

VOICES OF CULLY: A CASE STUDY OF THE LIVING CULLY
WEATHERIZATION AND HOME REPAIR PROJECT 2.0

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Abstract

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The Cully neighborhood is situated in the Northeast quadrant of Portland, Oregon. It is 2.75 square mile plot of land and home to roughly 13,000 people. In addition to being one of the most diverse neighborhoods in Portland, it is *the* most densely populated, with the smallest amount of parkland per capita. Over the last two decades, home value has increased 203% in Cully, compared to a 90% citywide increase. Amidst these development trends are stories of incredible resilience, resistance and activism from the affected community. My project is a case study of one anti-displacement initiative, which was developed and implemented by a multi-partner community-based organization: Living Cully. The *Living Cully Weatherization and Home Repair Project 2.0* presents a unique example of one group's ability to reinterpret sustainability – a common goal in an ostensibly “green” city – to include the strengthening of social cohesion and community health. The organization garnered support from energy conscious funders by developing a weatherization project that targeted majority low-income, minority homeowners. The goal was to lower residents' bills, but what they found was that a majority of homes were in no condition to be weatherized, as they needed to first undergo critical repairs. Improving residents' living conditions and the

structural integrity of their homes effectively safeguarded them from being evicted and contributed to preventing the involuntary displacement of these vulnerable residents. By distributing surveys to and conducting one-year follow-up interviews with the clients of this project, I [1] evaluated the effectiveness of the project as an anti-displacement initiative to [2] gain a better understanding of the way gentrification is experienced inside of the home. Gentrification literature often focuses on identifying and defining broad economic and neighborhood-level processes underpinning gentrification. This diverts attention away from the home, where gentrification is perhaps most intimately experienced. Gentrification manifests radically differently depending on place, as well as the scale at which it is being addressed. Causes and solutions similarly vary. It is crucial for gentrification theorists and policy-makers alike to define gentrification in a way that encourages the development of place-specific solutions. Doing so requires listening to the voices of experience, the voices that are often dismissed. This project takes a first step toward analyzing the scalar impact of gentrification. I urge academics, community workers and policy-makers to move beyond a neighborhood-scale analysis and consider the ways in which gentrification impacts residents inside of their homes by highlighting the vast, complex interaction between gentrification related social, economic and physical restructurings.

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Introduction

From the outset, this project has felt a bit discordant. I was concerned and still maintain concern that the following chapters do not fit into an arrangement that facilitates an easy understanding of the question, the argument and the purpose of my research. I chose to conduct a case study of the *Living Cully Weatherization and Home Repair Project 2.0*, because Living Cully's approach to mitigating displacement of vulnerable homeowners struck me as unique within the context of an ostensibly "green" city.

Although the City of Portland's development plans dub sustainability and livability as primary goals, they serve Portland's more privileged residents (and exclude Portland's more vulnerable residents) by funding projects that improve the aesthetic and commercial characteristics of less developed parts of Portland and thus drawing upper income people to lower income neighborhoods. Portland is often held as "an icon of urban sustainability" Checker asserts, but within the city, "the production of new green spaces appealed to very specific and elitist visions of 'liveability' while forcing low income housing and service agencies to fight their own displacement" (Hagerman, 2007 as cited in Checker, 2011: 214). Living Cully explicitly confronts environmental gentrification trends – whereby sustainability supersedes equity (Checker, 2011) – by reinterpreting sustainability as an anti-poverty strategy (Living Cully, 2017), in this case using weatherization. Weatherizing a home means making it more energy efficient, which benefits the homeowner by lowering their bills and making their home more

desirable if they choose to sell it – again going back to the “green” culture of Portland.

But weatherizing a home is really expensive and only benefits those who can afford it.

Living Cully’s Weatherization and home repair projects instead served low-income and people of color in Cully, most were also elderly and disabled, therefore especially vulnerable to housing instability. They found that most of the houses were in no condition to be weatherized though during initial home evaluations because they were in need of critical repairs. One of the project leads told me “to weatherize a home your roof can’t be leaking, to weatherize a home it needs to be safe” (E. Riddle, Personal Communication, July 20, 2016). So a majority of the money went toward making these critical repairs, which then contributed to safeguarding that house from being foreclosed and the resident from being foreclosed on. But the catch is that if an organization were upfront, transparent about their intentions to make critical repairs toward the aim of preventing displacement of vulnerable residents, they would likely not garner the same level of support or the same amount of *funding* that Living Cully did for their weatherization projects.

My goal was to learn as much as I could about Living Cully’s motivations and strategies for developing and implementing their weatherization project. I asked first and foremost, how successful were these projects at preventing the displacement of the residents they served? However, conducting a case study gave me the opportunity to discuss not only the project, but also the various issues associated with sustainability language and sustainability projects more generally. An examination of rhetoric, of representation, and of autonomy and volition resulted as I asked, what is the relationship

between sustainability and gentrification related displacement in the case of the Cully neighborhood?

While evaluating the effectiveness of the Living Cully effort stands as the practical goal of my research, I am equally dedicated to advancing gentrification theory. As a result, one section of the following analysis is driven by quantitative data; another section critically interrogates policy and the language of policy makers; the final section – and perhaps the most important one – draws on residents’ experiences with gentrification and the dissonance between those experiences and dominant representation of them in media and academia.

My hope is that this project demonstrates the complex interaction between sustainability rhetoric, rhetoric more generally and the way rhetoric shapes our physical world and experiences. Further, I aim to demonstrate how acknowledging this interaction complicates any given issue. My intention is to show the way complicated processes, such as gentrification, become simplified by the language or the framework we impart to discuss them. In doing so, I urge the indulgence in complexity by showing the effectiveness of a project that took into account these seemingly intangible moving parts.

Methods

Project Rationale

Portland, Oregon is often heralded as “an icon of urban sustainability” but within the city, “the production of new green spaces appealed to very specific social and elitist visions of ‘livability’ while forcing low income housing and service agencies to fight their own displacement” (Hagerman, 2007, cited in Checker, 2011: 214). More simply, a majority of environmental funding in Portland is invested in upper-income neighborhoods; and any capital that does reach low-income neighborhoods, promotes exclusionary green development and further encourages the immigration of upper-income residents (City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, 2013).

The purpose of my research is to evaluate one organization’s attempt to save affordable housing and counter involuntary displacement – while preserving the social and cultural integrity of Cully – in the context of a rapidly developing “green” city. My project presents a case study of one anti-displacement initiative, which was developed and implemented by a multiple-partner community-based organization – Living Cully. The Living Cully *Weatherization and Home Repair Project 2.0* actualized the theory of redefining sustainability as an anti-poverty strategy by concentrating environmental investments at the neighborhood level.

Of equal importance are the data gathered during initial client outreach and recent interviews, which made visible the harmful impact of gentrification trends at the level of

the *home*. These narratives contribute to the research findings in two ways: first, they reveal the importance of broadening the discussion of gentrification – in both the realm of academia and policy – in a way which moves beyond economic restructurings to include the disruption of individual, familial and neighborhood health, cohesion and embedded support networks. Secondly, client testimony reveals how keenly residents of gentrifying neighborhoods understand development as it is occurring around them and how they are reacting to such changes, which indicates the importance of bolstering resident input in the discussion of how local organizations approach community work and funding distribution.

The Living Cully *Weatherization and Home Repair Project 2.0* presents one anti-displacement initiative, which explicitly confronts environmental gentrification trends and holds neighborhood and homeowner well-being as a principal component of anti-gentrification programming. My goal is to tell Living Cully's story, to critically evaluate the project's effectiveness, and to present the narratives of residents who were served by the weatherization and home repair projects. Finally, my goal is to develop comprehensive documentation of the project to provide important lessons and insights, which may be useful for similar and future projects.

Research Design

Living Cully partners distributed surveys to evaluate the success of the *Weatherization and Home Repair Project 2.0* prior to construction (test-in surveys) and immediately after the projects were completed (test-out surveys). These surveys

evaluated (1) homeowner's housing conditions, (2) the health and safety of participating homeowners and (3) the stability of homeowners and the Cully neighborhood as a spatial whole. I redistributed the second round of surveys – their “test-out survey” – in July of 2016, one year after projects were completed. The quantitative results presented in the *Research Findings* section were compiled by comparing these three data sets and is formatted as a comprehensive one-year follow-up report. This data and the report itself serve as the first step toward documenting the impact of Living Cully's anti-displacement intervention as it functions over time. Said report is presented as a separate document within the quantitative analysis section of my *Research Findings*.

I also conducted semi-structured interviews with nine participating homeowners, as well as Eron Riddle, the *Weatherization and Home Repair Project 2.0* project lead, Cameron Herrington, the Living Cully anti-displacement coordinator, Tim Miller, the CEO of Enhabit¹, and Laura Young, chair of the Cully Association of Neighbors. The purpose of client interviews was to augment survey data and gather insight on residents' values and perceived sense of their neighborhood in a state of flux. Interviews with development and implementation team members contributed to my understanding of the project motivation and the logistics of gathering and distributing funding within the Cully neighborhood.

The methodologies and methods I utilized are both informed by a constructivist

¹ Enhabit is the non-profit which contracted a majority of the construction work done on participating homes. Their organizational goals and role in the weatherization and home repair projects will be discussed at greater length in *Background* chapter.

epistemology². Because gentrification processes take shape differently in different places, it is crucial that humanist and sociocultural gentrification theorists – who tend to use surveys and interviews to present the gentrification process at the scale of individual (Lees, et al., 2013) – take into consideration local specificities and the temporality of their case study locations (Bondi, 1999a). Interpreting clients’ testimonies as well as the motivations behind the Living Cully *Weatherization and Home Repair Project 2.0* required this explicit attention to the context in which residents and developers develop and enact meaning. Furthermore, constructivism takes into account “processes of interaction among individuals” (Creswell, 2003: 8), which fits the case and my work mapping out the varying dynamics of a collaborative group initiative.

For the purpose of conducting applied research for Living Cully, my research design follows a Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodology. Grounded in the need for empowerment through autonomy and self-determination, participatory research places the opinions, ideas and experiences of those being researched in high esteem and attempts to generate research questions and research findings that are both generalizable and relevant to specific real-life situations (Fischer, 2014).

A PAR lens provided me necessary tools to focus my analysis on the needs and desires of the *Weatherization and Home Repair 2.0* clients and development staff. Participatory inquiry moves beyond advocacy in an attempt to bring “citizens and their local knowledges directly into the exchange” (Fischer, 2000: 171). The information I

² Creswell (2003) claims, constructivism as an epistemology holds that “individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work” and that these “subjective meanings are negotiated socially and historically” (8).

gathered interviewing clients of the weatherization projects and project developers revealed (1) the ways in which affected community members experience and discuss gentrification and (2) the ways in which community members attempt to counter the negative impacts of gentrification in their neighborhood. In line with a PAR methodological framework, I formulated my interview questions to encourage residents' sharing of knowledge through stories and as such, my research findings emphasize these experiences. Furthermore, the compilation of these experiential knowledges and may be used by Living Cully in their efforts to continue appealing to funders and securing the continuation of their anti-displacement intervention.

The PAR goals of my project are collapsed within a broader *intrinsic*³ case study of the Living Cully ***Weatherization and Home Repair Project 2.0***. The project itself presents a unique case because it deviates from mainstream sustainability efforts; the project uses environmental strategies as means of conducting anti-displacement programming instead of the more common development in Portland, which facilitates displacement. Dominant sustainability and green development rhetoric is generally used as means of promoting displacement, a trend I brought to the fore in my literature review, and one which qualifies this project as distinctive and worthy of investigation.

My data collection ranged from the use of surveys and semi-structured interviews to secondary data analysis. By following the case study methodology, I gathered a wide variety of data to tell a rich and in-depth story of the Living Cully 2.0 organization and

³ An intrinsic case study focuses on “the case itself... because the case presents an unusual or unique situation” (Creswell, 2007: 74).

the *Weatherization and Home Repair 2.0 Project*.

Methods

Surveys

In July of 2016, I re-distributed ‘test-out’ surveys to nine participating clients. The purpose of redistributing duplicate surveys was to create two directly comparable data sets – one gathered immediately after construction work was completed and one gathered roughly one year later. In addition to those two data sets were the data gathered using intake surveys; these were distributed prior to construction work during initial home evaluations.

Test-in surveys were conducted while clients’ homes were being evaluated. During these evaluations, a member of Enhabit assessed the structure of the house to determine what work needed to be done while a member of Living Cully asked the homeowner questions about living in the neighborhood. These surveys contained yes/no questions, multiple-choice questions, as well as two short answer questions and were designed to collect the following information: clients’ length of residency, clients’ *intended* length of residency, reasons for choosing as well as staying in the Cully neighborhood, perceived connection to neighborhood, perceived familial health, as well as reasons for having delayed maintenance needs.

The test-out survey contained similar questions to evaluate intended length of residency, familial health, neighborhood connectedness, as well as clients’ reasons for staying in Cully. In addition, these surveys contained rating-scale questions, which

evaluated homeowners' housing conditions and experience – satisfaction, comfort, and sense of control – with participating in the project. For the purpose of comparing these data sets, I developed three indicator categories to be evaluated over time: homeowners' housing conditions, the health and safety of participating homeowners, and the stability of homeowners and the Cully neighborhood as a spatial whole.

While surveys can be effective tools for evaluating large groups and developing generalizable data, they also present limitations. First, they require the researcher to use precise sampling methods to ensure the data is accurate. In the case of this project evaluation, all clients completed the test-in survey and first round of test-out surveys. I excluded the test-in and test-out surveys of homeowners who did not participate in one-year follow up meetings to ensure the group was accurately represented. Secondly, these surveys provided answers to 'what' questions, without necessarily revealing *why* homeowners responded in one way or another. The test-in and test-out surveys were distributed discretely, though they were conducted in person as to provide clarity on questions and assistance if homeowner had trouble filling out the survey on their own. This limitation was, however, accounted for in one-year evaluation meetings by following up surveys with more open-ended, in-depth interview questions.

Integrating surveys as a quantitative method with a qualitative case-study approach generated visual data, which can be used to (1) show to future funders (2) and to evaluate the effectiveness of the project in a way that can be replicated in the future.

We need the hard numbers to get the funds but we also need the stories to get folks interested in helping our target population... you need to show that your hearts in the right place with the qualitative and ensure you're going to be effective with the quantitative. Eron Riddle (7/20)

Data from the three rounds of homeowner surveys was analyzed using SPSS and Excel Software. It is introduced as a comprehensive one-year follow up report in the quantitative subsection of my *Research Findings* chapter. This document was also presented to the Living Cully organization for them to use at their disposal.

Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used to supplement the quantitative data from homeowner surveys as well as to gather information from development and implementation staff. Interviews with homeowners were conducted immediately after the client had completed their one-year follow up survey. The purpose of these conversations was to gather rich narrative data about the homeowners' experiences living in Cully. As such, I encouraged story telling and although oral histories were not the intended outcome, interviews tended toward a chronological order. The interview schedule began with questions about the individual's family – where are you from? Where are your parents from? – and then turned toward questions about the individual's experience living in Cully – how long have you lived in Cully? Have you seen Cully change since living here? How? Do you feel as though you can get what you need from the businesses in

Cully without leaving the neighborhood? Final questions probed the individual to comment on the spatiality of their social networks – do you feel connected to your neighbors? Do you participate in community organizations in/outside of Cully? Interviews lasted between a half an hour and two hours and were conducted at the residents' homes.

Interviews with development and implementation staff were similarly informal, but less open-ended as they were intended to supplement secondary data on the Living Cully *Weatherization and Home Repair Project 2.0*. These interviews began with my asking questions about the project itself – what *is* it? Why is it unique? How has the project been successful/unsuccessful? In addition to these questions, the interviewee was asked to map out the flow of money within the project, as they understood it. In an attempt to bolster my understanding of the political context in which this project was developed, I proceeded by asking questions about the individual's role in the project, about their experience living in the city (a majority of development and implementation staff do not live in Cully) and about whether or not they considered Portland a “green” city?

Both interview schedules for homeowners and for development and implementation staff were concluded with an open summon for stories about living in Portland and/or the Cully neighborhood, experiences participating in the weatherization projects, or thoughts on the interview which had just transpired. Maintaining openness throughout homeowner interviews in particular, proved to be an incredibly important part of establishing rapport with residents. In most cases, interviewees immediately assumed

that I had been hired by Living Cully to conduct one-year follow up evaluations, and as a result, I was positioned as the middleman between the client and their home maintenance funds. When homeowners discovered my lowly position as a graduate student, they realized their answers to my questions held very little weight in whether or not they would be considered for future funding. Revealing my lack of authority created confusion, but it also instilled curiosity. Homeowners became simultaneously more frustrated by my taking up their afternoon by asking them questions – which would not lead to them receiving money – and still, more interested in answering those questions honestly.

Collaborative researchers “draw a distinction between the formal (abstract) knowledge developed in professional inquiry and the actor’s informal, contextual, local knowledge, often organized in narrative form and told as stories” (Fischer, 2000: 179) In those moments of candidness and ease, I felt my role as a collaborator more strongly than I had expected. I had intended for these interviews to expose the subjugated knowledges⁴ of individuals who are being implemented in the gentrification process. Because of these individuals’ demographic and geographic location, their knowledges cannot be contested; they are true because they are true for them. More importantly, it is true now but not invariably. My intention is to (1) integrate and contrast, when need be, these knowledges with those of mainstream gentrification discourse and academic gentrification theorists

⁴ Subjugated knowledge was introduced by Foucault, it “names what official knowledge represses within its own terms, institutions, and archives - it is official knowledge's unconscious” and refers “to marginalized and discredited knowledge from below and from outside the institutions of official knowledge production (‘a whole series of knowledges that have been disqualified as nonconceptual ... as insufficiently elaborated ... naive ... hierarchically inferior ... below the required level of erudition or scientificity’).” (Gordon, 2008: 652)

(2) and to emphasize that local specificity is a crucial part of understanding how gentrification processes manifest differently in different places; these reflections are presented in the qualitative subsection of my *Research Findings* chapter.

Secondary Data

Secondary data enabled me to better understand the context in which the Living Cully effort was developed as well as the current and historical political, social and economic climate of the neighborhood. Comparing census data from 2000 and 2010 quantitatively evidenced the gentrification process as it is unfolding in Cully. Demographic data revealed the unique diversity of the neighborhood and contextualized the Living Cully place-specific anti-gentrification programming. I analyzed city ordinances, neighborhood reviews and other gray literature for the purpose of bolstering quantitative depictions of the neighborhood. Studies and reports conducted by the City were particularly useful for understanding the way Cully is perceived and how these perceptions are informing infrastructural development.

Conclusion

Strauss (1987) said qualitative analysis should be “plausible, useful and allow its own further elaborations and verification”; it should not be undermined by its limitations, but recognized as perpetually inconclusive and inviting of further investigation.

I have no intention of producing generalizable data on gentrification processes. Rather, I aim to complicate the way gentrification is currently depicted in academia and mainstream media, as a process “that uproots the urban poor by raising rents and taxes...

making it impossible for them to stay” (Murphy, 2008: 67). I am to redirect the conversation away from a neighborhood scale analysis to the homeowner and the way they experience gentrification inside of the home. The purpose of my methods and the following research findings is to gather and present data to highlight the temporality and local specificity of the gentrification process. Furthermore, I aim to rationalize why any one generalizable theory – or even a polarized two (i.e. supply and demand theses of gentrification) – is unnecessary. As such, my project contributes to and aligns with the ‘Brechtian strategy’ (Harvey, 1995: 95), which claims it is more productive to keep conclusions on gentrification open and keep ‘tensions alive’ within the literary debate.

The Cully Neighborhood

The Cully neighborhood is situated in the Northeast quadrant of Portland, Oregon and maintains high rates of racial and ethnic diversity unparalleled by the city as a whole. Due to the neighborhood's late annexation into the city, lagging infrastructure-level investment and unique zoning, many of the streets and sidewalks remain unfinished and the neighborhood's public and recreational spaces pales in comparison to other neighborhoods in the "green" city of Portland. Along with an extremely active circuit of community-based organizations and the City's increased targeting of fringe neighborhoods for development, Cully stands as an ideal case study for examining the complexity of gentrification and anti-gentrification interventions.

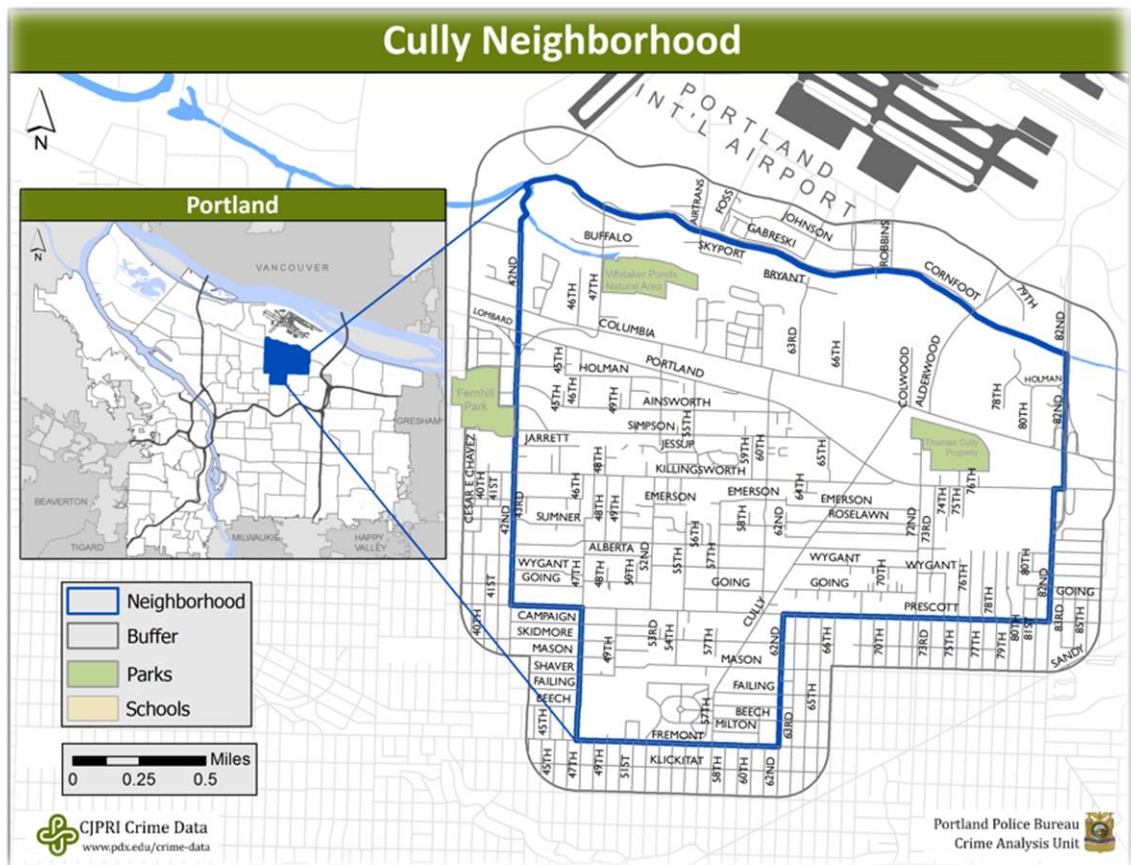


Figure 1. Cully neighborhood boundary (Portland State University, 2017)

The remainder of this Background chapter begins with a brief history of the development of East Portland. Although the West side of the river is a part of Portland proper, it has historically acted as the urban core and underwent urbanization during the 19th and early 20th century. In contrast, East Portland remained largely unincorporated from the period of white settlement to the WWII era (City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, 2009) and has as a result maintained a distinct cultural and economic fabric. The history of East Portland helps to contextualize the development currently

affecting Northeast Portland and the Cully neighborhood in particular. The following section of the chapter addresses the physical, social and economic characteristics of the Cully neighborhood as well as current plans for commercial development in the area. I focus on the ways in which Cully's unique attributes contribute to the variance in experiences of gentrification within the neighborhood. I close the chapter with a brief description of the Living Cully Weatherization and Home Repair Project 2.0, the anti-gentrification initiative around which my case study was organized. The order of this chapter brings clarity to the environment out of which the Living Cully intervention was born. In doing so, I highlight the disparate ways gentrification manifests, is experienced, has been and can be resisted.

East Portland

Place is established by a number of constituent parts. A place becomes an "assemblage" whose "properties emerge from the interactions between parts" (DeLanda 2006, 5). The purpose of this section is to identify and discuss the constituent parts constituting East Portland. This is important as East Portland acts as the backdrop for the current gentrification occurring in the Cully neighborhood. For the purpose of this discussion, I have chosen the physical infrastructure and the ideological characteristics assigned to the region as the two foremost place-making parts worthy of discussion. A place exists as an assemblage of and the connection between discrete things at any given time. That being said, it is worth noting that place "is a discrete thing... made up from the relation between parts that are always changing" (Creswell 2015, 53). It would this be

harmful to purport the following description of East Portland as absolute but a brief history of the physical and ideological development of East Portland helps to contextualize the gentrification in Cully.

The infrastructural development of East Portland was largely shaped by settlement patterns during the early 19th century. Prior to that time, East Portland was home to Upper Chinookan speakers, including the Clackamas and Multnomah peoples (City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, 2009). Diseases introduced by American and European peoples between 1700-1850 decimated the Native population by an estimated 90%. One observer in 1834 notes that Portland tribes were particularly devastated, claiming, the Multnomah Indians “who formerly occupied the Wapato Islands, and the country around the Willamette and who numbered 3,000 souls are all dead, and their villages reduced to desolation” (Darby 2005, 213).

Land Claim laws established by Oregon’s provisional government and later The Land Claim Act of 1850 encouraged white settlement by granting free land to settlers who resided on and improved their lot for a number of years. Single, white citizens who arrived prior to December 1, 1850 were entitled to 320 acres and married couples were granted double that – 620 acres. Between 1850-1853, settlers received half of this grant (i.e. 160 acres per single man, 320 per married couple) and after 1853, settlers could claim up to 320 acres at the cost of 1.25 per acre. Today, Foster Road, Sandy Boulevard, Cully Boulevard and most likely part of Powell Boulevard, follow the routes of major Indian pathways established prior to white settlement. They are among the few Southeast

through-roads that do not follow the strict grid, which is characteristic of Portland's roadways (City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, 2009).

Fires throughout the 1820's deforested large areas and prepared the land for agriculture. Surrounding what quickly became Portland's agricultural hub were rolling hills, which supplied timber that was then processed by other settlers who had established mills close to waterways. The landscape of East Portland, being ripe for resource extraction and agricultural production, perpetuated the rural character of the East side while supplying resources for the West side to continue its development as Portland's urban core. Between the years of 1890-1910, Portland was the third fastest growing city in the country. Despite the rapid growth, the city remained one of the most homogenous in the country, its population being primarily white, Anglo-Saxon and protestant (Johnston, 2003). The demographic divide between the West and East sides of Portland then, came down to class and politics. With the West side being the financial and political center, Portland's scarce but powerful⁵ elite resided in downtown or in the nearby West Hills alongside segregated ethnic and poor neighborhoods. Portland's elite garnered and maintained wealth by way of controlling a majority of the city's transportation, banking and real estate.

The distinct divide between the rural East and the urban West informed the ideological characteristics assigned to East Portland. As implied by the assemblage theory introduced at the beginning of this section, there is a relational nature to place –

⁵ In 1903, the Financial Redbook of America identified 74 Portland citizens owning assets or more than \$300,000, which today would qualify them as multi-millionaires. In 1918, less than 1% of the Portland population had accumulated 63% of the county's taxable income (Johnston 2003, 57)

place is necessarily related to its outside (Creswell, 2015). East Portland became essentially what West Portland was not. Historian Robert Johnston (2003) writes in his study of politics and class in the progressive era of Portland, “You might say I grew up in, but certainly not of, Portland. I spent most of my formative years in ‘East County,’ a physical space just ten miles from downtown Portland but of a distinctively different cultural and political universe” (Johnston 2003, xiii).

The East Side did not experience a class divide so apparent on the West Side. Rather, primarily working and lower-middle class residents occupied the East, who at the time outnumbered their Western counterparts 120,000 to 86,000 in 1916⁶. The percentage of homeowners was 58% on the East Side, as opposed to a low 30% on the West Side (Johnston 2003). The editor of the *Oregon Labor Press* wrote, “East Side merchants ‘have their homes with the homes of the East Side union families. Their children attend the same schools. East Side merchants rub shoulders with East Side union men as neighbors and friends’” (Johnston 2003: 55). The East Side was home to an extraordinary number of small business owners – with one out of every forty members of the workforce owning a manufacturing enterprise – creating a unique proletariat group Johnston (2003) calls the “‘Capitalists’ against Capitalism”, or “middling folks” (85-86).

Those Johnston (2003) calls “middling folks” are representative of the culture of the East Side, both then and now. Quoting Michael Merrill, Johnston (2003) argues the political impact of these small enterprisers who were able to “serve as an effective political counterweight to the development of capitalism by placing ‘as much emphasis

⁶ By 1920, 71% of the Portland population resided on the East Side (Johnston 2003).

on equality as... on accumulation” (Merrill 1990 quoted in Johnson 2003). While the elite on the West Side pushed for unlimited accumulation and commodification, politically powerful East Side folks were interested in protecting “the relatively widespread distribution of private property to ensure that wage labor could continue to serve as a stepping stone to independent proprietorship, and to increase the financial opportunities available to the many” (Merrill 1995 quoted in Johnson 2003). Lead by agrarian radicals, the middling folks created both counterinstitutions, such as cooperatives, as well as “a coherent set of alternative economic ideals” (Johnston 2003, 87). Regard for homeownership and support of small business prevails in East Portland and nineteenth and early twentieth century middling class values linger despite the inevitable development, which has ensued in Portland.

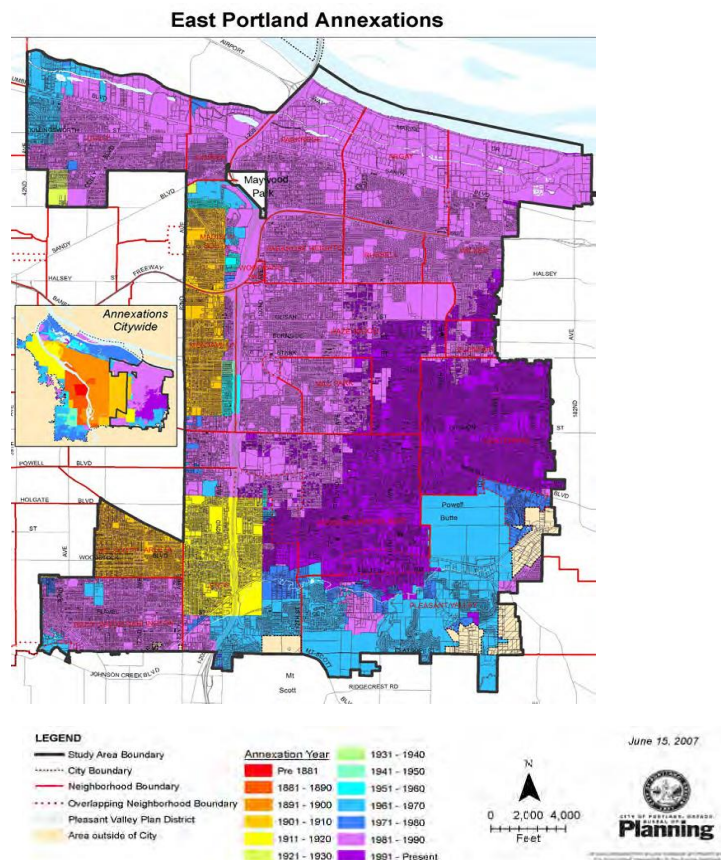


Figure 2. Annexation map of East Portland neighborhoods

The clash between an elite capitalism and the capitalist ethic purported by middling class folk parallels the tension currently ripe in Northeast Portland. A majority of Northeast Portland neighborhoods were only recently incorporated into the city, beginning in 1983 and continuing through the 1990's (City of Portland Bureau of Planning, 2007). As a result, these areas maintain a semi-rural character, with widely varying housing styles and disconnected street patterns that often exclude sidewalks and curbs. In 2007, The City of Portland Bureau of Planning (2007) issued an evaluation of the livability and viability of Northeast Portland, stating:

Areas have been planned for increased urban development intensity through application of City zoning designations. However, many parts of the areas were annexed to the City without complete urban infrastructure. Development has resulted in incremental creation of new infrastructure, but it also places a greater burden on some existing facilities. New residential infill development provides housing for a variety of income levels, but is sometimes perceived by community members as incompatible with existing neighborhoods. (p. 1)

The following section elaborates the current, if not familiar, clash between stakeholders urging development and the pushback of residents.

Cully

The demographic make up of Cully deviates from that of the larger Portland area, with an ethnic and racial diversity that stands out even amongst Northeast neighborhoods. The success of the *Living Cully Weatherization and Home Repair Project 2.0* intervention was due in large part to a serious consideration of the neighborhood's

distinct character and needs. Combatting the social harms associated with gentrification *requires* this: palpable regard for the social, political, economic and less tangible attributes rendering a place distinct. The purpose of this subsection is to introduce the temperament of Cully and to situate the anti-displacement initiative around which this case study is based.

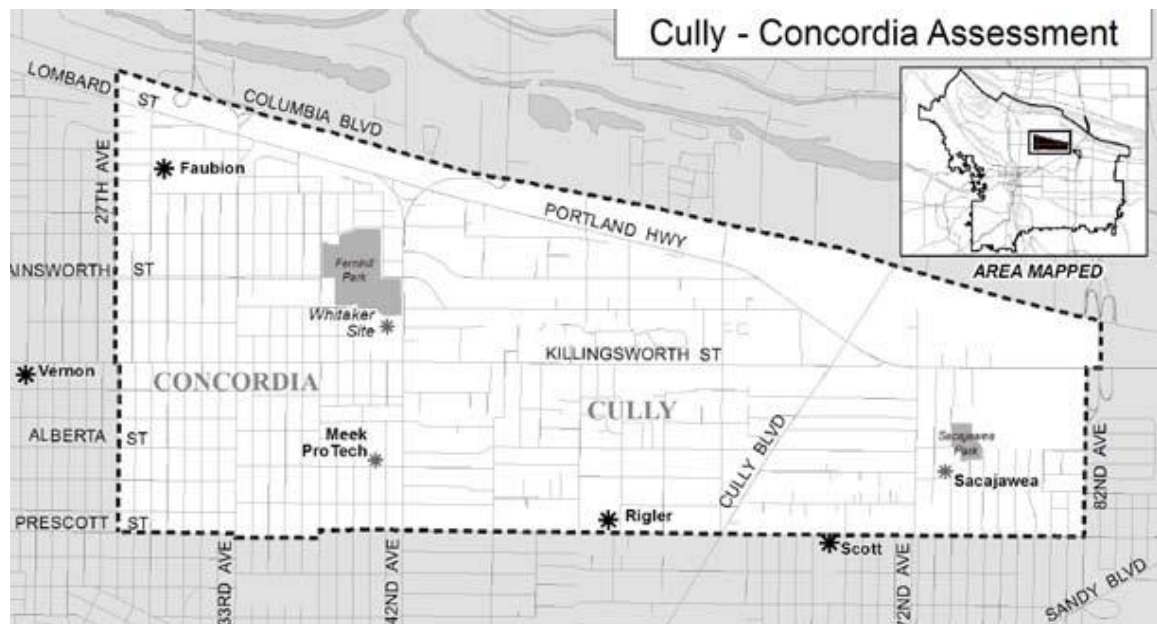


Figure 4. Map of Cully-Concordia study area (City of Portland Bureau of Planning, 2008)

In 2008, the City of Portland Bureau of Planning published the Cully-Concordia Study. The report addresses the positive and challenging aspects of Cully-Concordia as well as “how to increase and sustain the attractiveness and livability” of the area (p.1). The project team found Cully-Concordia to have had larger households than Portland as a

whole – at 2.64 median family members versus 2.3 median family members. The report notes, “Interviews with public school officials and housing advocates revealed a common view that actual households are larger than reported, especially in Cully”. Families with children occupy 32.6% of households, compared to 26.4% citywide (City of Portland Bureau of Planning 2008, 7-8). In conjunction with the high rates of homeownership in Cully, these statistics point to the importance of preserving homes as a strategy for safeguarding the livability of the neighborhood. The study area also has a nonpareil ethnic and racial diversity (See Figure 4), indicating the importance of developing and protecting culturally appropriate housing units. The Cully neighborhood in particular is home to a large number of aging and elderly residents; residents ages 55-59 and 60-64 increased 52.6% and 57% respectively between the years of 2000-2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). In sum, the neighborhood is diverse and largely residential, with an abnormally small percentage of commercially zoned land, at 2% versus a city-wide neighborhood average of 10% (Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, 2012).

The demographic characteristics of Cully evidence the importance of preserving housing for the community. Furthermore, preserving livability in the area urges a consideration of who uses what types of housing units. For example, townhouses are unsuitable somewhere like Cully, where families occupy a large percentage of the housing. Even if a certain number of the units are capped at an affordable rate, the space itself is unfit and displacement will ensue regardless of housing prices. The Cully community will benefit from “housing with more bedrooms, and... more affordable units, allowing extended families currently living together to have more living space”

(City of Portland Bureau of Planning 2008, 7). The Cully-Concordia Study was intended to guide agencies in their efforts toward bolstering the livability of the neighborhood. In 2012, however, the City implemented the “Cully Commercial Corridor and Local Street Plan” in relation to the larger Portland Plan⁷, which was adopted the same year.

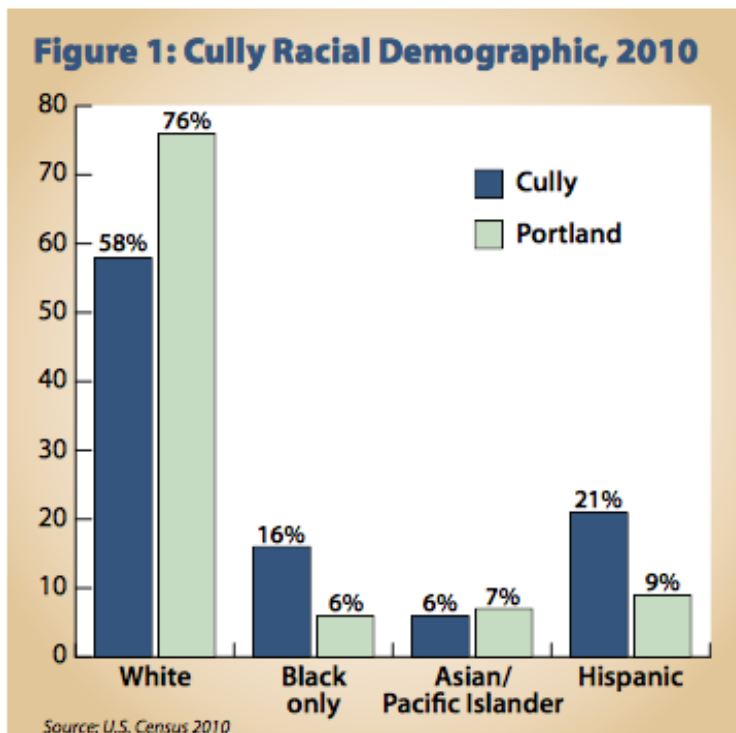


Figure 5. Cully Racial Demographic (U.S. Census, 2010)

The 2012 ordinance would “meet the community’s goal for a vibrant pedestrian-oriented Cully commercial corridor area with more neighborhood-serving businesses” and “address the transportation infrastructure and street connectivity needs of the Cully

⁷ The Portland Plan incorporates an extensive equity framework but ultimately facilitates commercial development, improved transportation and economic prosperity. The full document can be found at: <http://www.portlandonline.com/portlandplan/?c=58776>

neighborhood” (Bureau of Planning and Sustainability et al. 2012). The plan has two distinct objectives: (1) to establish and encourage commercial growth on the designated Cully main street and (2) enhance local access to the designated commercial corridor area.

In Portland, the prevailing zoning code allows for commercially zoned land to be developed residentially as well. This detail has and will continue to serve the interests of developers who seek to build high-end apartment structures in trendy, consumer-oriented areas. The 2012 ordinance increases commercially zoned land by 9 acres. In arguing for the potential of the plan to increase local business viability, the plan claims that while “the commercial area matures, more residents will live within walking distance of the businesses along the boulevard” (Bureau of Planning and Sustainability et al. 2012, 13). However, it is naïve to assume that local residents – a large percentage of whom are economically vulnerable – will be participating in local business development. At best, residents without automotive transportation may increasingly walk to buy groceries but if this is the case, it will most likely not be from a local business considering the price discrepancy between local grocers and chain grocers. Albertsons is currently the only full grocery store in Cully, which is still notably too expensive for some residents⁸. Increasing commercially zoned land will instead encourage people outside of the Cully neighborhood to build business inside the neighborhood.

⁸ Six out of the nine residents I interviewed explicitly mentioned the expensiveness of Albertsons and/or shopping in the neighborhood more generally.

The Plan's second objective is to improve local access to the Main Street as well as schools and parks by "addressing the need for greater connectivity, constructing safer sidewalks and bicycle routes and basic local street infrastructure" (Bureau of Planning and Sustainability et al., 2012, 32). The Cully residents who participated in this case study were divided on the issue of sidewalks and street infrastructure. While some expressed similar desire for greater walkability, others liked the way current infrastructure slowed traffic. Regardless of public opinion, it is certain that improved roadways will increase traffic – both pedestrian and car traffic. That is the goal of the City's Street Plan and it will be achieved given proper implementation of the ordinance.

The Cully Commercial Corridor and Street Plan parallels many of the development plans for modern American cities. Loretta Lees (2000) argued nearly two decades ago, "gentrification in the guise of urban livability/sustainability is constructed as the medicine for the problems endured by British and American cities" (p. 404). These solutions have proven unsuccessful and yet the language and strategies for community improvement remain the same.

In a "green" city, such as Portland, sustainability too often supersedes equity. This is a process Melissa Checker (2011: 212) refers to this "environmental gentrification", which "describes the convergence of urban redevelopment, ecologically-minded initiatives and environmental justice activism in an era of advanced capitalism". While the greening of urban environments is presented as politically-neutral and consensus-based by nature, it often "subordinates equity to profit minded development" (Checker, 2011: 209), fails to address the question of for whom these projects are meant to serve,

and furthermore, who gets to decide what sustainable looks like. These efforts appropriate sustainability language and co-opt neighborhood improvement initiatives to promote high-end development, which inevitably displaces low-income residents. Checker (2011) concludes that environmental gentrification is a form of “post-political” governance which de-links sustainability from justice and therefore disables meaningful resistance.

If Checker (2011) identifies the problem, Curran and Hamilton (2012) identify a solution – one that became actualized by the Living Cully 2.0 effort. By advocating collaboration and collective environmental re-visioning through community planning meetings and various activist organizations, Curran and Hamilton (2012) allow for the possibility of alternative economic development that holds social justice at high esteem and does not inevitably facilitate the involuntary displacement of low-income residents. The authors introduce the “potential for new spaces of politics for sustainability, broadly conceived with social justice as a central tenet” by introducing a series of “actually existing sustainabilities”. They propose a “just green enough” strategy, which is aimed not at new development, but clean up and the creation of green space for working-class populations. In this way, the “just green enough” approach improves the health and quality of life for residents without attracting upscale, elite green development.

The *Living Cully Weatherization and Home Repair Project 2.0* garnered support using “sustainability” language. By developing a project aimed at improving the energy efficiency of low-income homes, the organization simultaneously appealed to the environmentally minded funders distributing resources and aided in safeguarding a group

of Cully’s most vulnerable residents from involuntary displacement. Furthermore, in line with the “just green enough” strategy proposed by Curran and Hamilton (2012), the project funded critical home repairs to improve the health and quality of life of participating residents.

Living Cully Weatherization and Home Repair Project 2.0

The *Living Cully Weatherization and Home Repair Project 2.0* is unique in two respects. First, it diverges from typical weatherization projects by serving low-income, minority homeowners. Second, it stands out amongst the more familiar affordability-centric anti-displacement interventions – such as establishing rent caps or non-development zones. The project is introduced thoroughly in the following chapter. As such, this section focuses less on the specifics of the project as it does on its divergence from typical weatherization and anti-displacement strategies.

Weatherization programming in Portland has typically served middle to upper class residents who can afford to make upgrades to regulate their home temperature throughout the year. Eron Riddle commented, “Weatherization programming in Portland for the most part has been... more from an environmental impact perspective which I completely agree with and think is awesome and think is a cool *side effect* to the work we’re doing” but was explicit in saying that the goal of the Weatherization 2.0 project was to support the homeowner. The first round of Weatherization projects (Living Cully Weatherization Project 1.0) served significantly more homes – roughly 100 – but targeted “mostly middle or upper income and it did it more for the comfort in the summer, the

comfort in the winter versus the need” (E. Riddle, Personal Communication, July 20, 2016). The second round of weatherization projects differed by way development framework and service delivery model.

We kind of worked in the Multnomah county equity framework according to an empowerment lens when we were trying to figure out our service delivery model and the one thing we found that was most important was to advocate to gather all the funds because with Cully 1.0 it was one product, one provider, one thing where as now we’re having to utilize multiple providers with multiple strings attached. (Eron Riddle, Personal Communication, 2016)

The project was funded by various organizations; money trickled down from the federal Housing and Urban Development Fund to the Portland Housing Bureau and Northwest Natural to local fractions of Habitat for Humanity and Enhabit (to name a few prominent sources). Different organizations attach different stipulations to their funds (i.e. age, income) and layering these various services further complicates the requirements. For example, a person may be eligible for federal services but not state services due to the discrepancy between federal and state poverty lines. Rather than leaving residents to locate resources, figure out whether or not they qualified and potentially waste time and money if mistaken, the Living Cully 2.0 service delivery model weaved funds to match each participant’s qualifications and needs. Doing so encouraged participation from residents and contributed to the success of the project.

The 2012 Portland Plan denotes the City’s intention of creating 30,000 affordable units over the next 20 years. As means of further accommodating the increasing influx of

people, the City is preparing by zoning enough land “to ensure the private sector can generally produce enough housing to keep up with demand” (Bureau of Planning and Sustainability 2015, 2). The Plan declares support for the development of new types of housing that is likely to be affordable. This includes the construction of new units so demand does not exceed supply and force up housing prices as well as the construction of “small houses, small lot development and accessory dwelling units as well as multi-unit micro-apartments” (Bureau of Sustainability 2015, 2). This approach mirrors those of many progressive cities in its prioritization of livability by way of increased development; recall Loretta Lees’ (2000) prophecy. I mentioned earlier that the Living Cully 2.0 effort deviated from normative anti-gentrification initiatives by moving beyond the affordability rhetoric, which currently dominates anti-gentrification related programming. The organization focused instead on preserving homes. By making critical home repairs to homes vulnerable to foreclosure, the intervention protected both the home from demolition – and the property from reconstruction of new units – and the homeowner from involuntary displacement.

The Living Cully Weatherization and Home Repair Project 2.0

The following document was prepared for *Living Cully* as a one-year follow-up evaluation of the ***Weatherization and Home Repair Project 2.0***. The report utilizes survey data collected from participating residents to assess the impact of the interventions on homeowners' housing conditions, the health and safety of participating homeowners and the stability of homeowners and the Cully neighborhood as a spatial whole. The quantitative data included in this report illustrates the ways in which the home becomes a vulnerable and often, unhealthy space for residents of gentrifying neighborhoods.

Living Cully relies on multiple sources to fund the weatherization projects. In lieu of the vulnerability of funding, non-profit partners benefit from evaluation reports that combine quantitative and qualitative data to substantiate the importance of their interventions. Project Lead Eron Riddle commented, "You need to show that your hearts in the right place with the qualitative and ensure you're going to be effective with the quantitative." This intervention was developed under the notion that preserving homes creates long-term stability for residents as well as the neighborhood. Properly substantiating the effectiveness of the weatherization projects then, requires evaluating impact over time. The following report stands as the first step toward quantitatively evaluating the long-term impact of mitigating displacement – and harmful gentrification processes more generally – by prioritizing the needs of vulnerable homeowners.

Though a statistical evaluation of the *Weatherization and Home Repair Project 2.0* provides evidence of extensive poor housing conditions within vulnerable populations of Cully, it fails to relay the experiences of those individual households. Quantitative evaluations of gentrification portray people as numbers, thus perpetuating an understanding of the phenomenon as a singular process that affects neighborhood, rather than individuals. The second chapter of *Analysis* examines the experiences of the residents who are represented as mere numbers in the following report. Thus, this chapter stands as further evidence of the importance of supplementing quantitative research with qualitative data.

One-Year Follow Up Report

Introduction

The Cully area was not annexed into the city of Portland until 1985, which effectively delayed neighborhood level investment. Ironically, lagging investment has allowed the neighborhood to maintain many unique and positive physical and social attributes, including multi-family affordable housing, lush green spaces, as well as a greater level of ethnic diversity than any other neighborhood in the State of Oregon. Still, Cully residents experience disproportionate disparities, with 20% of its residents living in poverty compared to a regional average of 9.9%. It is the goal of the “*Living Cully*” effort to preserve and bolster the stability of Cully homeowners and the neighborhood as a whole. Beginning in 2013 and with NAYA (Native American Youth Association) spearheading the effort, the *Living Cully* partners applied a multi-level equity lens, based off of the Multnomah County Equity and Empowerment Lens with a Racial Justice Focus, to develop and implement the ***Weatherization and Home Repair 2.0*** project. In doing so, the community-based partnership sought to address critical health and safety repairs as well as energy efficiency improvements by initially investing an average of \$15,000 in each low-income household. These repairs and upgrades were instrumental to achieving the broader goals of Living Cully: to maintain the cultural and social fabric of the neighborhood and prevent involuntary displacement of long-term, underserved residents. This document provides a brief overview of the ***Weatherization and Home Repair 2.0*** project, as well as comprehensive project results that were compiled using

both interview and survey data collected in July of 2016; one-year after the projects were completed.

Project Background

Weatherization funding in Portland has traditionally served middle to upper income households to improve the comfort of the home and lower residents' bills. As such, weatherization programming within the city has been developed from a strictly environmental impact perspective. While project leads at Living Cully see reducing households' negative environmental impact as an important co-benefit of the work being done on homes, they prioritize equity and empowerment of the homeowner as the primary goal of the project's development and implementation. Initial interviews with participants revealed many indicators of pride of ownership among them. The ***Weatherization and Home Repair 2.0*** Community Project Development Coordinator Eron Riddle reports, "There was a pride in ownership, there was just the big things – roofs, windows, mold, dry rot, asbestos – people were living with this stuff because they couldn't afford to not." Recognizing the relationship between gentrification trends fueled by the rising cost of housing and the negative impacts of displacement (such as the hazards of sub-standard living environments) the Living Cully partners directed their weatherization efforts toward long-term, low-income homeowners in an effort to stabilize individuals, families and the community as a whole.

Participant Demographics	
Percentage of Minority Participants (African American or American Indian)	44%
Percentage of Participants Age 55+	78%
Percentage of Disabled Participants	56%
Average Years in Cully	10+
Average Household Size	3
Average Household Income	\$23,337

Figure 6. Demographics of Participating Homeowners

In doing so, the project effectively addressed critical health and safety concerns and mitigated the threat of involuntary displacement due to foreclosure, while preserving affordable housing units for current or future residents. This multifaceted approach reflects the organization's commitment to preserving both *individual* stability and *neighborhood* stability. España et al. (2015) produced a report shortly after the 2014-2015 round of projects was completed, which further details project goals, implementation and preliminary results. This current analysis continues where España et al. left off – evaluating homeowner stability one year after project completion – and takes the first step toward measuring how the *Weatherization and Home Repair 2.0* intervention impacts stability, health and home conditions over time.

Project Results/Findings

The Living Cully ***Weatherization and Home Repair 2.0*** projects were developed with the goals of improving:

1. Homeowners' housing conditions,
2. The health and safety of participating homeowners and
3. The stability of homeowners and the Cully neighborhood as a spatial whole.

Homeowner surveys were conducted a three different times over the course of the project; the first prior to construction, the second immediately after construction was completed, and the third, roughly one year later in July of 2016. The results provided in this section evaluate those three indicators one year after the first round of construction projects were completed. The following results were compiled by comparing three data sets collected from homeowner surveys.

Housing Conditions

Responses to yes or no questions on the ***Weatherization and Home Repair 2.0*** intake survey indicate that 100% of participants had put off taking care of major home repairs or maintenance due to cost. Of those respondents, 22% reported they were unable to keep a comfortable temperature in their home. Figure 5 compares improvement of home conditions, as reported by clients immediately after repairs were completed in 2015 and one year later in 2016. The graph shows an increase over time in the improvement of home conditions as a result of the repairs.

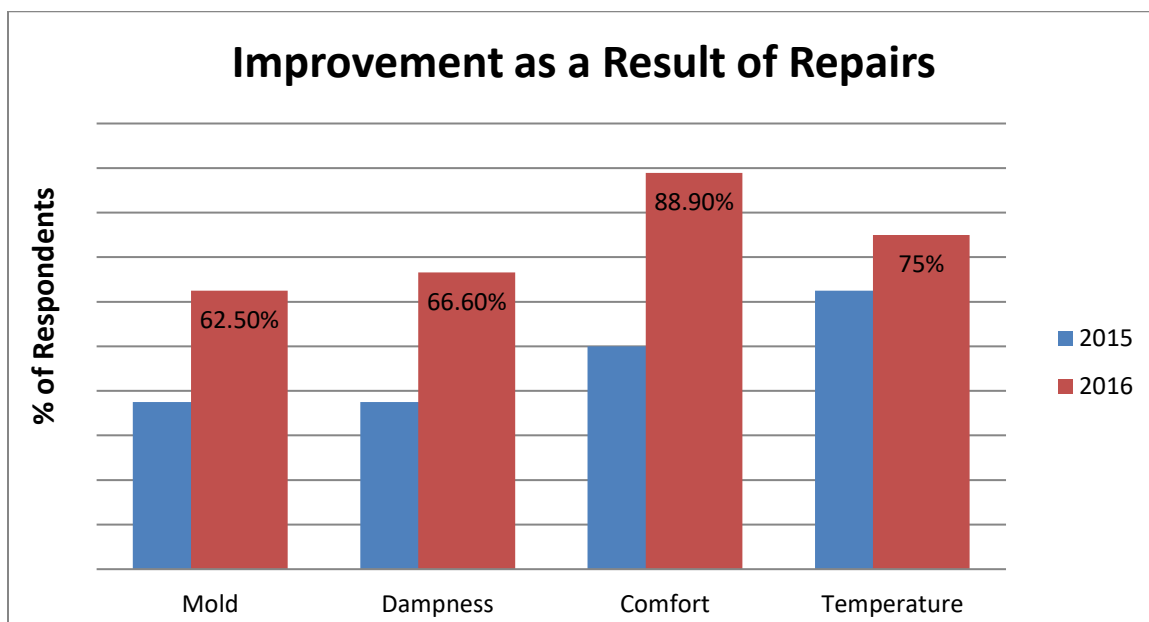


Figure 7. Graph comparing the percentage of respondents for whom these specific home conditions had improved as a result of the home repair projects in 2015 and 2016.

Health

The *Living Cully* effort recognizes the negative impact that substandard living conditions have on the health of both individuals and the community overall. Intake surveys show that prior to the ***Weatherization and Home Repair 2.0*** projects, 55.6% of participating residents were uncertain whether or not their home was negatively affecting their family's health. One year after projects were completed, the number of those who reported uncertainty had decreased by 20%; this discrepancy suggests that home evaluations and the construction projects themselves increased homeowners' awareness of the relationship between housing conditions and physical health. Figure 6 presents the

self-reported health condition of participating families in 2015 immediately after projects were completed, and one year later in 2016. Surveys show an overall improvement in the self-reported health of participating families.

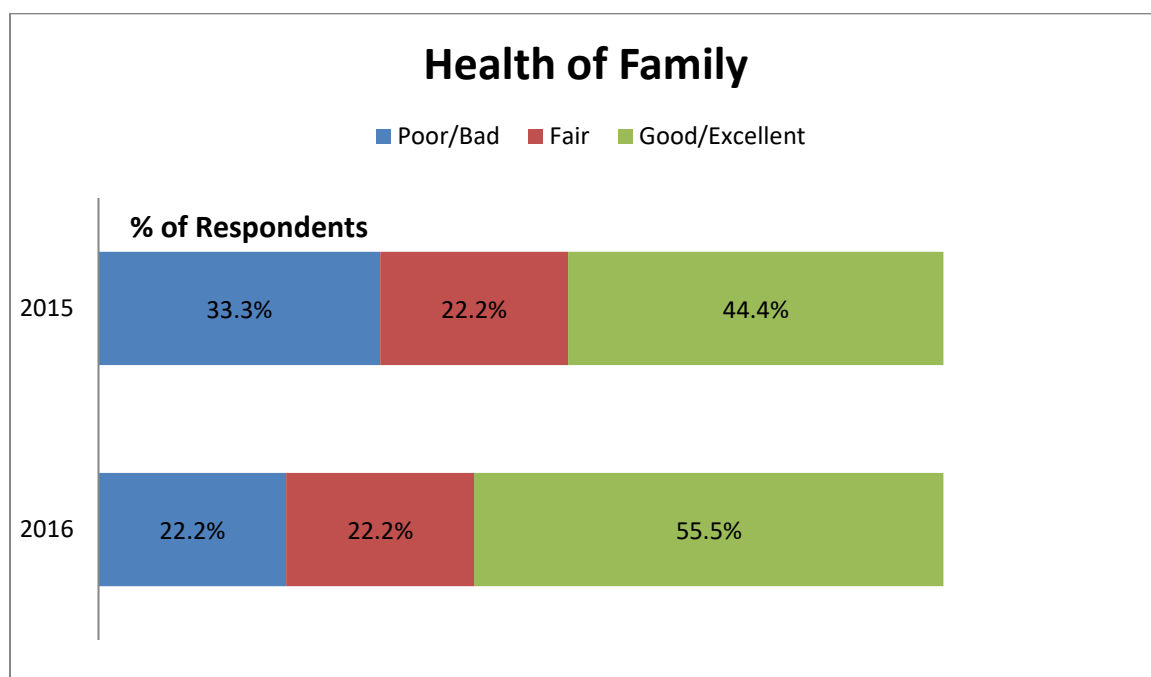


Figure 8. Graph presenting the self-reported health of clients in 2015 and 2016

Health was also evaluated at the neighborhood level by gathering information on participants' feelings of connectedness and dependency toward their neighbors. While 77.7% of respondents reported feeling either *somewhat connected* or *connected* to the Cully neighborhood at the one-year check in interview, survey data shows high rates of civil reliance in the case of an emergency. Figure 7 demonstrates strong social cohesion among Cully residents and consequently, how involuntary displacement has the potential to disrupt neighborhood level support networks.

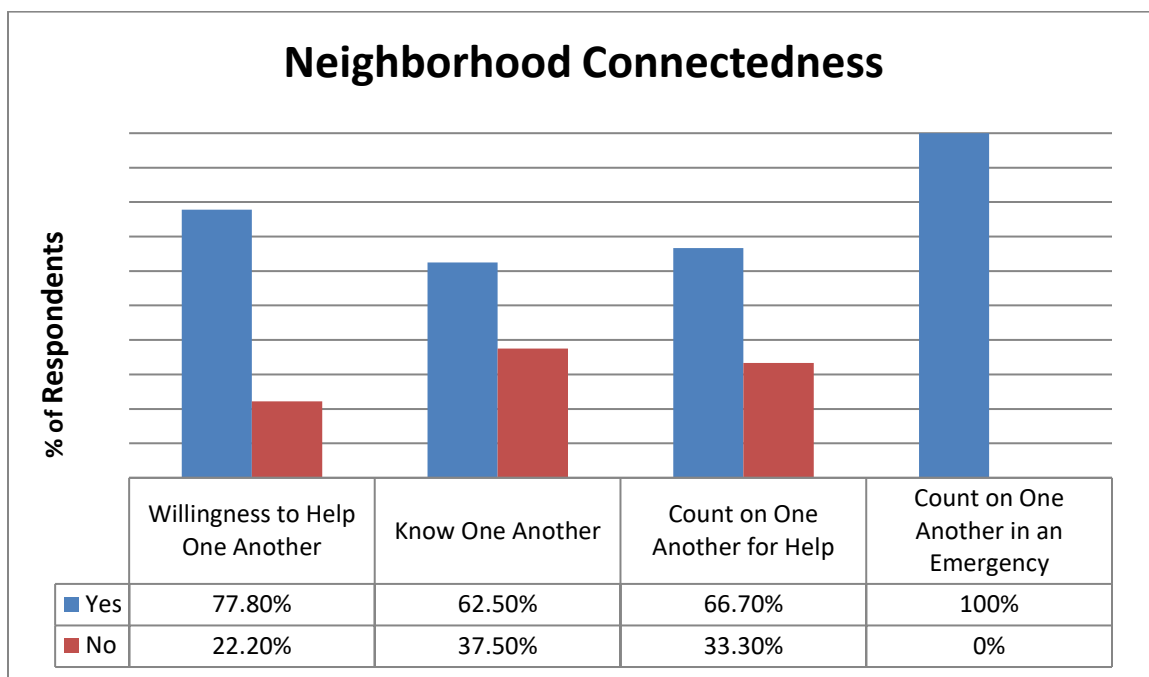


Figure 9. Graph demonstrating the percentage of respondents who felt a connection to their neighborhood and a willingness to help their neighbors

Stability

Considering the data presented in Figure 7, *individual* stability was evaluated based on the percentage of participants who are still in their homes and the economic well-being of those who have relocated from the Cully neighborhood. *Neighborhood* stability was evaluated by how effectively the intervention preserved affordability of the housing unit.

Of the ***Weatherization and Home Repair 2.0*** clients, all but two stayed in their homes. Those who relocated did so voluntarily and for extenuating circumstances. The first to relocate was a single, elderly, and minority woman. The work done on her home

was toward making her basement a legal dwelling unit so she could rent it out and supplement her monthly house payments. After the work was complete, the first tenant to occupy the basement severely damaged the unit and put her in an even tighter economic bind. Due to the weatherization and home repair investment, her home had been brought up to code – preserving the unit and allowing her to sell it for a decent asking price. As a result, she was able to buy her current home outright in the same town as her mother and lives with very few living expenses. The second to relocate occupied a multi-generational minority home with her mother, her son and his family. When her mother passed and her son moved to another town in Oregon, she was left to occupy a 3500 square-foot house alone. Follow up inquiry has shown that she still owns the home and rents the unit to supplement her current living expenses. Although these two homeowners were displaced despite the weatherization and home repairs, their stories demonstrate the economic stability a home can provide a vulnerable homeowner in the case of relocation.

It is important to note that while the new owners and renters of these units were most likely non-minority, long-term, low-income residents, the weatherization and home repair projects got the homes into a condition where they were no longer at risk of being torn down – which is another issue facing the Cully neighborhood.

Conclusion

One year after the *Weatherization and Home Repair 2.0* projects were completed, survey and interview findings demonstrate the wide range of impacts weatherization funding can have on vulnerable communities such as Cully. Displacement

occurs within gentrifying communities by way of two processes; one is either physically displaced – involuntarily forced from their neighborhood of origin and into another, or one is displaced within their community as social groups, systems and networks transform around them. Stabilizing residents and providing them a dependable housing unit thus stabilizes the individual as well as the broader community.

Data collected one year after weatherization and home repair projects were complete indicates the potential long-term impact of a targeted weatherization funding. If the focus is on affordable rent, the integrity of the neighborhood itself is overlooked. It is more environmentally efficient and economically effective to improve an existing home – and hopefully give the resident the opportunity to stay in place if they want to – rather than tear it down and build a new housing unit.

Voices of Cully: Experiences of Home

“Nail salons, bodegas and 99-cent stores along Franklin Avenue have been joined by shops selling brick-oven pizza and craft beers. New rentals and condominiums have risen in place of dilapidated buildings, attracting young professionals and white couples pushing strollers”

- Ronda Kaysen, *The New York Times*, 2016

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In Brooklyn, New York, and other well-known gentrifying neighborhoods in the United States, reports of rising rents and forced evictions, the influx of hipsters and bike lanes, and the replacement of locally owned corner stores with microbreweries and coffee shops, dominate gentrification-related media coverage (Kaysen, 2016; Wainwright, 2016; Semeuls, 2016; Bodenner, 2016; Bodenner, 2015). In 2016, *The New York Times* published interviews with a dozen young native New Yorkers, revealing that while some welcomed the new amenities accompanying the new gentrifying class and others lamented over a perceived loss of community, none was able to afford an apartment in their childhood neighborhoods (Kaysen, 2016). *The Atlantic* similarly reported that in the Ballard neighborhood of Seattle, Washington, old-growth fir houses were being torn-down and replaced with “slap-dash concrete, high-capacity condo/retail complexes”. This was done as a part of the city council’s attempt to develop urban villages as means of preventing sprawl (Bodenner, 2015).

These stories of gentrification are not limited to the United States. Media coverage of the phenomenon is echoed in European countries as well. For example, *The New York Times* reports the arrival of 60,000 people over the last year in Berlin has resulted in overcrowding, competition over housing, and an increase in “leases canceled for the slightest triviality” (Wilder, 2017). In response, local grassroots coalitions have taken to the streets in protest, carrying signs proclaiming, “We’re all staying” and “Say no to crowding.” City authorities responded by introducing rent caps, a partial ban on vacation rentals, development-free zones, and increased social housing subsidies. Such interventions attempting to preserve the livability of a neighborhood are commonly enacted to mitigate the negative impacts of gentrification.

In Portland, Oregon, “African Americans who were once a majority in Northeast neighborhoods have been displaced to ‘the numbers,’ which is what Portlanders call the low-income-far-off neighborhoods,” according to *The Atlantic* (Semuels, 2016). Portland is just one city that has recently been put on the map for its increasing youth culture and associated amenities. The cases of Brooklyn, Seattle, Berlin and Portland exemplify both the conventional understanding of gentrification, as well as the predominant discourse of those reporting the phenomenon. According to the dominant narrative, a neighborhood undergoes rapid transformation, pointedly serving a young, upper-income, creative class, and displaces long-term residents as well as the long-standing cultural fabric of the neighborhood. Although journalism consistently alludes to housing, by highlighting the displacement of residents and the demolition of old homes for the construction of newer

and shinier units, the way residents experience gentrification *inside* home has been ignored.

Reporting that ignores the home is not limited to journalism. Academic scholarship follows the same tendency toward conceptualizing gentrification with an exclusive spatial framing of the neighborhood. Academic literature may offer a more nuanced and place-specific examination of gentrification, but nonetheless excludes home from the discussion. A prime example is provided in geographer Loretta Lees (2000) review article. Lees (2000) urges the attention to varying geographies of gentrification by introducing two contradictory experiences of the phenomenon. The *emancipatory city* thesis demonstrates that, for some who would be considered gentrifiers, the city is experienced as a liberating space. For example, according to Forest (1995), the gay community in Los Angeles was able to explore and affirm its identity through the gentrification of West Hollywood. This thesis is implicit in literature focusing on the gentrifiers themselves and their forms of agency. The *revanchist city* thesis however, considers “the privileging of middle class desires and the effects of the advancing gentrification ‘frontier’ on other class fractions” (Lees, 2000: 399). The *revanchist* thesis is well represented in *The New York Times* and *The Atlantic* articles introduced at the beginning of this chapter. According to Lees (2000), there is not *a* gentrification, but *multiple* gentrifications. Although these theses implore place specificity in the gentrification debate and an attention to how places are constructed, the place-scale of the analysis is again, limited to neighborhood. Gentrification is differentiated, but only

spatially. The scalar impacts of gentrification are overlooked and thus the home remains overlooked as the space where gentrification is experienced most intimately.

Academic scholars have thus far been interested in identifying the economic processes and cultural changes underpinning gentrification as well as the forces that propel rapid and class-targeted development (Glass 1964; Smith 1996; Smith 1982; Davidson 2011; Redfern 2003; Kennedy & Leonard 2003). As a result, gentrification continues to be conceptualized as a neighborhood-scale economic and cultural transformation as it first was in by Ruth Glass in 1964. As she observed of inner London, “One by one, many of the working class quarters have been invaded by the middle class – upper and lower... once this process of ‘gentrification’ starts in a district it goes on rapidly until all of most of the working class occupiers are displaced and the whole social character of the district is changed” (Glass, 1964, p.xvii). To be sure, gentrification is comprised of both economic and cultural processes worth examining. However, a “district” or a neighborhood is comprised of individual *homes* and *homes* are where the lives of the urban poor take place. Excluding an examination of how gentrification is experienced within the home contributes to universalizing the concept of gentrification as a single neighborhood-scale process and in doing so, limits the potential strategies of intervention.

Supply and demand-side (i.e. economics vs. culture) gentrification frameworks similarly ignore the home as an affected space (Hamnett 1991; Lees 1994a; Boyle 1995). Supply and demand are important to consider as a part of that which motivates the

varying geographies of gentrification but they both necessarily assume a landscape⁹ perspective. Similar to the way in which Murphy (2008) conceptualizes gentrification as a single economic process, supply and demand theories of gentrification ignore the experiential reality of gentrification by never examining a spatial unit smaller than the neighborhood.

Journalists and scholars who focus on the neighborhood have ignored the home as an affected space. A limited unit of analysis that ignores the home has contributed to broad understandings of gentrification, which extend beyond the written word to influence anti-gentrification interventions at a grassroots and a policy level. Dominant approaches have excluded an examination of the place where gentrification is perhaps most intimately experienced – the home – and as a result constrained potential strategies for resistance.

The focus of mitigation strategies, as in Berlin, has been on establishing rent caps and limiting development. Although effectively preserving (some) affordable units, rent caps do little to address the destruction of neighborhood culture, which is carried by long-term residents – residents who tend to own their homes. In the rare case that home *is* brought into the discussion, it is portrayed as either a space where people live happily or a space from which people are displaced. The home is a complex space, which changes in regard to any number of external processes. Dominant gentrification discourse however, fails to depict the home as a space that is in and of itself vulnerable to change. Rather, the home is simply implicated as a part of a larger, neighborhood wide process. Mitigating

⁹ Landscape here is defined as a space of which the viewer is outside (Creswell 2015).

displacement is an important anti-gentrification strategy. However, proposing non-displacement as a stand-alone intervention is insufficient. Without distinguishing between disparate types of displacement (i.e. renters vs. homeowners), the equally damaging phenomenon whereby long-term residents become confined to their homes – an involuntary non-displacement of sorts – is ignored.

The purpose of this analysis is to examine how the people experience the home as a result of gentrification. Though often depicted as impervious to external forces, experiences inside the home actually reflect broader economic processes and social restructurings. Conceptualizing the home as both an *emancipatory* space and as a space of *confinement*, I illustrate the ways in which a home is a mediated space, rather than a static space. Forces outside the home shape experiences inside the home, creating a space that acts as both a sanctuary and a prison. I argue that the changing nature of an occupant's experiences constitutes the home as a compelling space for analysis by gentrification theorists.

The remainder of this chapter is comprised of four sections. First, I begin with a review of the way 'home' has been conceptualized in scholarship. I interrogate the humanist geographer conceptualization of the home as an ideal and primitive space that shapes our understanding of the outside world and then I move on to feminist critiques of these depictions. Second, I begin an analysis of the home as a sanctuary. With the goal of enhancing both theoretical framings and encouraging a critical consideration of both extremes, I separate the discussion of home as sanctuary and home as prison, although the two share origins. This analysis draws on interview data to show the way participants

of the *Living Cully Weatherization and Home Repair Project 2.0* relate to their home spaces and how the conditions of home change due to gentrification-fueled neighborhood restructurings. As the neighborhood transforms around the home, attachment to home strengthens and transforms the home into a sanctuary space and an imprisoning asset.

I identify the home acting as a sanctuary in three ways: first, the possessions inside and outside of the home are an extension of the occupant's identity as well as their freedom to act out this identity. Second, the home provides an occupant with privacy and protection – both physical and intangible – from neighborhood change and other external forces. Finally, a home is a financial investment, which relieves the occupant of the financial burden of renting and provides a form of stability commonly associated with homeownership.

In the third section, I turn to an analysis of how the home acts as a prison. The home is a space of confinement for reasons similar to those identified above: First, the possessions inside and outside of the home create a financial burden on the occupant and on the home itself, especially as the homeowner ages and loses the physical ability to maintain those possessions without assistance. Second, the privacy allotted by a home fosters isolation from the surrounding neighborhood, increasingly so if the resident feels disconnected from neighbors or has limited transportation outside of the neighborhood. Third, the home acts as a prison by financially tying the resident to their property. This involuntary non-displacement stands in stark contrast with much of the media coverage and academic scholarship, which identifies displacement as a primary symptom of gentrification.

This chapter concludes with a discussion about the implications of integrating the home into gentrification literature. Examining the home as a changing space where gentrification is intimately experienced emphasizes the temporality and spatiality of gentrification, as well as the importance of visibilizing the experiences of homeowners in gentrifying neighborhoods. As well, I address the ways in which an evaluation of the home in this context contributes to place literature by confronting the home as an ideal space.

Conceptualizing Home

For our house is our corner of the world.

- Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, 1994

While the home has been excluded from public and academic gentrification discourse, early thinking on the home is provided by mid 20th century humanist geographers. These scholars depicted the home as separate from the outside world, as a protected space that remains untouched by external neighborhood, citywide, statewide and even nationwide economic forces (changes). In the words of Tim Creswell, Bachelard (1958) among others considers the home as a “primal space that acts as first world or first universe that then frames our understanding of the spaces outside” (Creswell, 2015: 39). This perspective denies the influence of outside spaces – as well as forces that do not bear an obvious geography – on our experiences inside the home. In this way, the home is portrayed as an ideal space.

This monolithic interpretation came under critique by late 20th century feminist geographers, who argued that experiences of home depend on class, gender and broader social regimes. Gillian Rose claimed that for many women, the home is not a space of safety but rather of “drudgery, abuse and neglect” (Rose, 1993:56). Moreover, adverse experiences of the home are in part created, and certainly exonerated by outside forces such as institutional inequality and legitimizing hegemonic regimes. The home is reinterpreted as a space of confinement, far from the emancipatory realm imagined by Gaston Bachelard. Black feminist bell hooks (1990) on the other hand, introduces the home as a place of resistance. Growing up in a racially segregated society, hooks experienced the home as a space of freedom from oppression. As geographer Tim Creswell (2015) explains, bell hooks (1990) depicts the home as a space wherein which “people are relatively free to forge their own identities” (Creswell, 2015: 41). This experience paints the home as a protective space, where the resident is free from outside prejudice and otherwise restricting constructs. Gentrification theorists and policy-makers alike must consider the intersectional nature of neighborhood change. An approach that evaluates the complicated and often contradictory experiences of gentrification may preserve tension within the gentrification debate and as a result, steer us away from vaguely defining processes, consequences and solutions associated with gentrification.

An examination of the home as a changing space needs to be integrated into public and academic discussion of gentrification. First for the purpose of understanding how processes of gentrification breach the walls of the home in varying capacities. For some, the amenities associated with gentrification encourage greater mobility in and out

of the home, while others become further isolated from the neighborhood and attached to the home space. Second, a greater appreciation for the home as an affected space encourages anti-gentrification interventions that actively preserve homes, rather than simply maintaining affordable housing units.

This analysis draws on original data to provide an examination of how gentrification is experienced inside the home. Drawing on a constructivist lens, I permit extensive space for those who experience this phenomenon to explore their own anxieties and opinions, as means of legitimizing seemingly contradictory experiences of the home as sanctuary and as prison. I examine the ways in which the home acts as both an emancipatory space and a confining space and in doing so emphasize the importance of analyzing gentrification at the level of the home, as well as the urgency of developing anti-gentrification interventions that prioritize the homeowner.

Conceptual Framework

With the intention of gaining insight about how long-standing residents of gentrifying neighborhoods understand gentrification, I designed interview questions to gather testimony about whether or not – and how – residents of Cully perceived neighborhood-scale change. While three out of the nine interviews yielded testimony – extremely keen testimony in fact – about how the Cully neighborhood had changed over time, every single participant brought their home into conversation without being directly prompted. So, with ample coaxing, only one third of residents showed interest in discussing the ways in which their neighborhood had changed over time, but without any

lead, every participant expressed a pride of ownership, and most alluded as well to the stresses associated with owning a home. Perhaps *everyone* experiences the home as both an aid and a hindrance but the purpose of this analysis is to illustrate how gentrification exacerbates these experiences of the home as both a prison and a sanctuary.

Interview testimony illustrates a cognitive tension amongst homeowners between experiencing the home as a source of pride and the home as a source of limitation. Importantly, and as this analysis attempts to elucidate, both are true and legitimate experiences. In fact, the two are co-constitutive. While this analysis focuses on homeowners' experiences living in Cully, testimonies explicate the ways in which those experiences are crafted by outside forces – namely economic and cultural transformations associated with gentrification. Whether or not cognizant of their competing expositions of the home, residents' testimonies stand to complicate an idealized, edenic portrayal of the home, a depiction that has yet to be brought into the gentrification literature.

Home as Sanctuary

The hermit is alone before God. His hut, therefore, is just the opposite of a monastery. And there radiates about this centralized solitude a universe of mediation and prayer, a universe outside the universe. The hut can receive none of the riches “of this world.” It possesses the felicity of extreme poverty; indeed, it is one of the glories of poverty; as destitution increases it gives us access to absolute refuge.

- Gaston Bachelard, *Poetics of Space*, 1994

This evaluation of home as a sanctuary takes as its primary guide Mircea Eliade, a Romanian Philosopher who has long been considered “something of an axis mundi” (Biles, 2007: 294) among scholars of sacred space. Eliade (1959: 45) posits, “*Every construction or fabrication has the cosmogony as paradigmatic model.*” His argument is in other words, that the creation of the world, whereby the universe unfolds from a center, becomes the archetype for every human gesture, and thus every human settlement. The sacred space follows suit and a cosmic symbolism is enacted by the structure of a sanctuary.

Illustrated by the humanist thinking outlined above, the home has been conceptualized in similar terms. The home is imagined as a primary space – the center – much like Eliade’s sanctuary, which is characterized by its cosmogonist origins.

The home acts as a sanctuary by physically and emotionally protecting its occupants from the outside world. There are varying layers to protection, beginning with the structure itself. Walls shield a homeowner from the elements, creating a sense of safety and refuge. Possessions inside and outside of the structure heighten the familiarity of the space, as well as the perceived freedom of expression allowed by the space. The home permits liberation, the space and privacy to act out our identities. Finally, the home acts as an enduring possession in and of itself, granting financial security as well as the projected image of stability. This section follows a similar analytical framework, beginning with an investigation of how the physical structure of the home creates a sense

of safety. Following is a discussion of the role possessions inside and outside the home play in bolstering the home as a sanctuary. To conclude, I discuss the ways in which a home emotionally protects from the outside world, and conversely connects us to the outside world – as a financial investment and as an indicator of stability.

Privacy and Protection

The home acts as a protective space by creating a physical barrier between the occupant and the outside world. As well, the location and aesthetic of a property either generates or hinders a perceived sense of safety for the person who dwells there.

Testimony from Cully residents revealed the importance of a home for creating quiet and a sense of comfortability. A majority of homeowners referred less specifically to the physical protection of the house and more to the feeling of security within the neighborhood. Still, this sense of security is generated by the physical attributes of Cully.

I: Why do you like living in Cully?

R: The peace and the quiet and I'd say the privacy... because I mean there's not too many people getting into your business, we don't really have to worry too much about break-ins or getting ripped off or stuff like that. It's pretty safe, it's a pretty safe neighborhood.

Value statements surfaced which revealed an appreciation for the quietness of the neighborhood. Five of the nine participants named this as a primary reason for liking Cully. Responses such as: “Well, it’s quiet except on the fourth of July of course”, “It’s

not a high traffic street... its pretty quiet” and “I like being off the road, and you know its quiet back here for the most part” illustrate the calmness of Cully. Others responded less specifically, referring to the comfortability of the neighborhood. For instance,

“When we picked this house, one of the highlights was that in the backyard we have really nice trees, and being next to the schoolyard and a church over here. It just felt really nice and comfortable and we haven’t regretted it since we moved in”

Testimonies revealed a correlation between the rural aesthetic of the Cully neighborhood – open space, old-growth trees and unpaved roads – and the perceived safety of the neighborhood. Those who did not identify quietness and safety as their primary reasons for liking the neighborhood identified aesthetic advantages.

“I love the old growth trees, the lushness of the vegetation.”

“It’s really green so the trees, I like that”

“We have redone the backyard since we bought the house but at the time my husband, before we had kids and everything, fancied himself an urban farmer so he wanted a lot of space.”

Three residents, all of whom had children or grandchildren, similarly mentioned the proximity to parks as a reason for liking Cully. Frequent references to the greenness of Cully exemplify the ways in which an aesthetic cultivates a sense of security. With varying opinions, four residents brought up the poor road conditions in the neighborhood.

Two residents identified a lack of sidewalks and poor walkability as their primary dislike about living in the neighborhood. In contrast, one resident wanted to “leave the potholes alone because they slow down the cars” and another said she was “happy we don’t have sidewalks because it decreases the foot traffic in our neighborhood”. Though residents’ perceptions varied about which features would enrich Cully, there was a common appreciation for the physicality of the neighborhood and its ability to cultivate or hinder livability.

Cully residents valued the home as a protective space for its location within the neighborhood. One resident spoke about Cully in contrast with other neighborhoods in the city, saying, “You know, if I were in SE I wouldn’t feel that way, no way, but here I feel safe”. The home acts as a sanctuary by creating physical boundaries between the occupant and the outside world, but those walls can be breached. The experiences inside the home are in fact shaped by what exists outside those walls. Interviews revealed that Cully residents feel secure in their homes because of the perceived safety of the surrounding neighborhood and that the perceived safety of the neighborhood is closely tied to the physical attributes of the space.

Possessions

A home creates space to act out identity without the risk of judgment or outside opinion. Possessions inside and outside of the home then, are a reflection of the occupant’s identity as well as their freedom to alter their space as they so choose.

“I can pretty much do whatever I want to my home. Every tree that is on this place, I planted. Every shrub that is on this place, I planted”

“I’ve planted like 9 trees on my own property”

The ***Living Cully Weatherization and Home Repair Project 2.0*** targeted “majority low-income and people of color in the Cully neighborhood... most were elderly and disabled, those most vulnerable to housing instability” (CHRW 2.0, 2015). The residents whose spaces were adorned with possessions tended to spend more time in their homes for lack of transportation, or other disability related limitations. The same resident who expressed pride in having planted every tree and every shrub on his property had nearly three thousand DVDs stacked from floor to ceiling in his main sitting room.

“I’m running out of room. People have joked with me ‘why don’t you start renting them out?’”

Another resident who rarely left his home had mirrors strewn about the floor of the living room, which he explained were for a mirror wall he was building in the back of the house. His house was decorated with antiques he had found at estate sales throughout the years. In contrast, residents with greater mobility tended to keep cleaner spaces and have fewer possessions inside the house.

Household pets were another indicator of residents’ sense of rootedness. Obvious affection toward these animals further emphasized how possessions allow an individual to construct their personalized sanctuaries. One resident fostered dogs as a hobby and

spent 20 minutes discussing the process of fostering and training the animals she housed. Another resident's cat he called 'Sweetie' spent a majority of the interview on his lap. He expressed that his vet expenses were a primary source of shame for him – not having money for veterinary care. "Hello sweetie pie, what's your trouble? What's the matter baby?" another resident sweetly asked his dog, who hobbled around crying throughout our interview. He said neither of them was aging very well.

Financial

The home also protects in non-physical ways by creating a space of security in the wake of external transformations. Many residents noted the ways in which Cully had changed since their arrival, which ranged from 10-29 years prior. Despite the recognition of being vulnerable to displacement, residents expressed extreme pride of home ownership. Through testimony of how and why the home was initially purchased to current financial advantages, the home was valued as an investment, as well as the foundation for freedom, comfort and building a life.

The home unit emerged as a space that was fundamentally protective and the origin of stability. One resident who was maintaining his mother's house remarked "People need a place to live you know? Its just part of the human existence." Stories of how residents came to purchase their houses and why, revealed a sense of pride in the decision. The purchase was regarded as a step forward both personally and financially.

“I got it in my mind that I wanted to buy a house because I was 50 and didn’t have any investments”

“I was living in an apartment and I wasn’t getting anything out of it so I just said I’m buying a house, buying a house for me and my son”

“I felt that it gave me more freedom than an apartment; I also discovered that it cost less than having an apartment”

“It’s cheaper than renting... I thought it was a practical idea at the time... instead of just throwing your money into something where then you leave and have nothing, it seemed to make more sense”

“I was getting tired of getting disrespected by my landlord... and one dreary Saturday afternoon I happened to be looking through the nickel ads and one had this address”

The home becomes associated with emotional memories over time because its acts as a backdrop for the individual’s life. The home “is one of the greatest powers of integration for the thoughts, memories and dreams of mankind”, and as a result stands to gain significance over time (Bachelard, 1994: 6).

“My kids were raised here, my husband did a lot of work on it and it’s my life”

R: Owning a home gives me more freedom, more comfort

I: Do you still feel that way?

R: Oh yes, yes indeed, I have fought diligently to stay here. Last year they kept trying to put me into different kinds of homes for the elderly and I don't want that. I would prefer staying here until the final day comes, if that's at all possible.

Whether meaning is established by relationships that tie down an occupant to their space, or the home grows as a space of freedom, it is clear that a homeowner's relationship with their home becomes more intense over time.

Home as Prison

The following analysis of home as prison is based on the assertion that *humane conditions of confinement are still conditions of confinement*. A great deal of prison research has been dedicated to conceptualizing human beings as psychologically imprisoned by society. For example, according to Josh C. Turner (2006: 41), the infamous Stanford Prison Experiment (Haney, Banks & Zimbardo, 1973) seemed to find that “ordinary people assigned to the roles of prisoner and guard would naturally and automatically accept and enact these roles.” These findings and ensuing years of psychology made the individual a prisoner of social determinism (Turner, 2006). James Thompson (2004: 57) elaborates on the findings of Haney, Banks & Zimbardo (1973) asserting, “Prisons and punishment are performative. They construct special sites, appeal to certain audiences, involve ritualized acts and entertain of appall.” This body of scholarship has important implications for conceptualizing the home as a “set” for the performative aspects of life. And while research has yet to be done on the social

determinism enacted by and within the home, this analysis begins a discussion of the home as a material manifestation of identity, or perhaps the performance of identity. The home as a prison is wholly metaphorical and points to the ways in which a home – or a cell – are personalized spaces embedded in broader systems and physical structures of confinement.

Introducing the home as a prison is a bit more complex because it emerges as a confining space from the combination of an ideological attachment to the home and the burden associated with owning a physical structure as a financial investment. In some capacity, all of the testimony that proves the home as a sanctuary also stands as evidence of the home as a prison. As with the home as a sanctuary, there are different levels of confinement. The walls that establish privacy and protection also act as barriers to the outside world, fostering physical and emotional isolation. Secondly, the possessions inside and outside of the home that establish familiarity and represent expression, act as an increasing financial burden on the homeowner. Similar to the home itself, the maintenance of accumulated possessions ties a resident to their house. Finally, the physical and financial burden of owning a home in a gentrifying neighborhood limits the homeowner's mobility. Increasing property values make it difficult for the resident to compete with neighboring properties and thus restrict their ability to sell the home

Isolation

“When I grew up the neighborhood was taught... everybody looked out for you. On a day like today you would see kids all up and down the streets and you just don't see that

anymore. For one reason, its not safe, for another reason, a lot of people don't encourage their kids to go out because they just don't feel good about it"

Isolation occurs due to a perceived lack of neighborhood cohesion and a lack of neighborhood resources. The resident quoted above discussed at length the ways in which her experience growing up differed from her experience currently living in Cully. This is common for residents of gentrifying neighborhoods, and well established in media reports and academic literature on gentrification. The home is indicted as a space where people retreat in the absence of spending time with neighbors, but is ignored as a potential source of isolation.

I: Do you feel connected to you neighbors?

R: "No. I don't know them from a hole in the wall... no one has ever made the gesture of coming to see me or talk to me or whatever and I have really not been in shape to do it.

Multiple residents associated their poor connection to the neighborhood with a lack of mobility. Mobility was limited for a number of reasons, such as the financial and time restraints associated with maintaining a home.

I: Do you ever attend neighborhood association meetings?

R: I can barely keep my yard cut, I just don't have time.

"Property values are high and I have such a hard time keeping this home and I have no life, I can't afford an automobile – my van has been sitting here needing a new transmission for 3 years"

As illustrated above, residents make decisions that prioritize the maintenance of their home over other obligations, such as replacing the transmission of a vehicle, attending neighborhood association meetings, or paying vet bills as illustrated by a resident's quote in the *Possessions* subsection of ***Home as Sanctuary***. Homeowners who experience physical disabilities also struggled with poor mobility.

“Transportation is my biggest problem, I can’t ride the bus because it’s too painful. I have to go through ride connection, which requires a 4-day in advance request... I could utilize them more but isolation is a problem for me”

R: Both my sisters are living in the area

I: Do you see them?

R: No I don’t see any of them - mostly because of the transportation issue. If you notice on the list there, I also have vertigo, which makes it very difficult to go places.

R: I used to visit target quite a bit, but it’s gotten to a point where I can’t travel that far anymore.

Lack of and poor access to transportation cultivates isolation for elderly and disabled homeowners. Residents with physical and financial limitations are thus dependent on others for completing basic tasks such as going to the grocery store or medical appointments and those without strong support networks struggle with leaving the house. One resident utilizes the Veteran’s Association as well as an old housekeeper for getting around:

“They [V.A.] take me to all my medical appointments, which there are quite an abundance of. Other than the grocery store, I very seldom go anywhere else. Any shopping that I want to do, I do over the telephone”

“I have someone who is willing to take me to Winco, I go once a month and buy my entire months worth [of groceries]”

One resident explicitly noted his reliance on others for being able to participate in life outside of the home:

Lets face it, I am dependent, I am really dependent, I am dependent on my disability income, I am dependent on resources, I am dependent on the kindness of other strangers”

Residents with restricted mobility spend a majority of their time inside the home and consequently, most any interaction that *does* occur with the outside world still takes place from inside the house. One homeowner reflects on his physical limitations and subsequent isolation, saying, “Depression is a problem... I work hard at my thinking”. This same resident introduced the David Romprey warm line as yielding his primary contact with others. The hotline provides a space where people can call “just to talk... they are trained to affirm and validate one’s experiences and viewpoints and feelings and thoughts... they don’t help, they just listen”.

For homeowners with financial and/or physical restrictions, the home acts as a space of confinement. The same walls that instill a sense of privacy and protection also act as material and emotional barriers from the outside world. For some, the home is the

cause of isolation while for others, the home is simply a space where isolation is most intimately experienced.

Possessions

While possessions inside and outside of the home foster familiarity and ensure comfort for the occupant, they require physical and financial maintenance. Residents – particularly those who have become less able-bodied over time – expressed the burden of maintaining their personal assets.

“I used to have flower beds out front. I had three of them and I finally got to a point where I just couldn’t take care of them anymore. I used to have an electric train running through my backyard and I finally had to give it up last year because I couldn’t take care of it either.”

Possessions are an extension of the home and the identity of the homeowner. An inability to maintain possessions thus caused an overwhelming feeling that was directed at the home space in its entirety rather than the individual assets causing discomfort. The home transforms from a space of relaxation to a space of tension when the possessions adorning the space become a source of stress rather than expression.

“Furniture is highly overrated, I would be happy in a tiny house the size of my kitchen. All I need is a place for my bike, to put my guitar and pretty much that’s it except the basic essentials of life – something to cook with, something to wash with but mostly I live in that space anyway. I don’t really use the rest of the house, its just a place to

accumulate junk and to try to get rid of the junk and you know the yard is huge; it's a double lot so that's a lot of work. I pretty much hate being a homeowner"

For the homeowner quoted above, the accumulation of possessions acted as a hindrance for selling her home and leaving the neighborhood:

"That's just a big chore to sell a house, and so that's a big deterrent – it's kind of an overwhelming proposition to move... it's just too much work to be a homeowner, especially on a lot this size... you can't just shove the whole lot into a landfill and any kind of flat surface in the house is just covered in a week"

Residents who had boasted about the increasing pride of ownership within the neighborhood expressed similar anxieties over maintaining household assets.

"You can hear it, someone is sawing wood, someone is improving their property right now, there is constant improvement. It's constantly gotten better, cleaner and people are gaining pride in their homes."

"People generally take good care and care about their property."

Perhaps due to an internalization of perceived neighborhood aesthetic standards, residents felt personally responsible for maintaining their property. Those who were more physically able completed the required upkeep.

"Definitely a lot of up-keep, and I'm the only one doing it so you know, can't be getting lazy, yeah if I don't do it, it won't get done. I'm very depended on here so..."

On the other hand, those who lacked the financial and physical means of maintaining their properties relied on sparse neighborhood resources:

“You know I’ve remodeled two homes but I can’t mow the lawn now, I can’t do housework. There just aren’t resources for poor people to get help for those things...in terms of household work and yard work... very, very few and you have to be like a third of the median income or less than that.”

“I just want to have my house in order and clean and I can’t do that anymore and I can’t get the help to do that and I can’t do yard work anymore. It’s just getting harder to maintain my home and I don’t want to end up in a concrete floor studio apartment in an extra care facility but that’s where I’m headed to be honest”

For some, the inability to maintain personal possessions inside and outside the home transforms the household from a space of comfort and familiarity to a space of discomfort. For others, the same assets that cultivate refuge, also cultivate confinement by supplying the occupant with stimulation otherwise found outside the home; consider the resident quoted in the *Possessions* subsection of ***Home as Sanctuary*** who had three thousand DVDs and received up to seven magazines every day. Furthermore, possessions have the power to convert the home from a financial investment to a financial burden, limiting residents’ ability to build equity and wealth more generally. Possessions are difficult to divorce from the home, as they are an extension of the structure and the identity of the homeowner. Still, possessions are distinctly burdensome because they

exist in the resident's living space and thus impact the occupant more intimately than the house as a structural entity.

Financial

"I've been house broke ever since I moved into this house"

The home much like any financial investment requires continual maintenance. Otherwise, the value diminishes over time and transforms the home from a wealth-building entity to a wealth-building impediment. For homeowners in gentrifying neighborhoods, increasing property values and competition over housing accelerates this transformation. The home becomes an increasingly imprisoning asset over time when proper maintenance is untenable.

As illustrated in the *Financial* subsection of ***Home as Sanctuary***, Cully residents considered buying a home to be a step toward securing financial and personal stability. Homeowners reflected on their feelings at the time of the purchase, saying, "I felt that it gave me more freedom" and "It's cheaper than renting... I thought it was a practical idea at the time". One resident, who was quoted, "I got it in my mind that I wanted to buy a house because I was 50 and didn't have any investments" reflected on feeling disillusioned by the idea of homeownership:

"It was based on faulty thinking, you know this idea that people who own homes are more stable and have a life... and uh, also that it was an investment. It's not an

investment... you can't touch the equity. I just knew nothing about financial security or personal finance and what made a responsible person. I just never had those."

Other residents echoed the feeling of being trapped by owning a home. Still, having kept the house was regarded as a point of pride. The resident quoted above discussed a time during which he lived on 15% of his net income and frequently visited food banks.

"It was hell, pure unadulterated hell, but I saved the house, it was all I could do"

Another resident discussed her life after having lost her husband in 1999:

"After I lost my husband, I really haven't done much of anything which may not be a good thing but that's just the way I am. I mean I have enough energy to work and try to maintain my house and that's about all I can do"

Residents become confined by the home because it is their primary and often only, investment. As a result, homeowners work desperately to save the investment, which becomes increasingly strenuous as the surrounding neighborhood gentrifies. The resident who once lived off of 15% of his net income to save his house said he is currently considering moving into the shed in his backyard and renting out the main house "just to be able to live... just to be able to stay".

As a neighborhood gentrifies, competition over housing increases and long-term homeowners experience the increasing financial burden of maintaining their property

value. Homeowners are often forcefully displaced and newer, more expensive units replace their homes:

“There is mold in some houses and that qualifies you to tear the house down. For example there’s one lady, she lives on the corner in a 15,000 square foot lot, well her house has mold in the basement so it can be torn down and they’ll build 5 homes there or 15 town homes and that’s a problem all over the city – homes being destroyed; 400 in the last 10 years have been torn down, I heard that number last week.”

“Unfortunately the house just south of me, there were two homes and both of those homes have since been town down and there are models of what the potential land owner would like to do with it now and that’s to build two new homes there, one is like the estimated cost is 675,000 dollars and the other estimated cost is over 700,000 dollars”

The replacement of affordable housing units with expensive housing units affects both the financial landscape as well as the cultural fabric of the neighborhood. This jeopardizes the ability for some to stay in place:

“...So for homes to be built like that in a community, it will increase your property taxes. . Property taxes in this neighborhood are already about 4000 dollars/year. And to me, if I have 700,000 to buy a home, they may come in and make demands for improvements that the people here now aren’t comfortable with. For instance they want sidewalks, well I’m happy we don’t have sidewalks because it decreases the foot traffic in our neighborhood.

And our neighborhood is a lot better than some of the other in the neighborhood. So, you know, we just really cringe when we see that potentially happen.”

Alternatively, homeowners experience forced non-displacement because their house cannot compete with the current housing market and they are unable to sell:

I: How long do you intend to stay in Cully?

R: Rest of my life. I don't have any choice. This house made 30,000 last year, just being here. Did you know Portland is the number one city in the country for the rate of property value increase?

Vulnerable homeowners in gentrifying neighborhoods are often confronted with the decision to either hold onto a losing investment or be foreclosed upon.

“I don't plan on going anywhere, as long as I can keep my house. I'm trying to work with Wells Fargo so they can do something with my mortgage because it's just way too high. I don't want to sell it or anything, I don't have any plans on going anywhere but if I cant continue to afford it shoot I might be in foreclosure.”

In either case, the home, which was initially purchased with the intention of gaining freedom and establishing security, imprisons the homeowner.

Maintaining the value of a home requires periodic maintenance either directly or indirectly by the homeowner. In the case that the homeowner is physically unable to perform the required upkeep – consider the replacement of a roof or any other large-scale project – they must have the financial means of hiring someone else to do the work. For

vulnerable populations, who are often low-income and/or physically disabled, maintaining the physical integrity of the house becomes onerous, if not impossible. As a result, residents live with unhealthy and unsafe housing conditions so they are able to stay in place. Eron Riddle, Project Lead for the ***Living Cully Weatherization and Home Repair Project 2.0*** reflects on their findings during initial home evaluations:

“What we found with year one was that we didn’t do a whole lot of weatherization because we were using up funds making the house safe and livable for tenants, so in my opinion we kind of went in doe eyed, thinking we’d weatherize a bunch of homes and save them a couple hundred bucks in utilities... it wasn’t because of lack of pride in ownership... there was pride in ownership, there was just the big things – roofs, windows, mold, dry rot, asbestos, people were living with this stuff because they couldn’t afford to not”

The house becomes an imprisoning asset when residents’ decisions are informed and/or limited by owning their home. Vulnerable homeowners in Cully are being confined to their homes by an increasingly competitive neighborhood housing market. Even more unsettling is the fact that the residents who experience involuntary non-displacement are often forced into living with health-threatening housing conditions just to keep a roof over their heads.

Discussion

Although journalists and scholars alike recognize gentrification as a process that impacts the housing market, the way gentrification is experienced inside the home has been ignored. The home is widely represented as a space where people either live happily or a space from which people are displaced, but is overlooked as a space that is in and of itself vulnerable to change. As a result, anti-gentrification schemes have targeted the neighborhood as the primary spatial scale of intervention – implementing rent caps, increased social housing subsidies, and non-development zones, to restrict the influx of upper-income inhabitants – and the experiences of homeowners have been excluded from the debate.

For vulnerable residents of gentrifying neighborhoods, the home acts as both a sanctuary space and an imprisoning space. This examination of the home as a changing and transformative realm serves to redirect the focus of gentrification theorists away from “neighborhood” onto homeowners.

The *Living Cully Weatherization and Home Repair Project 2.0* is an example of an alternative approach to mitigating displacement of vulnerable residents. Living Cully targeted homeowners specifically and acknowledged the importance of the home space by funding the critical repairs of houses vulnerable to foreclosure. In doing so, Living Cully acknowledged the home space as both vulnerable and important for establishing social and emotional stability. By prioritizing the homeowner, Living Cully’s weatherization projects bolstered homeowner stability as well as the preservation of both

affordable housing units and the cultural fabric of the neighborhood – which is created and sustained by long-term, home owning residents.

Introducing the importance of the home into gentrification literature iterates and expands on Lees (1994) geographies of gentrification. To properly combat the harmful impacts of gentrification, the process must be understood as place-specific, as having scalar impacts *and* as a process which impacts people radically differently. The home offers a compelling unit for analysis because experiences inside the home mirror broader economic and social restructurings. Thus, conceptualizing the home as both a sanctuary and a prison allows the imagining of gentrification as being *both* emancipatory and revanchist, and as a phenomenon that must be addressed based on characteristics of the affected population. An examination of the way residents of gentrifying neighborhoods experience the home furthermore contributes to feminist geographers' critique of a humanistic interpretation of home. Residents' testimony illustrated the ways in which home acts as a complex space – one that is both emancipatory and confining – and these reflections stand to dissolve the notion of the home as an ideal space.

The *Living Cully Weatherization and Home Repair Project 2.0* stands as one anti-gentrification intervention that effectively prioritized the homeowner and mitigated involuntary displacement by reinterpreting sustainability to serve those most in need. The project was developed in a self-proclaimed “green” city, in which the development goals revolve around promoting sustainability, livability and equity. It has become increasingly easy to take for granted those terms, and to assume that naming them as goals will produce happy, healthy communities. But as I have shown in the preceding evaluation of

the Cully neighborhood, facilitating healthy neighborhoods is not as easy as building parks and putting in bike paths, or zoning the perfect ratio of commercial and residential land. Instead, it requires a compassionate and thoughtful investigation of the needs of the neighborhood's most vulnerable members and recognizing how sustainability projects impact long-standing residents. Gentrification manifests in radically different ways – it is not simply an issue of preserving affordable housing amidst neighborhood change. It is a phenomenon that reaches beyond the neighborhood scale to affect the day-to-day lives of individual residents. Too long has gentrification been conceived of as a singular economic process whereby low-income peoples are displaced due to inevitable development; too long have numbers and figures been used to simplify the lives of vulnerable populations. Resisting social harms associated with gentrification requires humanizing those who are being harmed, and the place to start is in their primary dwelling – the home.

My hope is that my research findings have demonstrated the complexity of gentrification, that they've brought to light the way complicated processes become too simplified by the language or the frameworks we impart to discuss them. One neighborhood is not just one neighborhood, it is a messy coalescence of families and friends and social groups, all of whom experience gentrification differently because they experience life differently. There is no one correct theory of gentrification and my hope is that I've shown how when we really indulge in that complexity, we stop limiting our strategies of intervention because we stop trying to place people's experiences into pre-existing categories.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Test-in Survey

Cully Wx 2.0 Participant Intake Survey and Script

Hi, remember me I'm _____. How are you? We received your application and it is being processed. Today, we are going to be doing two things – someone is going to be looking at the structure of your home to determine what work may need to be done, for example, if your windows need to be sealed or insulation needs to be in your attic.

While he/she is doing this, I would like to ask you a few survey questions about living in the Cully neighborhood. There are about 16 questions, and it should take about 15 minutes. The purpose of the questions is to help us better understand how your home might be impacting your health, and what you think about the Cully neighborhood. This information will be used by different organizations like NAYA that work in Cully, to better understand people's thoughts and needs about living here. None of your individual answers will be connected to your personal information, and the surveys will be kept confidential. You don't have to answer every question, but everything you provide us will be very helpful. Do you have a few minutes now to talk with me?

Note to interviewer:

- *Please read the questions verbatim*
- *Please read the choices verbatim when appropriate*
- *Please probe for the answer and take notes if applicable, but help the participant choose an answer for each question*

Name:

Address:

Project ID:

Phone Number:

(READ) First I'm going to ask you some background questions.

1. How long have you lived in the Cully neighborhood? Would you say:

- ☐ Less than one year
- ☐ 1-3 years
- ☐ 4-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years

☐ more than 10 years

2. How long have you lived in this home?

☐ Less than one year

☐ 1-3 years

☐ over 3-5 years

☐ 5-10 years

☐ more than 10 years

3. Which of the following are reasons why you live in the Cully neighborhood? (***Read each of the options and check all that apply. If the box is not checked, then the answer was no***)

☐ Family

☐ Friends

☐ Affordable housing

☐ Proximity to Job

☐ Availability and frequency of transportation

☐ Other Wanted to live in NE

4. How long are you intending to stay in Cully? Would you say:

☐ Less than one year

☐ 1-3 years

☐ 4-5 years

☐ 6-10 years

☐ More than 10 years

5. If you are thinking of leaving Cully in the next year, why?

☐ Family

☐ Friends

☐ Affordable housing

☐ Neighborhood changing

☐ Proximity to Job

☐ Availability and frequency of transportation

☐ Other

(READ) Now I want to ask about the health of your family.

6. How would you rate the health of your family?

☐ Excellent

☐ Good

☐ Fair

- ☐ Poor
☐ Bad

7. Do you feel that living in this house is affecting your health? For example, some people have had problems in their home that have made them sick, like having mold or a lot of moisture that can make breathing difficult.

- ☐ Strongly agree
☐ Agree
☐ Uncertain
☐ No

8. Does anyone in the home have asthma or another ongoing respiratory issue?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

9. If yes, have they been hospitalized or been to the emergency room in the last year for that breathing problem?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

(READ) Next, I want to talk with you about your house and the neighborhood.

10. Have you put off taking care of major repairs and maintenance of your home because of cost, such as a leak in the roof or crack in the foundation?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

List them: roof, crawl space

11. Are you able to maintain your home at a temperature that is comfortable for you throughout the year?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

12a. If “No,” why not? For heat to stay in the house it has to be continuously on.

(READ) Now I want to ask you about if you feel connected to the Cully neighborhood, for example

12. How connected do you feel to the Cully neighborhood?

- ☐ Very connected
☐ Connected
☐ Somewhat connect

☐ Not connected

What about living in this neighborhood do you feel good about?

What would you like to see change in this neighborhood?

13. What, if any, are the different organizations, agencies, or places here in Cully that you frequent?

(Check all that apply—a blank means “no.”)

- ☐ Church
- ☐ Child's school
- ☐ Small local businesses
- ☐ Salon or barbershop
- ☐ Bar/restaurants/coffee shops
- ☐ Daycare
- ☐ Grocery Stores
- ☐ Sports activities
- ☐ Parks
- ☐ The Cully Neighborhood Association
- ☐ Gathering places of friends and family
- ☐ Other Gartners Market

14. Do you feel like:

Yes No

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | People in this neighborhood are willing to help one another |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | People in this neighborhood know one another |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | This is a good community to raise children in |

15. Do you have people nearby who you can count on if you need a little help?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

16. Do you have people nearby who you can count on in an emergency?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me. The information you provided will be very useful in helping organizations that provide services in Cully to improve the services we provide. Do you have any other thoughts or questions you want to add?

Appendix B: Test-out Survey

Cully Weatherization 2.0 Test out survey

Name:

Address:

Project ID:

Phone Number:

Date:

(READ) Now that the work is done on your house, I'd like to ask you a few questions. Some of these questions you've been asked before.

17. How long are you intending to stay in Cully? Would you say:

- ☐ Less than one year (Go to Question #2)
- ☐ 1-3 years (Skip to #3)
- ☐ 4-5 years (Skip to #3)
- ☐ 6-10 years (Skip to #3)
- ☐ More than 10 years (Skip to #3)

18. If you are thinking of leaving Cully in the next year, why?

- ☐ Family
- ☐ Friends
- ☐ Affordable housing
- ☐ Neighborhood changing
- ☐ Proximity to Job
- ☐ Availability and frequency of transportation
- ☐ Other

(READ) Now I want to ask about the health of your family.

19. How would you rate the health of your family?

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor
- ☐ Bad

If family health is poor or bad please
explain: _____

20. Do you feel that living in this house is affecting your family's health? For example, some people have had problems in their home that have made them sick, like having mold or a lot of moisture that can make breathing difficult.

- ☐ Strongly agree
☐ Agree
☐ Uncertain
☐ No

(READ) Next, I want to talk with you about your house and the neighborhood.

21. How helpful was it for you to get an assessment of the needed repairs on your house?

- ☐ Not helpful
☐ Somewhat helpful
☐ Helpful
☐ Very Helpful

Please explain

22. Did you learn things about your home and your health that you did not know before?

7. Overall, how **satisfied** were you with program staff interactions during:

	Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	Very
Initial Contact	1	2	3	4	5		
Home Assessment			1	2	3	4	5
Bid proposal			1	2	3	4	5
Contractor work period			1	2	3	4	5
Comments:							

8. Overall, how **comfortable** did you feel during the process of:

	Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	Very
Initial Contact	1	2	3	4	5		
Home Assessment			1	2	3	4	5
Bid proposal			1	2	3	4	5
Contractor work period			1	2	3	4	5
Comments:							

9. Overall, how much **control** did you feel over **decisions** and events during:

	Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	Very
Initial Contact	1	2	3	4	5		

Home Assessment	1	2	3	4	5
Bid proposal	1	2	3	4	5
Contractor work period	1	2	3	4	5

Comments:

10. Overall, how **empowering** did you find each of the following interactions:

	Not at all	1	2	3	4	5 Very
Initial Contact	1	2	3	4	5	
Home Assessment		1	2	3	4	5
Bid proposal		1	2	3	4	5
Contractor work period		1	2	3	4	5

Comments:

11. Overall, did you feel like the process was easy or difficult to navigate?

- ☐ Very hard
☐ Not very easy
☐ Easy
☐ Very easy

Please explain

12. How satisfied are you with the construction work that was completed on your home?

- ☐ Not satisfied
☐ Somewhat satisfied
☐ Satisfied
☐ Very Satisfied

Please explain

13. While we don't have funds currently, if there was additional work that could not be addressed with this project, do you want to find a way to address the other needs in your home?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Please explain

14. Would you recommend this project to others in the neighborhood? Why or why not?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Please explain

15. Do you feel that you will be better able to keep a comfortable temperature in your home after the repairs were made?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Not sure (or Don't Know)

If "No," why not?

16. How has the following changed as a result of the repairs?

	Much worse	Somewhat worse	No change	Somewhat better	Much better	Not applicable
<input type="checkbox"/> Mold	1	2	3	4	5	9
<input type="checkbox"/> Dampness	1	2	3	4	5	9
<input type="checkbox"/> Comfort	1	2	3	4	5	9
<input type="checkbox"/> Temperature	1	2	3	4	5	9
<input type="checkbox"/> Other Quieter	1	2	3	4	5	

9

Comments:

(READ) **Now I want to ask you about your connections to where you live.**

17. What about living in this neighborhood do you feel good about? (Probe homeowner about their answer)

18. What would you like to see change in this neighborhood? ? (Probe homeowner about their answer).

19. How connected do you feel to the Cully neighborhood?

- ☐ Very connected
☐ Connected
☐ Somewhat connect
☐ Not connected

(If applicable) it appears connectedness to the neighborhood has changed, can you tell us why?

20. Through your participation in this project, have you learned about anything or any organizations in your community that you didn't already know about?

- ☐ Yes

☐ No
Please explain

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me. The information you provided will be very useful in helping organizations that provide services in Cully to improve the services we provide. Do you have any other thoughts or questions you want to add? The information you provided will be kept confidential and not linked to your name.

21. Would you be willing to let us check in with you again in a year to see how things are going?

☐ Yes
☐ No