Gentrification Effects on Racial Equity
In Communities of Color

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Executive Summary

Gentrification is a topic of discussion across the United States, and through this paper I will examine how a direct investment in a community’s racial equity will provide a better balance rather than an investment to the market in that community. Racial equity gives communities of color an opportunity to create an even playing field rather than an equal one. In examining how gentrification affects a community’s racial equity, I have reviewed two Chicago neighborhoods which are the Englewood and Pilsen neighborhoods. Through analysis of these neighborhoods I will show the affects that gentrification has had on their population and communal amenities such as schools provided.

Gentrification is the start, but the outcomes of gentrification are typically the end. Through these ends I will observe the options that we have at our disposable at the policy level and at the local program/organization level. Through these policies and programs, I make note of how these can be utilized in cities across the country that are facing the same issues that these Chicago neighborhoods are facing today.

Lastly concluding, with understanding the importance of finding a solution that benefits all parties involved in the challenges that arise from gentrification. Pointing out that communities of color are often time disproportionately affected by gentrification and at a higher rate than the majority population. Acknowledging that people are at the heart of all these policies, programs, and problems and we should ensure that the solution is people focused.
Client: Bryan Hudson

Location: Chicago, IL

- Licensed Architect in Illinois
- President and Founder of SOMA Design Consultants
  - Architectural Design and Construction Management firm
- Bryan is rooted in community work, and ensuring the stability of the community that he resides in.
- He holds strong opinions on the topic of gentrification, and believes that with “the loss of a political power base, loss of the school system, Economic power, and Cultural Crisis/Demographic Shift” and some of the reason gentrification has a strong foundation in communities of color.

(image)¹

¹ http://efficientestatesannuityandinsurance.com/thecac
Introduction

In the City of Chicago there has been a rise in gentrification across the city, but particularly in the neighborhoods of color. Many cities across the country have found creative and political ways to combat gentrification for San Francisco to Oregon. I’ve examined some of the resources, programs and policies, available to all communities to help mitigate the negative affects of gentrification. While, also examining how an increase in racial equity of a community could provide infrastructure and stability instead of dismantling communities.

Gentrification Defined

Gentrification is a double-edged sword, that both helps and often times harms the communities in which it is attempting to service. What is gentrification? Gentrification is what happens when private investors invest in lower income areas, and some adverse effects of gentrification is rising rental rates and property values which in turn displaces those existing residents due to the area no longer being affordable. Gentrification can also be seen as the following: “…it is hoped that gentrification will be seen as a unique vehicle for urban revitalization...Gentrification can help lead older cities back to a socioeconomic equilibrium while confronting the contextual reality of general urban decline.”

makes it undesirable by the residents in which gentrification actually occurs to. I have simplified gentrification into the follow formula:

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\text{Gentrification Simplification}
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\text{Dilapidate Buildings/Divested Communities} + \text{Monies/Investments} = \text{Economically Stimulated Communities}
\]

This simplification of the parts the make gentrification, is way to dissect the root of the action and then examine the benefits and problem that stem from this initial analysis. We all know that this topic has its attributes and its challenges, which I will examine next.

Through gentrification that are common trends that everyone can agree works or does not contribute to a thriving society. Some of the strengths of gentrification are that it generates economically competitive communities, while also bringing new amenities into the community along with further investment. This in turn generates growth at all levels of government, which is great for the economy. But it is through these strengths that challenges are generated. Some of the challenges of gentrification are increased property values and taxes, which is a direct cause for displacement and homelessness. These increases no longer allow for these areas to be
affordable, which is also is part of the reason that we are in a housing affordability crisis currently. Through these changes there is also the loss and replacement of a community’s cultural history. There are always the questions of: Who loses and who gains through this process of gentrification? Who will it directly have impacted? And the answer will often be “it depends.” A community impoverished benefits no one, but it holds an essence that is often removed when gentrification enters, because gentrification looks to erase the poverty instead of improving the conditions. Regularly those who are directly affected are communities of color and impoverished communities, where there is often no local governmental investment which contributes to the continued decline of these neighborhoods. “The poor traditionally have been forced out of one potentially valuable neighborhood after another, if it suits the planners and speculators. Up until now, they have been able to find alternative accommodations within the core slum areas.”

Now that all the undervalued areas have now been developed, and their property values have increased, we now have to have real conversations about ways to increase the value of people individually. In an effort to reduce the constant relocation of low income persons. There will always be poor people, but it is time to re-evaluate what this means for the people in these communities.

“As a new generation of whites move back to the central city, minorities are being displaced by sheer economics; whites can typically afford higher housing costs as developers buy up rental property and rebuild. Gentrification is the latest incarnation of white residential

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exclusion.” Gentrification is, in the eyes of many, an end to these suffering communities across this country, but if we considered and invested in these communities’ racial equity, then in turn we could provide more thriving communities than more gentrified communities.

**Equity vs Equality**

To invest in the economy of a neighborhood/community, or to invest in the people in the neighborhood/community, that is the question. Racial Equity is the investment in the minority races, to ensure that all have the same advantages. When considering equity, one must first be able to understand its comparison to equality. Equitable investments are those that benefit all communities and allows balance to find a place in change, whereas equality works within the already unbalanced system and ensures that change comes at the same rate regardless of the disadvantage it puts those in whom don't have the ability to anticipate and offset the change. We do all communities of color a supreme disservice by not providing them with equitable investment, especially because they have often been placed in a position that keeps them at a disadvantage.

Where does the change start? This is always the initial question, but let’s asks who will start the change? This person or entity will be pivotal in providing a starting point for bridging the gap. Across this county there have be a multitude of strategies to ensure that both the government and developers are investing in a community’s racial equity. Some of these options will further be discussed later. Racial equity is something that requires a concerted effort on the

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behalf of those parties directly affected by gentrification. It is something that one must consider for options to made to help reduce gentrification, and the effect of how gentrification can directly impact a city and community can be seen in the following case study from the City of Chicago.

**Gentrification Affects on Racial Equity – Chicago Analysis**

The City of Chicago has a diversity score of 73, but when considered at the neighborhood scale it drops to 33.\(^5\) This tells you several different things about the city of Chicago. One that this city is as diverse as it is segregated. One question that you can ask yourself is that if this segregation is a direct reaction to all the housing policies that the city has seen over the last 50 decades or is it a choice by those whom reside in these neighborhoods. The answer to your questions is both options. The shape and demographic of the city of Chicago, is a direct response to many of the federal and local policies that were implement that directly put a disproportionately large portion of African American people in a disadvantageous situation. The facts of the Chicago Housing Authority’s role in the persisting issues surround housing equality and affordable housing is undeniable. During the 40’s and 50’s the CHA was a willing participant in continuing this cycle of putting its black population at a disadvantage from its white citizens, especially with the CHA leading the charge of creating opportunities for the underprivileged and poor. There was a time when the blacks in the city of Chicago were intentionally relocated off of the valuable properties in the city to allow for better development to occur, and it was the charge of CHA to provide housing options for these disadvantaged people. They often provided housing

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\(^5\) https://www.walkscore.com/IL/Chicago
that was on the outskirts of the city, located in areas that were not desirable. Which later evolves into a concentration of poverty for the poor. “Thus the CHA, the one governmental agency that might have challenged the city’s racial status quo, found itself responding directly and favorably to white protectors taking violent action or to those powers acting in their behalf.” At both the local and state level of government in Illinois there was the upholding of these sorts of activities, which persisted the issue of concentrated poverty. That is part of the reason why the city is in its current state and indicated how the actions of the past have rippled in our present. The action of the city authority in many regards have create the realities that many people only know today. Every action has an opposite and equal reaction, and it was from these actions that occurred in the city of Chicago that we are now faced with the long-term reactions, which can directly be seen in the following two Chicago neighborhoods.

Englewood Neighborhood Study

White flight was the start, but gentrification seems to be the end. Located on the southwest side, Chicago’s Englewood neighborhood is bordered by Garfield Boulevard to the north, 75th Street to the south, Western Avenue to the west, and State Street to the east. (Appendix 1) The African American population in Englewood climbed from 600 in 1880 to 97,595 in 1960. Unfortunately, it has been on a decline since then at 89,659 in 1970 to 35,186 in 2009. Englewood was originally an almost evenly split neighborhood with White and Black Chicagoans,
but when white flight occurred in the 1980s the black population made up 69% of the Englewood area. Gentrification manifest itself in this community in a number of different ways, one of the predominate one’s being the change in the neighborhood scape from the people to the buildings and the history in which was housed in most of the removed or renovated structures. The investment in this community has been slow and often nonexistent. The city of Chicago has this year alone voted to close four high schools located in the Englewood community. This was something that my client mentions in our interview. I asked him what his top four concerns with gentrification were and one was the loss of the school system. (Appendix 2) The loss of schools opens another form of gentrification entirely, especially with the new proposal that has been made to replace the loss of those four educational providers. Englewood is one of the many communities in the city of Chicago that is undergoing layers of gentrification, and another that I will review is the Pilsen neighborhood.

**Pilsen Neighborhood Study**

Changing communities are the results of changing faces and demographics. Chicago’s Pilsen community is located in the parameters of the Lower West Side, primarily in the residential section of the area. (Appendix 3) This community is comprised of approximately 81% Hispanic residents as of 2017. This community has undergone a massive loss in its Hispanic population

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10 Interview with Bryan Hudson
since 2000, a 30% loss to be exact. The Hispanic population as of 2000 was approximately 40,000, and as of 2017 the population stands at 27,872. Gentrification manifest itself in this community through the loss of community members and through the new structures that are being built in these communities. The Hispanic community in Pilsen has always been rather self-sufficient and stirred a lot of economic growth amongst its community members rather than from city intervention. Because of Pilsen’s location, it is prime real estate, it has grabbed the attention of many developers across the city, which is a direct entry into gentrification. The Pilsen community has always been one that is ripe with activism, and it is through that activism that they are looking to stabilize their community and the families that reside in these neighborhoods. Gentrification has started to change their narrative in this community, but until we start to examine solutions for the negative aspects of gentrification we will continue to erase histories and replace them.

Introduction to Solutions

“Prohibiting poor people from being succeeded by more affluent people dooms the neighborhood, and perhaps, the city to poverty...Urban policies should support gentrification generally, even as it addresses some of the harms to which gentrification many contribute” If gentrification as a tool that helps stimulate economic growth in a community does not take into account the negatives of its actions then it is being negligent. Without considering this it negates the positives that are created by gentrification, and in turn leave the negatives to outweigh the


positives. There have been many studies conducted that examined possible solutions for gentrification. There are mandates that can be implemented in communities, that ensure that the needs of the community are still being met which directly reduces the number of persons displaced. There has been the conversation about reparations that these suppressed communities have faced over the decades, specifically the African American communities. There can be policies passed in our congress to help support these under invested communities and ensure their stability. There are a few different options, but with all these options there remains the question of why have none of them been nationally or locally implemented? When it comes to creating a solution for the negative affects of gentrification one has to examine who these solutions will directly benefit and in turn put another at a disadvantage. Considering these ideas and understandings I will examine how this idea is one of the largest determinates as to why our issues surrounding gentrification consistently persist.

Fact + Statistics: Those who are affected

“Racial prejudice against African Americans continues to shape the public policy agenda in subtle, and not so subtle, ways. Myths about black people and black images stir debate about public policies, and when those policies are misguided, all American are hurt.”\textsuperscript{13} This has been the trend in this country and can be seen at all of horizons of public policy from housing to access of quality food options. Gentrification is often a process that directly affects people of color. In

cities across this county the elderly, the lower-class, the black and brown populations are often those who suffer from the negative outcome of gentrification. They have historically been moved to and through areas that have potential for growth or areas that will never see growth and investment for several different reasons. Gentrification ideally is not a new occurrence, it has in today’s society developed an identity for itself, because of its disproportionate nature now. Cities have always been a hub for the “urban” groups, and today these urban neighborhoods are primarily comprised of black and brown people. They have housed the legacies and struggles of these people and due to gentrification, these ideologies are at risk of being erased and replaced. This is one of the biggest losses due to gentrification the replacement of theses histories in a space that they have known all of their existence.

Who benefits from gentrification and at what level of society? The new residents to a community are a large beneficiary of gentrification, although unintentional and inadvertently they affect the surrounding neighbors. The Local and Federal Government are beneficiaries of gentrifications and are often time those at the wheel steering the charge. The old residents, if they can withstand the changes that occur, will inevitably benefit from the changes that their neighborhood is undergoing. “The effects of renewal-increased housing stock, improved housing stock, increased tax base, increased security, increased local prestige, and physical improvements-all accrue, to varying degrees, to all groups except the original low-income residents.”14 All these things increasing is great for the economy of this city and the neighborhood, but the once failed approach is not acknowledging and address the fact that

everything has risen but the income of the current residents. Which directly ties back into the need for us to consider investing in a community’s racial equity rather than economy, because directly investing in the people with inadvertently increases the local economy.

In the built environment, gentrification is visible in the changing streetscape. Gentrification is not the enemy, it is a tool that is not considerately utilized properly. In communities where they have suffered from divestment and loss of educational facilities, there is a sense of loss and surviving. In these communities the divestments lead to more blight and abandonment, which is an open door for developers to start reshaping the community’s image.

**Possible Mitigation Strategies**

**Policies**

The policies that will be examined and explained, are essentially tools that can be utilized to ensure that affordable housing remains constant, ensures that displacement is reduced, and ensure the needs of the community are at the forefront of the discussion. These options have a very important role to play in the topic of gentrification, and when used correctly these options have the capability of becoming the solution to the challenges that gentrification generate.

*Housing Trust Funds*

Housing Trust Funds were created under the Title I of the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008, Section 1131. Through these funds the establishment and sustainability of affordable housing is made, and this is to tackle the outstanding need for affordable
housing that currently exist at the Federal, state, and local levels of government. Housing that will accommodate and target families who fall within the extremely low and very low-income brackets. By creating these funds, the creators provide the communities with insurance that considering development and possible gentrification the neighborhood will still have the ability to accommodate those that may need the most assistance.\textsuperscript{15}

\textit{Community Land Trust}

Community Land Trust are organizations based in the community that ensure that acquired land remains under the control of that particular organization. One of the primary purposes is to guarantee long term housing affordability. “To do so, the trust acquires land and maintains ownership of it permanently. With prospective homeowners, it enters a long-term, renewable lease instead of a traditional sale. When the homeowner sells, the family earns only a portion of the increased property value. The remainder is kept by the trust, preserving the affordability for future low- to moderate-income families.”\textsuperscript{16}

\textit{Inclusionary Zoning}

Inclusionary zoning, along with the previously listed items, are to ensure that the housing market is generating the needed affordable housing due to the shortage of it. Through


inclusionary zoning it can required and or encourage to provide affordable house, depending on how the zoning is written in that area. Often times, there are some incentives for the developers to include affordable housing, from density bonuses to tax abatements. This structure offers a significant amount of variety which allows for these incentives to vary, but these incentives are often time one of the driving factors behind the choice a developer makes to include affordable housing. This form of pushing the ball on affordable housing ensures that all parties benefit from the established inclusionary zoning.

*Mandates + Policies*

Mandates and Policies are often the tool of choice for many organizations across the country. These offer a structure that can provide limited loopholes for developers to work around. The creation of policies and mandates, make the process more beneficial for the people rather than the builder. The provider works within the parameters of the policies or mandate to ensure that they are meeting the quota that is set. These provide developers with requirements to follow and abide by if they want to build in certain areas. This form of affordable housing generating tool should be considered as a protecting agent for the lower classes, to ensure that they have the ability to remain in their houses and offers them more control over when and where they choose to move.

*Community Benefits Agreements (CBA)*

Community Benefits Agreements can be great contracts between developers and community groups to ensure that the developer provide specific amenities to the
community or mitigate other issues in the community in exchange for the community’s support for the development. CBA’s have many layers to them that often allow for specifications to be made regarding the percentage of locals being hired or how much monies will be returned to the community through the development. They can be tools to help turn the tide on a community’s poverty and start reducing the number of impoverished persons.

These policies are used as tools across this county, and the following section will showcase how many organization utilizes these policies to help their communities and ensure their security and reduce the negative affects of gentrification.

Programs

The programs that I will be detailing in the portion, will provide insight into what other cities across this country are doing in an effort to curb the negative affects of gentrification. These are all options that, to some degree, can be implements in the City of Chicago. Collaborations can grow from some of these neighborhood strategies. The purpose of this section is to examine the structure that organizations have established and their effectiveness in being a prototype for other communities across the country.

The Fifth Avenue Committee’s Displacement Free Zones

Located in New York the Fifth Avenue Committee (FAC) is an organization that roots most of its work in community development and social justice. Its five guiding principles are
as follows “(1) growth and influence, (2) engagement and accountability, (3) creating a learning/teaching community, (4) youth and education, and (5) preventing displacement”\textsuperscript{17} The campaign that they establish known as Displacement Free Zone developed to provide defense for those who were subject to soaring rent increase and to reduce the number of residents, typically people of color, who were being displaced. Along with other New York organizations provided incentives to owners, to ensure that tenants were kept in their units and to also encouraged them to build more affordable housing. Through this campaign FAC dually noted: “We must work as effectively as possible to prevent displacement. Each program area should consider preventing displacement as one of its most important goals and incorporate this perspective into its ongoing work. If FAC is unable to reduce the number of low-income residents that are displaced from the community, much of the reason for the organization's existence will be lost.”\textsuperscript{18} They are framing the problem in a way that makes it tangible and providing solutions that all parties can benefit from.

\textit{San Francisco Anti-Displacement Coalition (SFADC)}

Located in San Francisco, the San Francisco Anti-Displacement Coalition is a group of supporters and organizers who act on behalf of the people who are incurring soaring rent


increases and evictions across the city. These changes have displaced thousands of residents across the city of San Francisco. This coalition serves as an advocate for the community, while also educating them on their rights and helping them become more politically active to tackle these challenges. The SFADC believes that tough public policies are the route to ensure that tenants have and retain affordable housing, their rights are protected, and safe housing. “We believe that real estate speculation destabilizes neighborhoods, communities and economies. We support regulation and controls on such speculation.”

They believe that the policies that can be implemented at all levels of government is what will be a contributing factor to what type of market is created, sustained, and thrives which directly identifies whom it is created for.

SAJE

Located in Los Angles, SAJE’s mission is to alter public and corporate policy which provides sustained economic benefits, increase economic rights, and buildings leadership amongst the working class. They have been an advocate for the people through prosecuting slum landlords, establishing a land trust, and educating the people through implementing innovative educational programs. SAJE’s has spearheaded multiple other organization in an effort to help support the communities in which it services which include the Figueroa Corridor Coalition for Economic Justice. The Figueroa Corridor Coalition for Economic Justice was a larger contributor in the Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) that was

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drafted and established when the Staples center was built. This organization believes that through representation and defense have they been able to ensure that the residents are protected and valued in their communities.  

*Pilsen Alliance (Chicago)*

Located in Chicago, the Pilsen Alliance is an organization that organizes around social justice who work for “quality public education, affordable housing, governmental accountability, and healthy communities.” They aim to provide the community with direct action campaigns, innovative educational tools and programs, and provide advocacy for community initiatives. This organization believes that advocacy through education, policy, and involvement are key to ensuring that the community is part of the conversation and feel included in the changes that may come. This is one of the few organization on the list that are located in the Pilsen neighbor, and who are actively making great contributions to the community in which it serves.

These programs can be used as a framework for many organizations across this country. They can help establish a foundation for which they should advocate for the people and create

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the necessary measures needed to reduce the negative affects of gentrification through using the policies that were listed in this section.

Conclusion

Gentrification itself does not require a solution, it is the ramifications of gentrification that require attention. It is evident that a solution to these challenges that stem from gentrification will not be solved with one solution, and not overnight either. It will require all levels of government and community, to ensure that whatever the solution benefits every party involved. We must consider those person in which we are creating space for along with those who already reside in those spaces. If we lose sight of the idea that places are for people, then who are we truly designing for? These policies and programs put people at the center of their programs and missions, and it is through this process that they have a better product for the communities in which they service.

Gentrification disproportionately affects persons and communities of color, whom are often time at the largest disadvantage. These communities, in the current form of gentrification, lose more than they gain. We must understand and acknowledge their loss as valid for us to be able to understand its importance, and to be able to provide preventative measures to ensure that these losses do not continue to be a constant with gentrification. If gentrification was utilized for its intended purpose, to service all and not just those who can afford the change, then it could potentially be a great tool for everyone. Until we address and begin to mitigate the challenges
that we face with gentrification, it will never be accepted by the communities in which it takes over.
Bibliography


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http://www.thepilsenalliance.org/.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix 1
Appendix 2

Interview Notes with Bryan

How do you see gentrification manifest itself in the built environment in Englewood?

- Bryan: “When a developer brings the idea of developing a retail center in the heart of Englewood... that’s anchored by a Whole foods and a Starbucks, not to say the community doesn’t desire it, but that same retail center does not have rents suitable for community business that may want to be there working. For instance, you have a wingstop in this shopping center, when you could easily have a Harold’s there, but Harold’s can’t afford the rent. But Harold’s would have that place packed. When you do a development, but the development doesn’t support the same people that need to utilize it, then obviously you have built it for somebody else. Or the expectation is that at some point “others” who are used to those retailers will be there, kind of like “we built it but we didn’t build it for you”

- Me: “More like barrier or divisive building/structures in communities rather than something that is more geared towards the current community rather than the future community”

What are the top 4 things that concern you the most with gentrification?

- “Loss of Political Power base. Which can be seen in New Orleans. Right after Katrina. Where, in my experience of visiting that city in the last 30 years... if there were 9 chairs then 7 of then were occupied by black. After Katrina 7 of those chairs where occupied by whites...then two black councils members on the council. If those are the right numbers, I don’t know if it was 9 or 7, but before Katrina it was the complete opposite. You got black politicians that...you have elected from you power base, then they are pushing your agendas and when that power base is disrupted or destroyed, then you have folks coming in talking about noise ordinances in a historic neighborhood that lives off of music and seconds lines.”

- “Loss of the school system. When those elected officials don’t have your best interest, then they are going to look at your schools as failing and offer alternative solutions that are more than likely not in your best interest. Because if their moving in they’re going to either have selective enrollment schools or going to send their kids to private schools, and it does not benefit your children, because either one they can’t afford it or they can’t compete.”

- “Economic power. That ties into the political and education. When you have an established community of black middle class that built themselves up over the course of 60-70 years and have fixed their tax rates and their property rate at a median value of 75,000, with taxes that are maybe 1000 a year. Then you get these developers who have a clean canvas, and they introduce homes that cost 300,000. And only the folks that can afford those buy them, and most fo the folks that can afford then don’t look like the rest of them that live there, that they are all retired because they are first or second-generation home owners. They are now on fixed income. If I had a mortgage for a 75,000 property and that property has been paid off and somebody comes and changes it now...all these properties are like 4 times the amount of mine, my taxes have increased 4 folds. My property hasn’t increase but the land it sits on has. I can’t afford to build something that is comparable with the other stuff that they are introducing. And so now I can’t
afford to live in a neighborhood that I helped build, develop, and grow. Now all of a sudden all the equity that I had is gone...that’s and economic problem with gentrification.”

- “Cultural Crisis/Demographic Shift. A cultural stand point...when you are set in your ways to do certain things, and new folks come in who don’t understand you culture there is a good chance and opportunity that that culture can be white washed or forgotten. So in Englewood, if you look at the addition of the Mariano’s grocery store, that they just built in Bronzeville on public housing property. You build that and new homes, and then a flood of whites that move in on King drive, somebody’s going to complain about Bud Billiken. Bud Billiken has been going on for 75 years.”

Investing in a race rather than community is part of racial equity. To ensure that there is equity distributed rather than just equality. What are your experiences with racial equity? (if any)

- “To answer you question, the only time I’ve seen it work from an equity stand point is when we have functioning co-ops. Case in point, we had a co-op grocery store in Hyde Park, which even though Hyde park is predominately white, but it’s been middle and lower middle-class blacks that have lived there for decades and that co-op had given everybody what they needed. But in the same sense everybody in that community was responsible for it, and that co-op existed for 30 years maybe. Then they decided to get rid of it and put in a Trader joes, and then they also decided to bring in a Whole foods. The only good thing about trader joe’s is that they have affordable products, but it took away any type of community control, because now you have a chain [that’s] occupying that foot print. I think that in the 50 years I’ve been here, in the Hispanic community because they have a sense of...[it’s important to] recirculate their dollars, they come in and open up a family business...and you can see in their neighborhood different types of restaurants, clothing stores, banks, insurance...you don’t see that in the black community. Part of the reason why is...there is an article that talks about the loss of the black power structure after Harold Washington died. Like the Supreme Life Insurance building, that was a black business, and it was businesses like that, where if we needed monies or loans we could go and get that and do what we needed. But in the last 30 years just about all the black banks around the country have gone out of business. Just about all the black tourist companies are gone. That’s all about desegregation, and taking away our financial power base, so you don’t see black wall streets, you see “others” that come in and setup shop. Their mere presences keep us broke, because they occupy a space where we can’t get...folks to come to our corner store because they can go get cheaper stuff and alcohol and cigarettes at these other places. So, is it a systematic destruction of a black power base, I would say yes. Can we prove it, I would say yes. ”

How has gentrification had a direct impact in your life?

- “As an Architect, when I was working with a design team for Roosevelt square. Part of the issue with doing that project it was a HOPE VI project. And that hope VI project, which was a national movement for public housing. You got this plan to re-develop this public housing and make it mixed income where basically you have had black folks on reservation for 50 years. And now that it suits you it’s becomes and eye sore, because this reservation land was prime property all around the country. But not that it suits you, and your tired of your failed experiment, because you never put the money back into it to support it. Not it becomes and eye sore, so now you build these new properties where all these folks were renting because they were stuck in section 8,
and now they’re gone, and you have just placed them all over the city or all over the country without any type of social skills to live in a property that they are renting. Maintain a house that they are renting, so as a gentrifier you have now destroyed a complete community. This is around the country, not just Chicago. The thing about Englewood it didn’t have public housing, but the predatory lenders pretty wiped out the long-term home owners that lived in Englewood. Policies got put in place to dismantle public housing, were a big factor, and I was a participant in that, because we are designing rental properties for new residents, but it is at 10% of the original population that lived there.”