

Narratives of Displacement in Bushwick, Brooklyn, New York

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Abstract

Towards the beginning of the twenty-first century the injection of global capital and financial instruments into United States real estate markets directly contributed to increased luxury development and a decrease in affordable housing stock in New York City (Fields and Uffer, 2014). Simultaneously during former Mayor Bloomberg's tenancy a dwindling supply of affordable housing was met with the rezoning of much of the city, especially the borough of Brooklyn, which paved the way for new development (Moss, 2014). Subsidies using tax-payer dollars were and currently are given to corporations by the government to create market-rate luxury housing in much of the city while adding very little new affordable housing. Almost like a ripple effect, once owners of multi-family tenement buildings see changes from gentrification underway they may systematically remove tenants that were previously paying lower rents under rent regulations in order to increase their rental profits (Cooper Square Committee). The process of gentrification is often discussed in the mainstream media outlets in terms of how a neighborhood is improving such as the lowering of crime, decreasing of so called blight. Yet the media rarely speaks of the lived experiences of the people, typically low-income and working class minorities, who are being displaced by gentrification. Both the historic and current advocacy for affordable housing and honoring tenants' rights provided the motivation for a pilot study that sought to collect qualitative research on NYC residents who have experienced displacement from the gentrification of their neighborhoods. The findings of this research are alarming as they provide a glimpse into tactics used by land lords such as harassment and illegal evictions to remove rent regulated tenants. More disturbing is the trauma incurred by tenants, a lack of awareness of tenants' housing rights and rent regulation laws and a lack of accountability of landlords who engage in illegal practices. At the end of this paper I discuss potential participatory design projects that could be created from the research of a more in-depth study. Such a project could seek to inform the public about these issues, organize tenants to advocate for justice, educate tenants about their housing rights as well as resources for legal counseling and/or to encourage NYC residents to stand up to the illegal practices used by landlords.

Introduction

Since the economic down turn and housing foreclosure crisis of 2007-2008 the cost of living has been increasing in many cities while the number of new jobs being added to the workforce and wages earned by employees have largely stagnated. Prior to and following the economic recession New York City has undergone what some have termed “hyper-gentrification” or rapid growth in luxury development, particularly within Brooklyn (Moss, 2014). This rapid change to the built environment of the city has been coupled with a dwindling stock of affordable housing for working class and low income residents. In turn the impact of these economic forces have negatively affected residents' ability to procure and maintain stable housing. Although regulations are in place that require developers to create affordable housing under NYC's 80/20 plan, many new units being constructed are not truly affordable due to the method and metrics under which “affordability” is determined by both the local and federal governments.¹ As neighborhoods begin to change in socio-economic and racial make up property owners often respond by increasing rents in multi-family, residential units. In response to the affordable housing crisis the current NYC mayor, Bill De Blasio, stated that the city will both preserve or create 200,000 units of additional affordable housing (Grynbaum and Navarro, 2014). However, many critics argue that an emphasis needs to be on preserving existing affordable housing as many units that have rent regulation will expire in the coming decades or that the mayor's use of inclusionary zoning gives developers more opportunities to build luxury housing and increase the pace and extent of gentrification.

The consequences of neighborhoods changing socio-economically from these economic forces amounts to working class and low income residents being displaced from their homes. Often the emphasis of examining

¹ The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) determines Area Median Income (AMI) for regions in the U.S. AMI is a metric used by New York state/city to determine how developers can set prices for residential apartments that are below market rate and thereby label them affordable. AMI is calculated by HUD for a metropolitan area by aggregating data on median income for many counties. In NYC AMI is calculated by aggregating its five counties as well as Putnam county which is outside the city. Thus AMI for a family of four in NYC is \$83,000. According to HUD for housing costs to be considered affordable they must be no more than 30% of a family's combined income. However developers are allowed to rent newly constructed units anywhere from 60%-175% of AMI and label them as “affordable.” According to the U.S. Census, the annual median income for Brooklyn in 2012 dollars is \$44,850, thus truly affordable rent would be \$13,455 annually. However it is not uncommon for many NYC residents to spend 50% or more of their annual income on rent.

gentrification is on aspects such as new residents and businesses moving in, the lowering of crime and/or the beautification of formerly blighted areas within neighborhoods exemplified by NPR's recent series on gentrification in Marketplace (Kai, 2014). Within the normative conversation around gentrification there is typically a lack of emphasis on the forced removal of residents that have affordable and/or regulated rent as well as the illegal conversions of affordable units (rent stabilized, rent controlled) into market rate units. In these situations landlords frequently use illegal practices to encourage tenants to move out. Practices documented by housing rights groups include the distribution of misinformation, verbal threats and phone harassment, the destruction of tenants' apartments either directly by demolishing bathrooms or kitchens or indirectly by performing construction work that damages neighboring units (Cooper Square Committee, 2014). Other forms of land lord harassment include the shutting off of tenants' utilities (electricity and gas) and illegally evicting tenants by changing their locks when they aren't home (Cooper Square Committee, 2014). This emphasis on illegal practices and displacement rather than gentrification provided the motive for a ethnographic research pilot study. This study involved collecting qualitative data on experiences of displacement by interviewing NYC residents who have lived through issues such as wrongful evictions.

The geographic focus of this pilot study is the neighborhood of Bushwick in Brooklyn (Kings County), New York City, New York. In this paper Bushwick is defined as being located in northern – central Brooklyn and bordered by the Queens-Brooklyn border to the northeast, Cemetery of the Evergreens to the southeast, Broadway to the southwest and Flushing Avenue to the northwest. This neighborhood was chosen for several reasons: the first is that Bushwick has and is continuing to undergo a dramatic urban transformation from renovations to existing properties and new luxury development in the past five to ten years. Thus all the experiences of persons interviewed are fairly recent. The second reason for choosing Bushwick as a case study is based on the author's involvement in assisting the Northwest Bushwick Community Group with redesigning an interactive web mapping tool for the group called The Northwest Bushwick Community Map². Thus the author had previously meet with activists from the group, had some understanding of the dynamics currently

2 The redesign of the website can be viewed at <http://clhenrick.github.io/BushwickCommunityMap>

changing the neighborhood and was introduced to one of the participants through the group. Finally it is worth mentioning that the author was able to gain access to some participants through previously existing informal relationships such as friendships and acquaintances all of whom had lived in Bushwick. The author did reach out to the other community groups Right to the City and Make the Road New York but was unable to make contact with other participants.

A total of four participants were interviewed, all of whom were living in Bushwick when they experienced displacement. The experiences of these individuals sheds light not only on the difficulties of finding stable and affordable housing, even when one is not living at or below the poverty line, but more importantly they highlight the illegal practices used by landlords to remove tenants from their homes so they can increase rents being charged in their properties in a timely manner. One consideration of collecting this preliminary data is for the proposal of a larger study and for potential methods of creating an interactive participatory design process which is discussed more in depth later in this paper.

Findings

The author was able to conduct four separate semi-structured interviews with individuals who have had experiences around displacement. Each interview was recorded, transcribed and analyzed for the identification of themes. Additionally the author attempted to expand his overall understanding of housing rights advocacy and activism by attending meetings and doing other pro-bono work with housing rights groups.

The author:

- Met with several groups related tenants rights such as Movement To Protect the People (MTOPP), Northwest Bushwick Community Group (NWB), Cooper Square Committee, and Right to the City.
- Participated in a community / participatory mapping project lead by NWB in Bushwick.

- Attended a Community Board meeting for the Prospect Lefferts Gardens and South Crown Heights neighborhoods.
- Performed Geospatial Information Systems (GIS), web development and cartographic design work for NWB.

The four participants had varying experiences with displacement ranging from being priced out, evicted legally through housing court or evicted illegally through controversial practices by their landlords. Participant A is a single mother who works for the NYC Department of Public Health and was priced out of Bushwick after she felt she needed an apartment larger than a one-bedroom to adequately provide for her two-year old son.

Participant B is a graduate student and graphic designer who was forced to move from the McKibben Lofts in Bushwick where he had been living for several years after an NYC Department of Buildings inspector posted a notice for all residents to vacate the first floor of the building. Participant C is a single mother who after giving birth to a child faced extreme harassment and an illegal eviction from her landlord following the selling of the building she lived in for two years. Participant D is a young man in his mid twenties who experienced two evictions through his mother, the first when he was living with her and second after he had moved away for college.

Themes

Following an analysis of transcriptions of the participant interviews several themes within the data were identified. The themes are as follows: trauma such as psychological, emotional and physical trauma experienced from landlord harassment & eviction; landlord harassment; lack of home stability due to the unavailability of affordable apartments in the market; lack of accountability of landlords engaging in illegal practices; and tenants' lack of knowledge around their housing rights.

Psychological, Emotional and Physical Trauma

Living through a displaced is a traumatizing event for tenants. Two of the participants stated how the process effects you emotionally and psychologically, even to the point where the stress causes physical symptoms. After being displaced tenants still live with the trauma and stress of the event, potentially having to live with post-traumatic stress syndrome. When he confronted the landlord that had evicted his mother most recently participant D remembers his mother expressing signs of post-traumatic stress:

And so when we were looking for apartments the second time around we wanted to get a letter from him saying we weren't bad tenants. Cause a lot of people ask well why are you looking for an apartment now? Why were you evicted? So we wanted to prove that we didn't do anything wrong. So we went to get a letter of support from him, I went with her and did all the talking, he didn't give us the letter. My mom didn't do anything and she was trembling with fear, she was so traumatized, it gets to this point where you never want to confront this person again (Participant D, 2014).

During a participatory mapping exercise with NWB participant D found himself on his old block and recognized the landlord from the residence of his first eviction. When mentioning to the landlord how the neighborhood had changed he describes the landlords reaction; "It was really shitty, what he said was 'we finally got all the fucking animals off the block'" (Participant D, 2014). Such a statement highlights how landlords may view low-income minorities and indicate their bias into systematically removing them once there is an opportunity for higher income tenants to occupy their rental units.

Participant D goes on further when describing his mother's and sister's experiences of the second eviction:

So I went through the first eviction with her, and my sister went through both with her. So the first eviction didn't hit her but the second one hit her real hard. She was talking about killing herself, my mom was also talking about killing herself because when she got evicted they had no idea where they were going to go. It was fucking January, it was snowing, that particular weekend it started snowing and

that was a month from when I was defending my thesis, so it was a really bad for all of us (Participant D, 2014).

Participant C speaks of her experience trying to save money to move to a new place while being a new mother:

We didn't eat for months, my child wasn't eating, wasn't gaining weight, he's still under weight now from the trauma we went through then, he stopped growing, I lost an insane amount of weight. I was under a lot of stress because of the baby, trying to figure out what we are going to, spending SO MUCH money on transportation to find another apartment just for them to look at me and this kid and be like, 'so do you work?' And me be like, 'no I watch my kid, but once I get a place I'll work'. 'But my boyfriend works', 'well we need two people that work'. Well then who's gonna watch the kid? It's like from every angle you feel like you're getting fucked (Participant C, 2014).

Lack of Stability due to Unavailability of Affordable Apartments in the Market:

A correlating factor to tenants who experience displacement is difficulty finding new housing that is affordable for their income level. This is even the case when an individual or family is not technically at or below the poverty line. When asked about being priced out of her neighborhood, Participant A mentions it being difficult to find adequate housing even with a stable, salaried job working for the city; "Yeah, so basically like, I make 78,000 a year, my salary has gone up slightly since I began living here from 70 to 78 over time. But 70 as a single adult vs. 70 as a two person household is why I couldn't afford to live there" (Participant A, 2014).

When she began looking for a new apartment several months after giving birth and beginning to experience harassment from her new landlord, Participant C describes the financial and time burden:

“It costs us \$5000 just to move to that new apartment. That was all the money I had saved just in case if anything happened...It took us over a year to find an apartment or maybe it was just under a year. But eventually we found an apartment, we moved out” (Participant C, 2014).

Participant D mentions several times how long it took his family to find new housing after being evicted, due to the stigma of finding housing through Section 8.

The first time i was evicted was in 2006. We were coming from my mom’s counselor from her office on 23rd, it was a tuesday, around 4:30, there was a big yellow sign on our door that said we were evicted and that’s as much as I remember of that day...after that we ended up in a shelter for a year. She got evicted (a second time) January 9th 2014, I was in Mexico at the time in grad school. She was jumping around room to room, by august the realtor finally found her an apartment out in Jamaica (Participant D, 2014).

Landlord Harassment

Landlord harassment is a tactic commonly used to remove tenants who are rent regulated from their apartments. Tenants often have little power to change their situation and must wait for a date in housing court while enduring abuse such as the shutting off of utilities or destruction of parts of their apartment building or even their unit. During her first place of residence in Bushwick Participant C experienced a suspicious burglary that coincided with being denied a lease renewal:

When we came back home our house had been robbed, burglarized. But however they did it they had to come up the fire escape. but there was no access to the fire escape unless you were in the building. So we were like it either had to be someone in the building or like it could have been done by the landlord to get us out of there so of course nothing ever came of that because there was no proof of anything we were sort of traumatized and were like fuck this place lets get out of here (Participant C, 2014)

During the second year at her most recent residence in Bushwick participant C talks about their utilities being shut off by their landlord and how he would deliberately not allow utility companies to enter the first floor of the building to access the gas line shut off:

...and it was getting really bad there, they turned off the electric, they turned off the gas but to get it turned back on, they lied about some stuff. We couldn't get the electric or gas turned back on because there was only access through the basement and if the electric or gas company came when the store was closed they couldn't get into the basement at all. And that i think was also illegal."

In two separate Section 8 homes participant D's mother experienced frequent sexual harassment from her landlord. Although this harassment did not appear to provoke her to move out, it highlights the power dynamic that exists in Section 8 between tenants and their landlords. His mother experienced sexual harassment from separate landlords at both locations where she was evicted:

He was a shady character, a pervert, but... He had porn posters in his basement, he would sexually harass my mom. There was two of them, Peter was the one that was sexually harassing her and I saw in the mapping exercise a few weeks ago. The other one would let it slide and go by but not actually harass her but never call the other guy out.

...and this landlord used to sexually harass her for the 6 years she lived there. I think he invited her downstairs once when no body was there. He also sexually harassed her verbally a few times. Really shitty luck with landlords (Participant D, 2014).

In addition to having her utilities shut off Participant C described her landlord calling her on the phone to yell at her for not moving out or accepting an illegal rent increase of one thousand dollars per month:

"It was horrible. I was being harassed by this landlord. He calls me screaming and yelling at me saying I'm

causing him all this drama, that this is such a headache for him and whatever. And I'm telling him he can kiss my ass because this a headache for me. I have a kid, we can't support our selves right now, you're kicking me out."

Lack of accountability of landlords engaging in illegal practices

Three of the participants mentioned illegal or questionably legal practices by their landlords to remove them from their homes. Based on these experiences it appears that landlords are too often not accountable for their actions. When her building was sold to a new owner, Participant C mentions how the landlord informed everyone in the building that their lease was no longer valid, an illegal practice:

They [the new landlords] made everybody in the building get off of their lease. Everyone's lease was due at the same time. So if you're living month to month for two months, three months then you don't have to renew the old lease. It was just long enough that they didn't have to renew. So, I of course am like that's ridiculous you can't raise my rent \$1,000! He's like yes we can, I was like this is a rent stabilized building, he said not any more
(Participant C).

Participant D spoke of how both Section 8 landlords used questionably legal tactics to remove his family from their homes. Remembering the first time his mother was evicted when he was still a young boy and living with her he says:

She [his mother] said the landlord wanted us to move across the street to another building but that building wasn't going to be approved for section 8 and after that I don't understand anything she says. I looked at some of the papers and court orders that came out of that process and it said that she owed him \$16,000. I don't understand how that happened because we were on section 8. When you're on section 8 you only pay a small percentage so if it was \$16,000 that means it was two years of

accumulating of us not paying rent which wasn't the case (Participant D, 2014).

Prior to being evicted the second time Participant D recalls his landlord deliberately failing an inspection by the NYC Housing Authority. The failed inspection meant that the unit no longer qualified for Section 8 so the landlord stopped receiving payment vouchers from the government. As a result she became responsible for paying the entire amount of the rent and the landlord was able to take his mother to court for not paying rent.

The landlord found a loop hole in section 8. An inspector has to come by once a year, he purposely failed the inspection. Yeah like he purposefully didn't fix things, sanitation mainly. There wasn't proper sanitation in the house. Outside there weren't proper garbage things so I guess that created an environment where the apartment failed section 8 inspection so they stopped sending payments. This created a situation where the landlord could take my mom to court because my mom wasn't paying rent anymore (Participant D, 2014).

Participant B spoke of his former residence in a loft building known as the McKibben Lofts. The building was notorious for having loud parties and illegal basement apartments for the three years he had lived there. Additionally some tenants were renovating their illegal units and renting them on the website AirBnB to make a profit. This had apparently been a spoken agreement with the building owner who allowed the illegal renovations and units to be built and rented out. However one day without an apparent warning the building was given a notice of evacuation by an NYC Department of Buildings inspector:

The reputation of the building had been on radar of NYPD and DOB for years. It was notorious for violent muggings, crazy out of control parties. NYPD would even patrol the hallways on the weekends. It was 'red flagged' so the DOB was either waiting and building a case or just letting it happen. The basement [first] floor didn't have a certificate of occupancy. Finally someone let a DOB inspector in, probably a guest at an Air BnB hotel. The inspector sees illegal gas lines, bathrooms, kitchens, beds in one basement unit and places a notice of evacuation...The landlord now wants to rezone the entire

basement floor as commercial. If it's zoned commercial it can legally become a hotel (Participant B).

Tenants' lack of knowledge around their housing rights

Tenants are often unaware of their legal rights and a course of action they should take to protect themselves from illegal evictions and landlord harassment. Even when tenants are aware of their rights and seeking legal help as Participant C was actively doing, the trauma endured by harassment can be enough to persuade them to get away from their abuser as soon as possible and not follow through with a housing court Case.

Participant C's experience demonstrates this when she recalls negotiating with her landlord at housing court:

"He gave me like \$3000. Under that negotiation I was also to drop the DHCR case also. I felt like he bullied me into it" (Participant C).

Additionally tenants may not call the police when they are evicted illegally for fear of minor infractions they have accumulated or unwanted interaction with authorities. Participant C demonstrates this when she stated why she didn't call the police when her landlord illegally evicted her:

I was afraid to call the police, because i had forgotten to pay a ticket and um what the police do now and if you call and file a complaint or call for anything in order to crack down on people who have warrants, they background check you first and they will arrest you. I mean because I forgot to pay a ticket amidst all of this drama...I was afraid to call the cops on the land lord illegally evicting me. So I let it go because I had a baby I didn't want to get arrested.

Personal Reflection

Perhaps the most notable reflection by the author is that it can be difficult to gain access to individuals who have experienced forced displacement. If this study is able to continue it will be necessary to reach out further

to additional housing rights and community groups, community legal counseling services, as well as using methods such as flyers and posting online advertisements. However there are factors that may dissuade residents from coming forward to speak about their experiences such as being a non-native english speaker, fear of being sued by their landlord for slander, fear of being blacklisted on the NYC Tenant BlackList and unable to rent again in NYC, as well as the upsetting emotions that may likely come up when sharing their experiences. Stakeholders who could provide access to participants may also be reluctant to do so without having built a rapport with a researcher and knowing whether or not their interest is genuine and will add value to the lives of the participants. The author experienced this when reaching out to an individual who works with Latino residents in Bushwick around housing justice.

Additionally difficulties with performing the research on behalf of the author were identified during the research process. The author had personal feelings of guilt come up for having never dealt with such experiences with housing as well as relating these feelings to his own socio-economic status, race and gender. Furthermore it often felt difficult for the author to ask the participant to continue telling an account of land lord abuse as it can be difficult to listen to. The process is an emotional experience for the participants; several individuals cried or showed other visible bodily language revealing they were uncomfortable of remembering their experiences. This made the author question his role as researcher and made him feel that he should take a role as an ally or friend. If the study is pursued further the author would likely require training in counseling others who have had traumatic experiences.

One last issue is that there is a problem in sharing the participants' stories while keeping their identity protected. This is relevant when addressing the question of how to create a meaningful narrative media experience around these stories so that they can be shared with the public for advocacy on tenants' rights outside of academia. If their names are changed would enough descriptive information given away about their situations inform their previous landlords about their identity and cause retaliation such as a slander law suit or

blacklisting? These are questions that require attention and cannot be ignored when choosing how to share these narratives of displacement.

Moving Forward

Given ample time and funding further interviews could be completed and possibly incorporated into a participatory action research or design project. As stated earlier, one of the limitations of this pilot study was gaining access to participants. Even when introduced to stakeholders such as people working in non-profit or volunteer organizations that advocate for tenants rights and affordable housing there was reluctance given directly or indirectly to grant the author access to individuals who have experienced displacement. With additional time the author could attend meetings and put in volunteer time with organizations to build rapport prior to asking for access to individuals. This way additional tenants rights groups, community groups and legal counseling services in Bushwick and elsewhere may be more willing to provide access to individuals who have had lived experiences around displacement.

If enough participants were to express interest in offering more than their narratives and consented to using the qualitative data collected to create a media experience to be shared with the Bushwick community the narratives could evolve into a true Participatory Action Research project with a design component. Potential ideas for participatory design include creating an oral history walking tour of the locations of residents' experiences, an art installation or mural at a community center, an interactive digital and/or print map featuring the locations of the participants' stories. There have been a number of precedents for activism inspired art and design work that utilize community member participation that such a project take inspiration from.

One such precedent is *Memories of the Future*, a series of works created by Melanie Crean with Majora Carter. Crean is an NYC based artist whose work often focuses on social justice issues and creating work in public

spaces and recently developed a location aware mobile application that allows a user to take a walking tour of spoken word performances in Hunts Point, South Bronx. Each location in the app features an artist from Hunts Point performing an original work at site specific locations that reflects on their lived experience of the area (Crean, 2014). Such a project hints at the possibilities of how texts from participatory research may create a powerful media experience that empowers participants while simultaneously advocating for change.

Other interactive media that takes inspiration from location based mobile technology or cartography often does not utilize narrative text from participatory research. An example is the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project's temporal and animated digital map titled *The Ellis Act* which plots the vast number of locations of evictions over time on a map of San Francisco (AEMP, 2013). The evictions plotted in this map are a direct result of the Ellis Act, a piece of legislation in California that allows landlords to easily use no-fault evictions as a method to remove tenants from their buildings. The map gives quite a powerful statement in itself, though it does not include the narrative components of tenants who have endured no-fault evictions under the Ellis Act.

Combining narrative texts with quantitative data on a map could have the possibility to make a connection between abstract data and the lived experiences of people who have dealt with displacement. It is possible that the narrative text could be triangulated with quantitative geospatial data to highlight the vulnerability of rent regulated apartments and lack of affordable housing in the city.

A final benefit of creating such an interactive and participatory project is that it could serve as a cultural-probe to encourage other community members come forward to share their story of being displaced in Bushwick or the greater NYC area. Often individuals who go through experiences such as that of displacement feel isolated in their experience and are unaware that others may be dealing with similar situations. If an interactive media piece gained enough attention additional stories could be crowd sourced and added to the project. Thus such a piece would serve to document and reveal people's lived experiences around displacement through illegal practices by land lords in NYC while potentially letting individuals know they are not alone in their experiences.

A narrative mapping project may also have the potential to pull texts from a diverse audience, countering the homogeneity Parker describes as a flaw in the Portland Green Map's project (Parker, 2006).

Conclusion

Despite encountering limitations in gathering participants, the Narratives of Displacement pilot study proved to be successful in highlighting the lived experiences of several Bushwick residents who have been forced to relocate due to the ripple effects of hyper-gentrification. As stated the themes that were identified in the narrative texts are: trauma such as psychological, emotional and physical trauma experienced from landlord harassment & eviction; landlord harassment; lack of home stability due to the unavailability of affordable apartments in the market; lack of accountability of landlords engaging in illegal practices; and tenants' lack of knowledge around their housing rights. Highlighting four stories of individuals who have experienced issues relating to these themes suggests there exist countless others within Bushwick and the rest of New York City. Encouraging residents to speak out about these experiences can have many potential benefits for their communities such as spreading awareness of these issues, identifying problematic landlords, providing tenants with knowledge of their legal rights and access to legal services as well as strengthening the work being done by community groups, tenants unions, housing rights groups and affordable housing groups. However it must be made clear that the identities of participants are kept confidential so that landlords do not retaliate against them. If the author is able to continue this research and pursue the project further, additional stories could be collected either as part of a participatory action research project and/or participatory design project. Pursuing this research further could help change the focus of the discussion around gentrification from neighborhood change to the illegal and forced removal of low-income or working-class people. The latter is typically what is being missed by the mainstream media and others when conversations about gentrification occur, online or offline. By spreading awareness around these issues people can be encouraged to help others and know they are not alone when going through land lord harassment, questionably legal practices or illegal evictions. Tying human experiences to this issue will help others see that it is dire problem in need of attention by community

members as well as local, state and federal governments.

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