% increase of renters that pay more than 35% of income on rent (*see Table

4.3*). In 2016 nearly half (49.9%), of the renter population in Highland Park is cost

burdened when it comes to their housing (US Census 2017). Which is a large

factor when noting the lack of affordability and the pressures of increasing

housing prices in the community.

Table 4.3 Highland Park Renters Paying more than 35% of income on Rent

Population:	2012 Percentages	2016 Percentages	Change
Renter paying more than 35% of income on rent	42.3%	49.9%	+7.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2012 American Community Survey & U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

To create a more substantive understanding of gentrification and those impacted by it, a table was created highlighting household incomes between two time periods. When comparing 2000 and 2016 household incomes, there is a noticeable decrease in lower income households (or incomes <49,999) and an increase in incomes higher than $50,000(*see Table 4.4*). Those with incomes greater than $50,000 substantially increased, thus, showing higher income households populations increased in this area. The shift in household income is known to be a factor in communities facing gentrification (Henig 1980). This implies that low-income households are possibly being impacted by gentrification and displacement as higher income populations have made their way into Highland Park. This can also be attributed to low-income homeowners cashing out and moving elsewhere due to the increase of housing prices.

Table 4.4 Highland Park's Household Income % (2000-2016)

Households Income:	2000 Percentages	2016 Percentages	Change
Less than 10,000	10.5%	6.7%	-3.8%
10,000 to 14,999	8.5%	5.4%	-3.1%
15,000 to 24,999	15.3%	12.4%	-2.9%
25,000 to 34,999	14.0%	9.7%	-4.3%
35,000- 49,999	17.2%	14.1%	-3.1%
50,000- 74,999	17.4%	18.9%	+1.5
75,000- 99,999	9.1%	11.2%	+2.1
100,000- 149,000	5.8%	12.3%	+6.5
150,000- 199,999	1.2%	5.3%	+4.1
200,000 or more	1.1%	3.8%	+2.7
Median Income (dollars)	$51,444	$55, 596	+ $4,142

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 &Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Because income is not the only factor contributing to gentrification, this research pulled data on race. This analysis revealed a decrease in the Latinx, Black and American Indian Alaska Native populations as White and Asian populations have increased (*see table 1.2*). A possible explanation is that gentrification usually happens in minority-majority communities. Another explanation is that gentrification and displacement may have contributed to change of the racial composition within the community. This is supported by the 3.3% drop of the Latinx community in Highland Park. It is possible that the Latinx

community is leaving due to the high cost housing. As table 1.1 shows, Highland Park is no longer affordable or inhabitable by its original members due to its high value in housing.

Table 4.5   Highland Park Population % by Race (2000-2016)

Population by Race:	2000 Percentages	2016 Percentages	Change
White	40.8%	46.8%	+6%
Black or African American	3.1%	2.9%	-0.2%
Latinx	70.2%	67.5%	-3.3%
Asian	12.3%	12.5%	+0.2
American Indian and Alaska Native	2.2%	1.6%	-0.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 & U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Figure 4.4 Highland Park Population by Race %
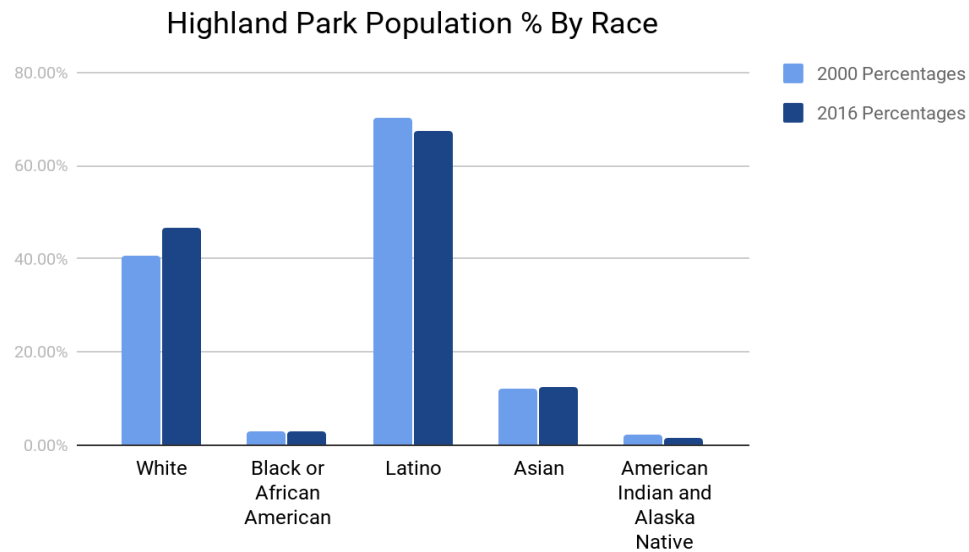
Highland Park Population % By Race

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 & U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Furthermore, educational attainment was analyzed since it has also been identified as a factor in communities facing gentrification and is a factor in the social determinants of health (LACDPH 8). By analyzing the data on educational attainment for residents 25 years and older between the years 2000 and 2016. This research discovered that there was a 7.1% decrease in the number of those residents with lower educational attainment. (*see Table 4.6*). Yet, in 2016 Highland Park had more residents that had reached higher education levels, specifically those with graduate or professional degrees (*see Table 4.6*).

This descriptive data showed that as the racial composition and household income changed in Highland Park so did the educational level of residents in this community.

Table 4.6 Highland Park's Educational Attainment % for 25 Years and Older

Percent 25 Years and Older Educational Attainment	2000 Percentages	2016 Percentages	Change
9th to 12th grade	19.7%	12.6%	-7.1%
High School Graduate	17.9%	21.3%	+3.4%
Associate Degree	4.7%	7.2%	+2.5%
Bachelor's Degree	11.4%	18.1%	+6.7%
Graduate or Professional Degree	2.1%	9.9%	+7.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 & U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Figure 4.5 Percent 25 Years and Older Educational Attainment in Highland Park
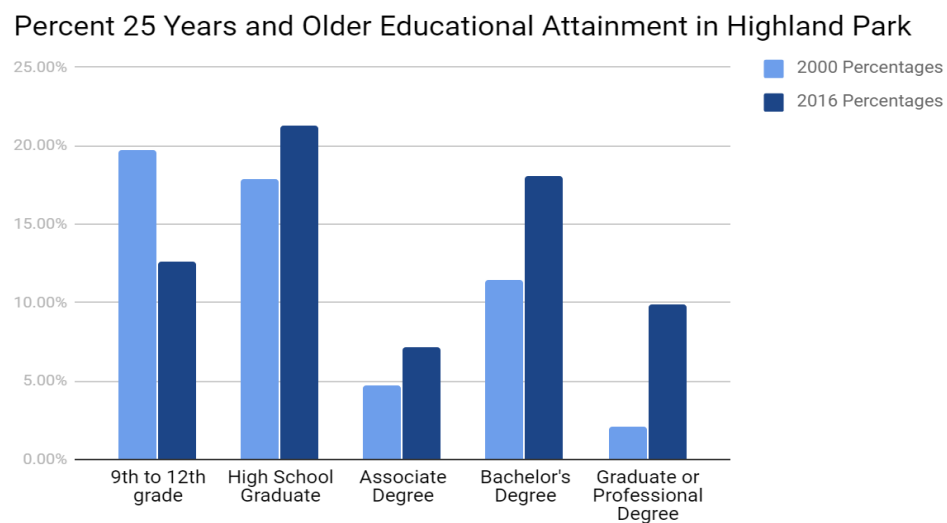
Percent 25 Years and Older Educational Attainment in Highland Park

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 & U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Furthermore, poverty levels by race were analyzed to understand shifts that can be a result of gentrification (*see Table 4.7*). Through the analysis, this research found that American Indian / Alaska Native experienced the highest increase of poverty with 14.1% from 2012- 2016 *(see Table 4.7)* compared to other races. The two other populations whose poverty levels have increased are the Black/African American and Latinx communities with 3.3% (*see Table 4.7*).

Table 4. 7 Below Poverty Level by Race % in Highland Park

Below Poverty Level by Race	2012 Percentages	2016 Percentages	Change
White	16.1%	18.5%	+2.4%
Black or African American	17.9	21.2%	+3.3%
Latinx	19.8%	23.1%	+3.3%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	19.2%	33.3%	+14.1%
Asian	10.%	11.1%	+1.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2012 American Community Survey & U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Figure 4.6 Below Poverty Level by Race % in Highland Park
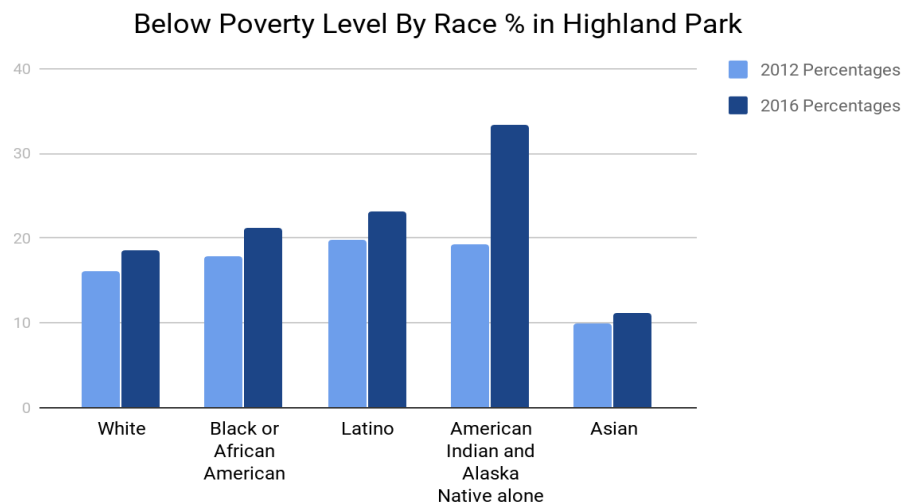
Below Poverty Level By Race % in Highland Park

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2012 American Community Survey & U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

This research also analyzed data on foreign born populations, according to the literature, immigrant communities are often the most impacted by gentrification and displacement. According to Jackelyn Hwang,

"immigration and its associated changes are linked to gentrification, but this relationship is structured by the broader racial and immigration contexts of the cities in which these changes take place. Nationally cities with higher levels of immigration had great rates of gentrification" (337).

The analysis of foreign-born populations revealed that the foreign-born population had a decrease of 7.6% in Highland Park as the White population increased by 6% (*see Tables 4.8 and 4.3*). This finding coincides with the

literature published on the connections between gentrification, displacement, and foreign-born populations.

Table 4. 8 Foreign-Born Population % in Highland Park

Foreign Born	2000 Percentages	2016 Percentages	Change
Total Population	44.3%	36.7%	-7.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 & U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Figure 4.7 Foreign Born Population
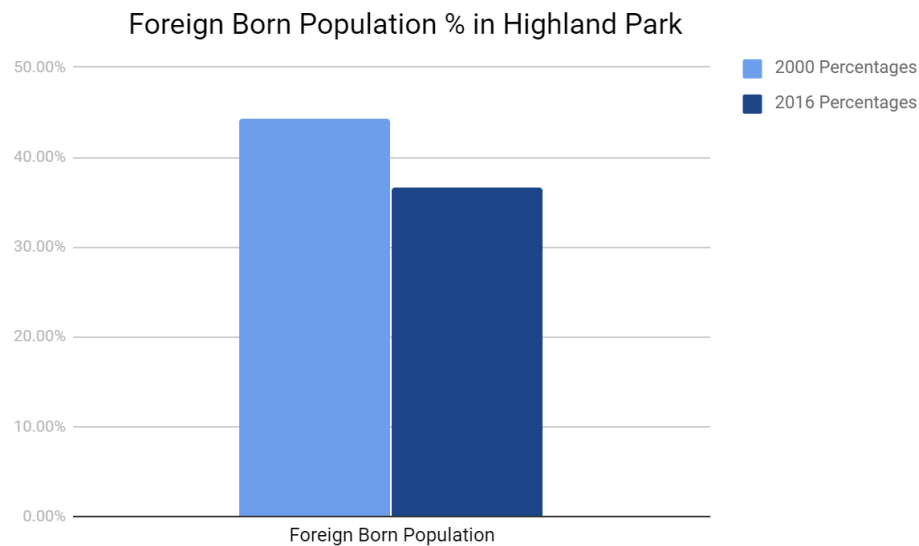
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 & U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

The literature also revealed that households impacted by displacement tend to be single-family households (Henig, 641). This research analyzed data

for families with a female household and found a significant decrease in female

householders (*see Table 4.9*). Because no data was collected on this variable

prior to 2012, 2012 and 2017 data were used as points of observation. This

analysis revealed a 1.2% dropped in the single female household between 2012-

2017. This change can possibly be attributed to the financial burdened single

households experience when they can no longer afford the rent.

Table 4.9 Female household with no husband.

Population:	2012	2017	Change
Female Household no husband	17.8	16.6%	-1.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 & U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Chapter 5:

Findings: Social & Health Impacts of Displacement

Based on the qualitative data, this research found that immigrant, low-income, and working-class renters were most impacted by displacement in Highland Park. James Rojas studied these populations in East Los Angeles and found that they often rely on their networks to "establish themselves in communities" (35).

> The arriving Mexican immigrant will seek out neighborhoods where other Mexicans live, while Mexican Americans will seek out neighborhood that they can afford and that are relatively accessible to family and friends" (Rojas 35).

This became evident when conducting the research in Highland Park, a majority Latinx community. When talking to the interview respondents many mentioned renters that had no support system were often displaced to other areas or were more susceptible to negative health impacts. The relationship to a support system was found to be crucial for people facing displacement. Patty Lara, a resident of Highland Park who experienced a heavy rent increase shared a personal testimony, "I lived in this area (Highland Park) for 34 years, I never lived in a different area. This is my community. I tell my son, I don't want to move to a different area where I don't know my neighbors" (Lin 185). Patty's testimony provided evidence of people's connection with place through the support systems that have been developed over time. This research found that many people facing displacement rely on their support systems to resist displacement via

access to resources, legal services, or the ability to organize. When these options failed, they used their support system to seek refuge.

The literature review and interviews provided insight into the intersections of the social and health components of renter displacement. Often the presence of social structures provided a safety net that prevented worsening health disparities. However, when there was a lack of social structures after a displacement, it would often trigger a cycle of unstable conditions such as, overcrowding, serial displacement, poor housing conditions or homelessness which all are associated with poor health outcomes. In an article, author Levitt found that "moving at a [certain] age reduces social supports and increases stressors…. the longer one has lived in a neighborhood the more likely one is [to] experience anxiety or depression after a move" (Levitt 90). See table 5.1 to review all the social and health impact themes that were identified through the interview.

Table 5.1 Social & Health Impacts of Displacement in Highland Park

Interviewees:	Social Impacts	Health Impacts
Lawyer(T)	- Support systems - Fractured community support - Serial displacement	- Stress - Anxiety - Depression - Overcrowding - Unhealthy living conditions
LATU Organizer (S)	- Lack of Access - Support systems	- Stress - Depression
DMH Mental Health Case Worker	- Lack of support systems - Lack of Access - Community organizing	Unhealthy living conditions

	• Overcrowding	
LATU Organizer(M)	• Community organizing • Fractured community support	• Stress
NELAA Organizer (1M)	• Lack of Support systems • Community organizing • Support Systems to stay in the community	• Stress • Physical Health
NELAA Organizer (J)	• Lack of Access • Overcrowding	• Stress • Mental trauma
Homeless Outreach Worker(J)	• Lack of Support Systems	• Worst mental and physical health • Homelessness • Unhealthy living conditions.
Homeless Outreach Worker(M)	• Lack of Access • Support Systems	• Homelessness • Mental Health
Eviction Defense Network:	• Lack of Access • Support Systems • Overcrowding	• Anxiety • Depression • Unhealthy living conditions

5.1. Support Systems:

Through the literature review and interviews this research found that people

become connected to place through the development of social networks, otherwise

known as support systems. Martha Matsuoka discussed the importance of social

cohesion, which can alleviate poverty and create better health outcomes (page 6).

"Without a network of trusted community to rely on, displaced people or

longtime residents in gentrifying areas may feel more socially isolated,

stressed, and less safe, impacting material wealth and emotional well-being

(Matusoka 6).

In the collection of interviews, this research was able to understand the

importance of support systems as a symbol of resilience for many of the renters

facing displacement. Many of the organizers interviewed discussed how outreach was mostly conducted through word of mouth and social media. Organizers also shared how renters facing displacement would often be referred to tenant or legal services by someone they knew. Therefore, this research found that support systems become vital for renters in identifying resources when facing displacement.

When interviewing the homeless outreach workers, they mentioned the importance of support systems and how they can prevent someone from being homeless (Exodus, Interview). This was evident as many organizers also shared how people secured housing in the community through their networks and support systems "When people can no longer afford to live in the community some renters will move in with their families until they secure housing" (LATU (S), Interview). Interviewees shared the importance of having local family members in their community to secure housing without having to leave their community. These examples show the vital role support systems play for renters when facing displacement.

5.1.1 Community Organizing/ Resistance

Through the interviews, this research found that residents that were aware of resources or had access to a support system were often better equipped to fight displacement. Many of the respondents discussed the importance of organizing; they gave examples about how tenants would organize and create tenant associations to protect one another from abusive landlords. A renter who

had faced displacement, that then became an organizer discussed why these grassroots organizations were formed, "as a strategy to bring awareness on the issue of displacement, and an example of community residents coming together" (LATU, (S) Interview). Many of the interviewees shared examples of renters coming together and seeking support to create a tenant's association and fight back a forced displacement. The respondents also shared that many of the grassroots organizations that have formed in the community is based on the need to fill a gap in services that is so desperately needed.

One of the tactics tenant associations used to apply pressure to landlords was through media, art, and public actions to bring awareness on how a landlord was forcibly displacing people. In one instance, this type of resistance led to negotiations between the landlord and tenants to establish fair rent increases[24]. This type of organizing has led to a deeper sense of community where renters have formed tenant associations with the support of organizations such as the LA Tenants Union. Through the creation of these community organizing strategies community cohesion was fostered amongst renters and enhanced support systems for renters when facing displacement.

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[24] Chiland, E. "Boyle Heights mariachis agree to 14 percent rent hike but win new leases ending months-long strike". *Curbed Los Angeles.* 2018. https://la.curbed.com/2018/2/16/17018298/boyle-heights-mariachi-gentrification-rent-strike. Accessed 11 Dec. 18

Figure 5.1 Marmion Royal Tenants Union and Organizers Protesting

(Urquiza, 2016)

5.1.2 Overcrowding:

One of the reoccurring topics that arose from the interviews, was

overcrowding due to high rents. Interviewees mentioned that multiple families in

one housing unit already existed in Highland Park. However, according to

organizers increasing rents in low-income populations have exacerbated

overcrowded conditions. The homeless outreach worker mentioned "people

needing to live together to afford housing and staying in the community" not just

in Highland Park, but in all Los Angeles County (Exodus (M), Interview). As

housing becomes more expensive for low-income renters, overcrowding also

tends to increase. This was evident when identifying that 49.9% Highland Park's renter population is cost burdened when it comes to housing (US Census). Many organizers spoke about how overcrowded housing was the only option displaced renters had before becoming homeless. In a 2015 study, the authors found that "gentrification can cause overcrowding, increase tenant harassment and eviction and exacerbate discrimination in the housing market "(Levitt 88).

The findings along with current research from the LA County Department of Public of Health; highlighted how overcrowding created worse health outcomes for low-income residents. The report mentioned that

"overcrowded housing has been recognized as a health risk since the 19th century, and is associated with increased risk for infectious disease, such as influenza and tuberculosis, along with chronic diseases like asthma, cardiovascular disease and depression" (LACDPH 2).

In an interview, a homeless service provider spoke about an experience of seeing three families that began living under one roof after displacement. The legal services provider also spoke about "multiple families living in two rooms in one apartment" (EDN, Interview). The mental health professional also addressed how overcrowding tends to create stressful situations and the ones most impacted are the children (DMH, Interview). Overcrowding is used as a temporary solution before displaced renters find affordable housing. However, landlords will often use overcrowding as a justification of violating rental agreements and renters get subject to eviction. Although, overcrowding is not the

most suitable alternative, it helps low-income families stabilize their financial situations to either move or support one another by living together.

5.2. Fractured Community Support:

When service providers and community organizers were asked about the renters' who were displaced and pushed out of Highland Park, many responded with "they come back because their support system stayed behind" (DMH, Interview). They also mentioned that many residents come back to take their children to their original schools, so they won't feel disconnected from their community or to not fall behind in their education. In the literature, an author discussed how "displacement has also been associated with declining school performance in children, affecting educational achievement and the lifelong health benefits to which its tied" (Matsuoka 5).

When asked about why people go to court to fight displacement, the respondents spoke about resident's strong willingness to remain in the community. There are some renters that take the time to know their rights that can appeal, but this is not always the case. When asked why people choose not to fight displacement, respondents mentioned that renters were often fearful of retaliation since landlords threatened to call law enforcement on them. A respondent discussed "renters need to become aware of their rights and types of services that are in the community to help them be informed" (EDN, Interview). If people continue to get displaced their ability to recognize resources diminishes with a lack of support systems.

Many of the organizations talked about the importance of protecting the community from being displaced before they become too fractured that they no longer have the ability or capacity to resist displacement. When talking to the mental health expert she mentioned that often "removing people from their support systems created isolation and detrimental mental health effects "(DMH, Interview). When renters do not have support systems, it can exacerbate the type of mental and emotional turmoil a renter can experience in a community facing displacement.

5.2.1 Serial Displacement:

When asked about serial displacement many of the organizers shared stories of families being displaced multiple times. They also shared how "serial displacement perpetuated stress on renters as they had to relive the trauma of facing a displacement again "(NELAA (M) Interview). Interestingly, interviewees mentioned that many residents that were experiencing serial displacement "were aware of the resources and services available to them but were too afraid to fight back or not willing to fight back because of not wanting to deal with the courts and end up losing the housing anyways" (EDN, Interview). The respondents shared that this was especially relevant with the immigrant population.

One of the interviewees mentioned they knew people who had been displaced as much as three times, "she stayed with family because they were trying to stay in the community" (Exodus (M) Interview). In one interview the organizer made the connection between renter displacement and displacement

from their country of origin, sharing that "they had to leave due to the conditions that made it difficult to stay" (NELAA (M) Interview).

5.2.2 Homelessness:

According to respondents, renters who have been displaced and lack a support system have a higher chance of becoming homeless and this often leads to deteriorating health effects. For example, in Los Angeles County "adults with a history of housing instability also reported significantly more unhealthy days in the last month compared to without a history of homelessness (11.2 unhealthy days vs. 5.1)" (LACDPH 12). Author Jan Lin interviewed a former renter in Highland Park and captured the connection between displacement and homelessness: "four months after being evicted from their Highland Park apartment, Louis Morales and his step son Arthur Valenzuela lived hidden in the bushes on the embankment of a local river" (Lin 189).

Figure 5.2 Encampments along the Arroyo Seco River

(Urquiza 2015)

Through the interviews, this research found that many people who are homeless have lived most of their life in Highland Park (Exodus (M) Interview). When interviewing a homeless outreach worker, he stated that:

"the homeless population often have existing mental and physical health conditions that can quickly worsen by destabilizing their housing situation and limiting their health care" (Exodus (J), Interview)

Surprisingly, when analyzing LAHSA homeless count data the research found an increase of homelessness in the community of Highland Park, which can be attributed to the amount of gentrification and displacement.

Table 5.2 Homeless Population in Highland Park 2016-2018

Homeless Population in Highland Park	2016	2017	2018 Total	Change from 2016 to 2018
Total Population unsheltered:	108	164.6	384	+276

(Los Angles Housing Services Authority 2018)

Figure 5.3 Homeless Population in Highland Park
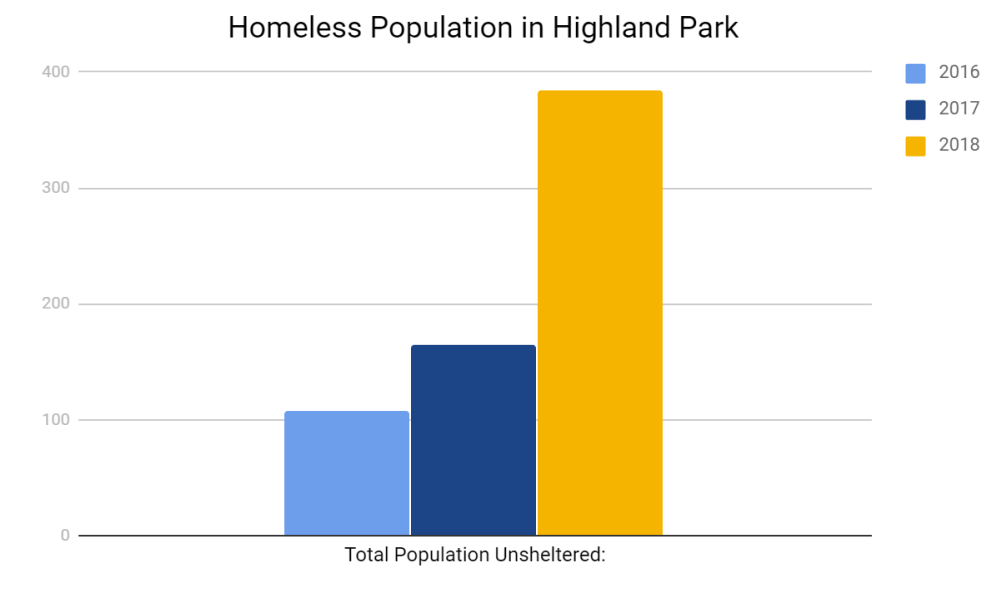
(Los Angles Housing Services Authority 2018)

5.3. Lack of Access:

This research also found that low-income renters often faced language barriers and happened to have low educational levels. This was evident in the quantitative findings, I determined that the population with the lowest educational attainment experienced a 7.1% decrease in Highland Park's population.

Because of these factors, many renters may not be equipped with the knowledge to fight back and stay in their community. The mental health worker spoke about the major barrier, she experienced in her line of work, which is "people don't speak English" (DMH, Interview). The legal service provider shared that people who are being displaced, "just don't know what to do and they don't know how to do it. They don't know how to strategize and often they want us to fix the problem and we tell them well we can't fix the problem" (EDN, Interview). This research found that many renters do not know they have rights as renters and do not know what landlords are legally allowed to do. The mental health worker added that the "lack of awareness is different for everyone and one of the patterns she has seen is that clients don't come to her until they are homeless" (DMH, Interview). Therefore, this lack of access creates a barrier for renters in knowing the rights they do have and how to fight an unlawful displacement.

5.4. Unhealthy Housing Conditions

In the interviews with community organizers and service providers, this research provided a glimpse of the pressures of gentrification and displacement in the community. Respondents expressed that many renters made sacrifices like living in overcrowded conditions, or even worst living in conditions where units were not fixed or needed repairs. This sentiment was reflected in the literature, as low-income residents are pushed out of their community due to gentrification, "residents may be forced to relocate to poor areas outside of the central city, often in depressed suburbs, again experiencing concentrated poverty" (Powell et

al. 447). In addition, many renters would settle for unstable housing conditions if it meant staying in the community. An organizer shared how landlords neglected repairs to renters housing, which has led to mold or infestation of bugs (NELAA (M), Interview). Consequently, this creates poor health conditions which perpetuate health disparities for renter's health (LACDPH 7).

Chapter 6

Planning and Policy Recommendations

A major component of this research was to explore the issue of displacement and gentrification in Highland Park. By focusing on the intersections of the social and health impacts, this research has found that renter displacement is a public health issue based on the findings. Through qualitative interviews this research also identified policies and planning recommendations needed to address displacement. From the interviews, the research uncovered much of the current work being done to prevent or intervene with displacement. However, much of the respondents expressed that there is still more that the city can do to address renter displacement. To address this issue of displacement, recommendations will require a coordinated effort among the renter community, city departments, and decision-makers to determine the types of policies and planning needed to protect renters from the social and health impacts of displacement.

Jonathan P. Bell coined the term, "embedded planning," which challenges how jurisdictions and planners engage with the renter community[25]. This approach can be helpful in engaging planners to work alongside the community to create policies and plans with the renter community. This can help planners understand renters lived experiences and could assist in making an inclusive and

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[25] Bell. J.P. "We Cannot Plan from Our Desks". *American Planning Association*. Oct. 2018 https://www.planning.org/planning/2018/oct/viewpoint/ Accessed 15 Feb. 2019.

participatory process of engaging community members in policy and planning decisions. Therefore, this research identified strategies that take on the approach of working with the renter community and community-based organizations to better equip renters in advocating for anti-displacement policies. (See Table 6.1 for all the strategies identified through the qualitative interviews).

Table 6.1 Identifying Anti Displacement Strategies

Interviewees:	Gaps in Work/ Needs:	Strategies for Anti-Displacement
Lawyer(T)	- Not enough lawyers - A lack of education for renters - A lack of rights for renters	- Outreach: canvassing - Referrals for services - Anti-Harassment ordinance. - Rent control - Tenant unions - Advocacy - Additional Lawyers - Lack of Funding
LATU Organizer (S)	A lack of education for renters	- Outreach - Rent control - Tenant Unions
Mental Health Case Worker	- Comprehensive wrap around services - A lack of rights for renters	- Referral of Clients - Rent Control
LATU Organizer(M)	- Lack of services for people going through displacement. - More renter's rights education	- Rent Control - Homeless Shelters - Education
NELAA Organizer (M)	- A lack of rights for renters - Legal services not accessible for low-income renters	- Rent Control - Pubic events - Outreach: social media - Tenant unions - Rent strikes - Legal counsel - Anti-tenant harassment ordinance - Community land Trusts

NELAA Organizer (J)	• More renter's rights education • A lack of accessible data	• Outreach • When people purchase apartment buildings • A lack of Community building and education
Homeless Outreach Worker (J)	• More places homeless people can seek services in their community	• Outreach • Public Events • Community Land Trusts • Alternatives to market rate housing • Education
Homeless Outreach Worker (M)	• A lack of rights for renters. • More renter's rights education	• Advocating to the local elected official • Outreach • Rent Control • A Resource Center • Tenant Unions • Advocacy Organizations • Lack of Education and Resources
Eviction Defense Network:	• A lack of attorneys doing eviction work	• Outreach • Advocacy • Organizing • Right to Counsel • Rent Control • Education • More attorneys

6.1 Community Land Trusts:

All respondents agreed that the housing market creates pressure on renters, where many landlords see housing to profit form, rather than a service or a right. In response to these housing pressures a couple of respondents felt Community Land Trusts (CLT's) should be implemented as a strategy to create long term affordable housing. Typically, non-profits or community-based organizations, in some cases cities and jurisdictions, have used this strategy to

intervene with the displacement of low-income communities of color. "CLT's were designed to ensure community stewardship of the land and ensure long term affordability for communities of color "(Williams 461). In CLT structures renters often participate in the decision-making process, which creates an inclusive method of self-determination. According to researcher Melanie Spencer, CLT's are another strategy of preventing gentrification and displacement, but more importantly stabilizing the community. "The application of the Community Land Trust model is precisely one mechanism that can be used to promote this concept of equitable development for all populations within a revitalizing community" (Spencer 48).

The strategy is to remove private ownership and to allow communities to stay affordable, which is a vital resource in working-class communities (Spencer 57). Many other researchers who have studied the impacts of displacement mentioned the need to "raise displacement as a health issue, supporting anti-displacement community organizing, and providing policy and technical support to cities facing displacement" (Levitt,92). Therefore, it's crucial for cities to work with communities to provide technical support in the development of CLT's to ensure long term affordability and include renters to be part of land stewardship.

6.2 Eviction database:

Evictions have steadily increased in low-income communities especially those communities going through gentrification (Desmond & Scholleberger 298). To better respond to rampant evictions, cities need to identify trends and patterns

to develop preventative measures that could intervene in the displacement process. Therefore, the recommendation is to work with the courts to establish an eviction database to understand where evictions are occurring. By tracking eviction data, the city can target and offer more resources, such as tenant rights clinics and legal services, to communities at risk of displacement.

6.3 Anti- Harassment Renter Ordinance:

This research found that landlord harassment was a major issue that resulted in renter displacement. Landlord harassment often takes shape on a case by case depending on the landlord and tenant. Many of these methods of harassment were used to push out existing renters that were typically in rent-controlled units. This research also found that harassment often intimidated renters to leave, and often scared them from trying to fight back for fear of retaliation. However, by creating an anti-harassment ordinance across the city of Los Angeles, this policy can protect renters from being pushed out.

By penalizing landlords who create inhospitable or inhabitable conditions for renters, it can give renters more rights when they are facing harsh treatment from landlords. In addition, this policy can help tenants get repairs done without fearing retaliation from landlords. A similar policy has been introduced and adopted in Oakland (Levitt 92), which protects tenants from landlord harassment.

6.4 Rent Stabilization Ordinance:

This research found that rent increases were another major factor in the displacement of renters in the community of Highland Park. Therefore, by updating rent regulations like rent control, it can provide additional rights and can prevent many low-income renters from being displaced. An example of a rent stabilization ordinance would be the adoption of a moratorium that would freeze rent increases. Recently the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors has adopted a moratorium that would prevent rent increases in the unincorporated communities of Los Angeles County[26]. Although this moratorium is temporary, it is important for jurisdictions to use this strategy to slow down displacement and understand the dynamics of gentrification, before coming up with long-term strategies and policies that prevent displacement.

For example, cities such as Oakland have implemented similar moratoriums for no-fault-evictions. By having jurisdictions establish no-fault-evictions, property owners are required to have a good or legitimate cause to evict a tenant. This ordinance could potentially provide more rights for tenants making it more difficult for renters to be displaced.

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[26] https://la.curbed.com/2019/4/9/18302250/rent-control-los-angeles-county-extension

Figure 6.1 Anti Eviction Sign in Highland Park

(Google images 2016)

6.5 Preservation of Section 8 Housing:

This research found that some landlords were no longer accepting section 8 vouchers. In an interview a homeless outreach worker mentioned how landlords would often evict renters that rely on section 8 and refuse to accept any new renters that receive that type of assistance. As it is, Section 8 requires a long process that often takes months or years to qualify for the program. In turn, this creates disparities where people who are low-income and have Section 8 still do not have the same opportunities as affluent renters to housing security.

Therefore, the recommendation is to develop a policy, so landlords do not discriminate against Section 8 voucher holders and require the acceptance of Section 8 vouchers in any new housing development. This could prevent people from losing their Section 8 vouchers and keep them from becoming homeless. Another solution would be to incentivize landlords by providing subsidies on future developments, to ensure housing security and the preservation of Section 8 units.

6.6 Community Engagement:

Another vital policy recommendation would be to create resources that are readily accessible to the community. Renters at risk of displacement need materials in the language they understand and offered by people that sympathize with their situation. More educational opportunities and resources such as legal services or renter's rights workshops are also needed. This recommendation of creating more community engagement opportunities provides renters with the support systems that many people often do not have. Several strategies to engage the renter community with resources such as renters' rights, legal services, and future policy development are mentioned below.

6.6.1 Social Practice & Art

While interviewing the organization NELAA this research found out about their strategies of street performance and using art as a method to facilitate conversations with renters about displacement. Creating social art that supports

renters at risk of displacement can be an alternative to educate renters on resources and their rights. This strategy has the potential to change the culture of how we see displacement in communities and how communities can be engaged and empowered in these conversations through a non-conventional method.

Figure 6.2 Highland Park Renters Reel the Squeeze of Gentrification

(Smith, LA Times)

Through the collection of personal testimonies renter displacement can be viewed in a more compassionate way to start generating interest and obtain support to prevent or intervene in renter's displacement.

6.6.2 Housing Resource Fairs:

To further expand community engagement efforts, this research recommends the city work with community-based organizations, tenant unions, and other non-profits to conduct housing resource fairs in low-income communities. The fairs can serve as one stop shop for people facing issues around housing. Housing fairs can also help people get resources and receive services on the spot. In addition, other services and resources such as mental health and public assistance can support renters that are at risk of displacement. By providing all the resources in one location, renters can enhance their support systems through education. These housing fairs should happen in low-income communities at least once a month in areas that are at risk of gentrification.

6.6.3 Tenant Legal Clinics:

From talking to lawyers and tenant organizers many of them discussed the need for consistent legal clinics. Renters should always be offered free legal services, especially for low-income, or working-class renters who have limited financial resources. The city should allocate funding to non-profits to make legal clinics free and accessible for the people that need them. These clinics would better equip renters from being displaced by educating renters on their rights.

Figure 6.3 Tenant Rights Workshop in Highland Park
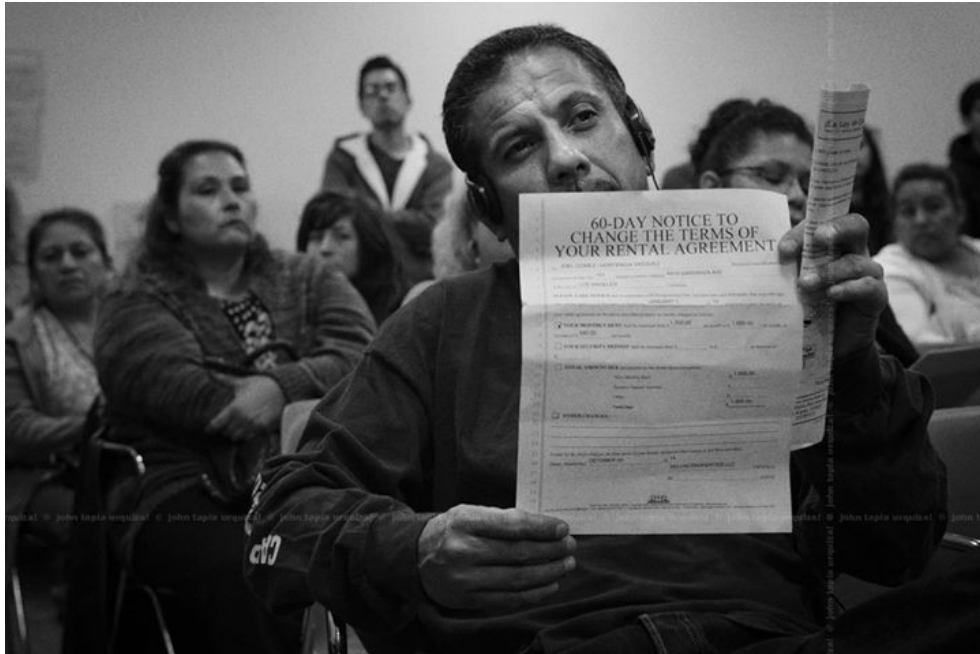
(Urquiza, 2016)

6.7 Establish Tenant Unions:

This research also found the importance of support systems; for instance community organizing was used to empower renters to demand better living conditions and fair rents. Therefore, the recommendation is to work with apartment complexes and renter groups in developing tenant unions or tenant associations. This research has shown that the creation of collective power gives renters the ability to become engaged and empowered to fight displacement and stay in their community. Through the identification of this strategy that is rooted in resistance, renters can create an opportunity to impact policy and create stronger regulations for developers and landlords.

In creating tenant unions, community-based organizations can facilitate a process to educate residents on their rights as renters, provide tools to organize, and allow for renters to participate in the planning of housing development in their communities.

Figure 6.4   Tenant Association Protesting Outside a Landlords House

(Tenants Union, 2019)

6.8 Right to Counsel:

This research also found that many renters facing eviction, would go into court with no legal support. Therefore, by developing a policy that establishes a right to counsel, renters would have the right to legal support. Often renters did not know how to identify the resources for free legal advice or did not have the resources to hire a lawyer. Moreover, the interviews revealed that renters go into the courtroom representing themselves with no resources to win their case. Therefore, the recommendation would be to initiate a policy where renters can be entitled to lawyers free-of-charge and must have a lawyer present at eviction

proceedings. With this recommendation the courts would be forced to provide more support for renter populations and increase the capacity of lawyers taking on eviction cases.

6.9 Limitations:

The initial research was to conduct interviews with renters who had been displaced. However, the renters that were willing to meet and interview never were willing to participate. These renters were probably traumatized by the displacement and didn't want to relive their experience, and nor should they be burdened to relive the experience for the sake of this research. Therefore, by interviewing community experts and services providers this research was still able to center the lived experience of those being displaced. More importantly, this research was able to speak on violent process of forced displacement, common problems experienced by those displaced, and possible alternatives to address displacement.

Another limitation was the lack of geospatial data on renter turnover specific to Highland Park. There was no data that captures the exact information on the types of displacement that has happened in the community nor was eviction data readily accessible. By understanding the lack of data that is captured on displacement , this research chose to focus on the qualitative component to highlight this dynamic.

Another limitation was being able to find Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) data specific to Highland Park. RHNA data usually is

captured at the city level, which Highland Park is a community in the city of Los Angeles. Moreover, this research was not intended to understand the lack of affordability options in the community, but about the act of displacement that is typically carried out on renters by landlords.

6.10 Suggestions for Future Research:

This research found the connection between gentrification, displacement and homelessness. A suggestion for future researchers is to further explore this connection and continue to track trends and patterns over time for communities that are susceptible to gentrification or going through gentrification. This type of research can be useful in creating urgency so better solutions can be created that address displacement. This research gives a glimpse to the type of displacement that can lead to homelessness, however, additional data and research is needed to make stronger a correlation between the two.

Another interesting area of research would be to explore how mental health is connected to gentrification and displacement. One can do this by seeing collecting data on mental health related cases that involve law enforcement or emergency room visits and determine if there is a correlation between communities that are going through gentrification and communities that are not gentrifying.

6.11 Conclusion

According to the organizers and service providers interviewed in this research, there is no denial that Highland Park is experiencing gentrification and the pressures of renter displacement. However, various groups and community members have organized to bring awareness and provide services to renters facing displacement. When elected officials and planners develop housing plans and policy, they often neglect the lived experience of those suffering the burdens of renter displacement due to gentrification. It is understood that gentrification revitalizes a community, however, it is often at the expense and health of low-income and immigrant renter communities.

Residents that are being displaced tend to be marginalized already and have limited health and social services to begin with. So, when renters experience displacement it can worsen their health and make them susceptible to detrimental cycle of consequences. As a result, displacement, can trigger a cycle of social implications such as not having upward mobility which perpetuates the cycle of poverty and makes low-income communities more vulnerable to serial displacement.

Therefore, cities should be providing additional funding to existing work like educational workshops, legal, housing and mental health services for renters at risk of displacement. Equally as important, preventative policies are needed to protect renters or create alternatives to the unregulated housing market. Cities should partake in educating and engaging their residents in their rights as constituents of Los Angeles. As development is being created it should be done

with community, and more community-driven alternatives are needed where

renters get to propose solutions through community engagement efforts.

Furthermore, if this issue is not addressed soon the inequities of

displacement could continue to burden communities. For this reason, when

discussing displacement due to gentrification it should be framed as a public

health concern, so elected officials, departments and community organizations

find alternatives to prevent and intervene in the displacement process. This way

Los Angeles can create healthier communities, where constituent's health is

valued more than investor profit, and where modern-day colonization can finally

be addressed.

Figure 6.5 Highland Park Residents Speak up Against Gentrification

(Katie J, 2015)

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18

An Exploratory Look at Displacement in Highland Park

Survey questions for service providers and community organizers:

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me today. This Survey should only take 45 minutes to one hour. I will keep all the information received anonymously and will reference your survey by the organization that you are affiliated with.

General Questions/ Context for organizations:

What is the organization you're with/ work for?

How did you get involved in this work?

How do people become aware of your services?

Do you know anybody who has been displaced?

The residents that you have engaged within this work, How long have they lived in Highland Park?

where do you hear people moving to?

What are the different ways people are being pushed out of the community?
- Was it a rent increase?
- Were they evicted?
- Were they asked to move out and given relocation assistance?

Of the different ways, people are being pushed out which one do people experience more often?

Social Cohesion

Why do you think people are being displaced?

Why do you think people to choose to live in Highland Park in the first place?

Do you think it has to do with social connections or affordability?

Do you hear about overcrowding housing before displacement?

Do you hear about overcrowding after displacement has occurred?

Do you feel people are being pushed out of the community? Is there a demographic that is highly impacted? What demographic is vulnerable to displacement?

Do people still come back to the community? If so why?

Do people want to stay in the community, do people try to stay in the community?

Do you think people know of the resources as displacement occurs? why?

What resources do you think can prevent displacement?

Did people go to court and try to fight the displacement? Why or why not?

Did the building get a new owner?

What are the ways that Landlords harass tenants?

What are some things people are doing to resist displacement?

What can cities do to prevent displacement? Like what?

What are some forces creating displacement?

What are some current things happening to address displacement?

What could the community do to address residential renter displacement?

What are some limits/gaps to keep people from being displaced? It can be at any level

Access:

Are displaced people able to afford a place in Highland Park?

Do you feel the community is the same? why or why not?

Do the property owners offer residents to stay?

Health

Do you see people that are being pushed out of the neighborhood have their health affected?
- Mental, emotional, physical?

Have you heard people that had to visit the doctor since being displaced?

Did any residents have trouble with their health while being displaced? Or after?

Have you engaged with people who have been displaced several times?

Appendix B: Consent Form

An Exploratory Look at Displacement in Highland Park
By:Miguel Ramos (626) 375-6799, miguelaramos@cpp.edu

Thank you for your time to interview with me. The intention of this interview is to engage with organizations and individuals that might be working with residents that are either going through a displacement process or have already been displaced. The interview should take no longer than an hour. There are no risks in this interview unless you yourself have been displaced and find this topic to be too sensitive. Otherwise, the benefits allow for this research to understand the deeper dynamics that residents face when being displaced. Things that are not seen on the surface. There will be no compensation for this interview and it and all answers will be kept anonymous.

Thank you for your time, do you have any questions?

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

Your Signature:_____
Date:_____
Your name printed:_____

In addition to agreeing to participate, I also consent to have the interview audio-recorded.
Your signature:_____
Date:_____
Your name printed:_____