

Gentrification and Health: Moving toward community action

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**Boston Housing Authority
Center for Community Engagement and Civil Rights
Resident Empowerment Coalition/REACH Project
Fall Summit
Saturday, October 29, 2016**

Overview

- Background
- Findings from an exploratory study of gentrification and health
- Implications and next steps

Gentrification



\$4,000

Listing no longer available

4 beds 3 baths 1,600 sqft

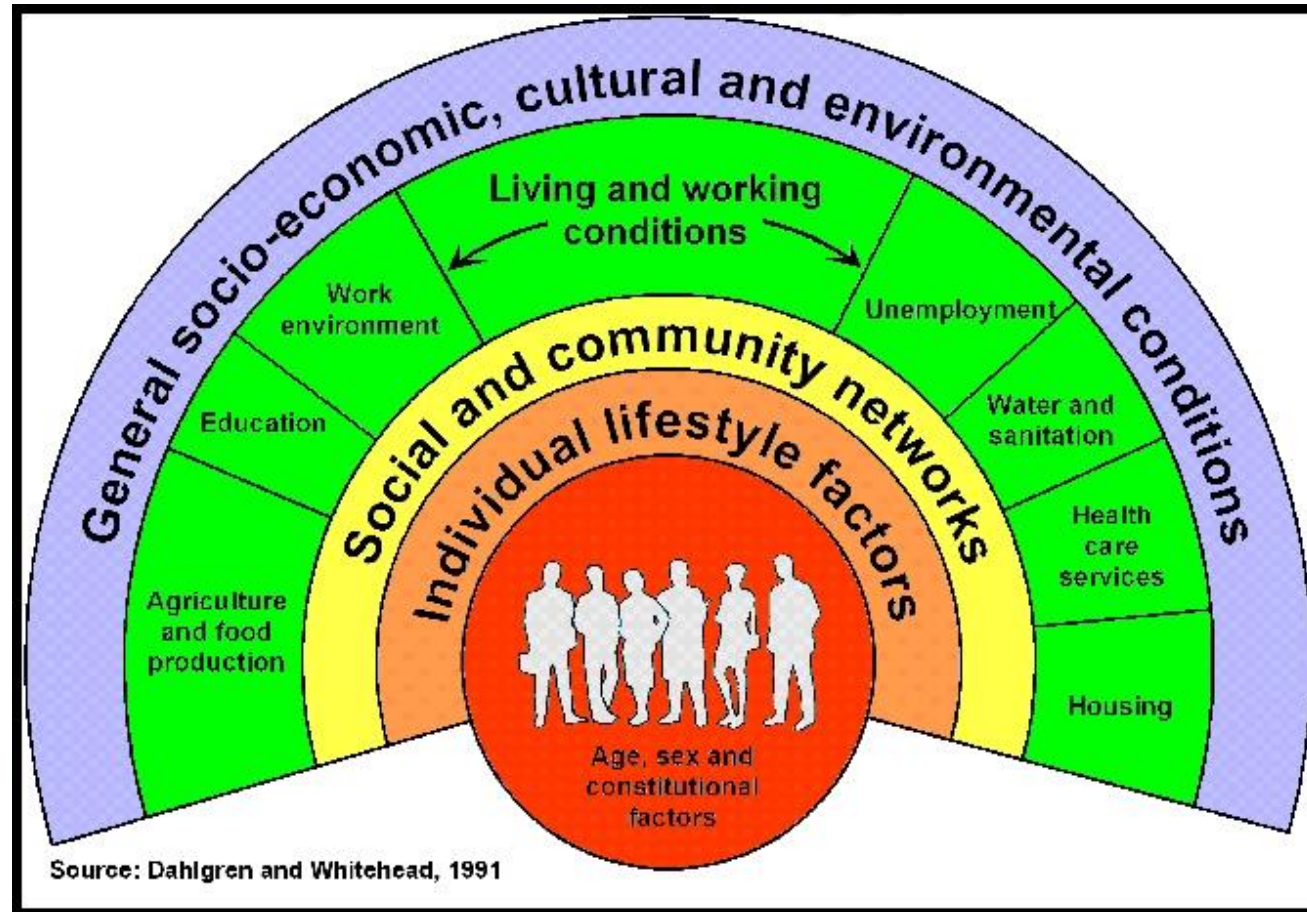
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 Townhouse for Rent

149 Cedar Street #1A
149 Cedar Street
Boston, MA 02119

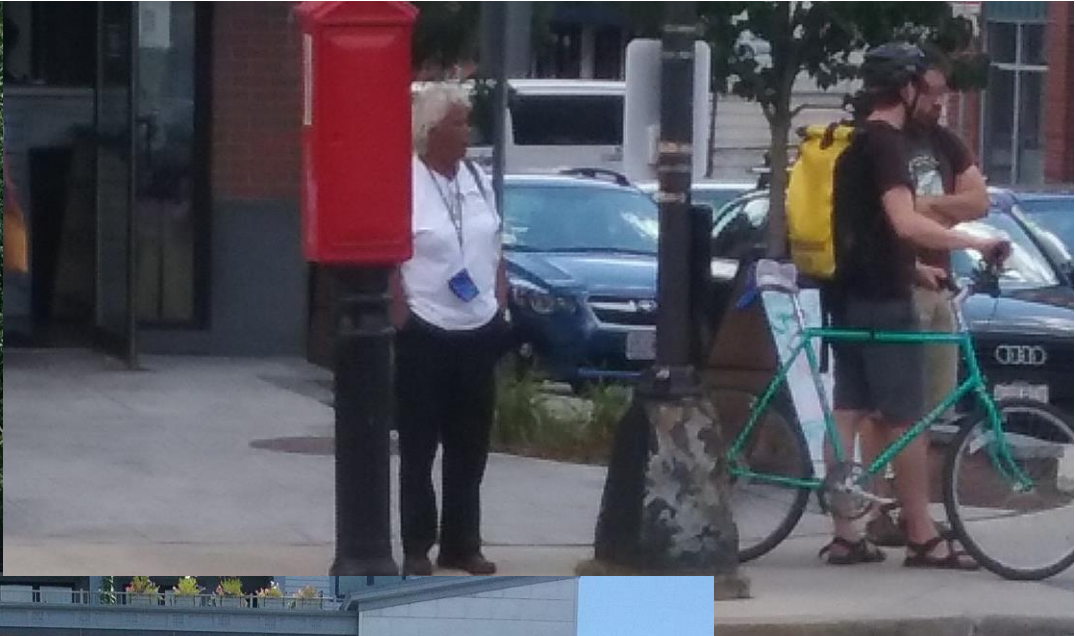
What do we know about the health effects of gentrification?



Research and Action: An Exploratory Study of Latino Immigrants' Perceptions of Gentrification

- Community-Academic Research Partnership
- Interviews with residents and business owners (n=16)
- Two groups discussions
- Visual ethnography
- Community Forum





Why now? Who are we cleaning up for?

- *I think slight improvements, but the improvements aren't necessarily to benefit the people who are in the community but improvements to benefit the members of the community who will be moving in soon.*
- *You start to think, the neighborhood is getting more beautiful, who's gonna get kicked out now? It bums me out... Neighborhood improvement should not lead to displacing the residents to make that community a desirable place to live.*

Those who fought for the community are suddenly being pushed out

- *A lot of times the neighborhoods are improving because of really great community organizing... And ... all of a sudden it becomes more desirable, those who didn't want to live there before that had more money, more access to resources, suddenly said, 'oh! You guys made this place a really nice place to live, let me buy your house from under you.*
- *It is not fair because we have been organizing and working in this neighborhood for the last 25 years to create stable communities and then somebody is coming from outside of the neighborhood to displace low-income families.*
- *Families who have literally held this community down post burning of Roxbury and Dudley, those families who have given so much are no longer able to afford to live there, it's impossible.*

Overcrowding and displacement

- *They're doubled up or moving out.*
- *People double up, and then people are on the move, being pushed from one area to the next and sometimes out of the city altogether.*

The Mental Cost of Displacement

If you can no longer afford to live where you have been living you have to figure out how you... have to figure out how you can afford to live somewhere else, and I think that's a huge stress factor on people, especially if you have to pick up a second job or... you have to move further away and...your cost of public transportation goes up, you know it just impacts every aspect of their lives but I think the stress of it is a huge factor that is underestimated... Their social network, in terms of their family and friends, people that would otherwise be supportive to them not having access to that.

Stress and Loss of Social Supports

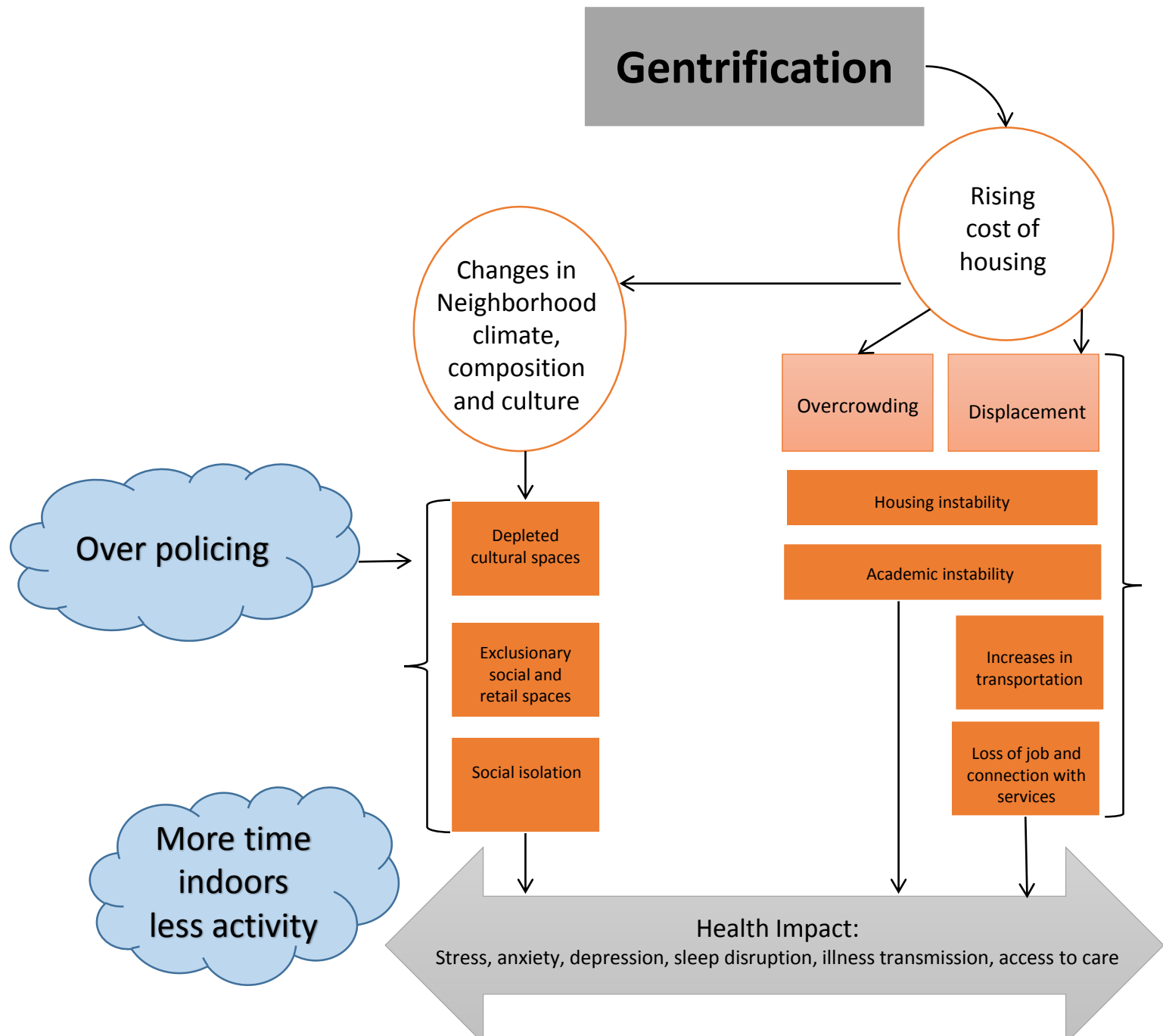
- *Some may well have some mental health challenges before experiencing housing insecurity but absolutely being housing insecure exacerbates and traumatizes people. ...Families are coming in who are so traumatized. I want to stress the mental health issue because I think that gets ignored.*
- *I think the main negative would be the stress of leaving a neighborhood where presumably one has a social network and set of supports.*
- *They have to go out of the city in places where they don't have any opportunities, they don't have transportation, no hospital, no school, so this creates some kind of real problem for a lot of low income families because they become to be very sick, emotionally sick, and they lose jobs...*

Loss of Cultural Landmarks

In the case of Jamaica Plain, we had the replacement of a store that served a largely Latino community ...replaced by a Whole Foods.

... the feel of the place has changed dramatically. The town space, the use of outdoor space, it's a very different feeling on the street...and I know people feel like they're not at home anymore in their home....





Gentrification y la salud

En esta última década, ha habido un cambio demográfico y cultural en Boston. Muchos están hablando sobre *gentrification*.

¿Qué significa esto para usted?

Le invitamos a una conversación comunitaria sobre el impacto de *gentrification*

25 de marzo del 2016, 11am a 1 pm
SkyLab, Bruce Bolling Building, Dudley Square

El Centro de Desarrollo Dominicano compartirá los resultados de una evaluación llevado a cabo en colaboración con *Boston University School of Social Work* y *Tufts University, Public Health and Community Medicine*.

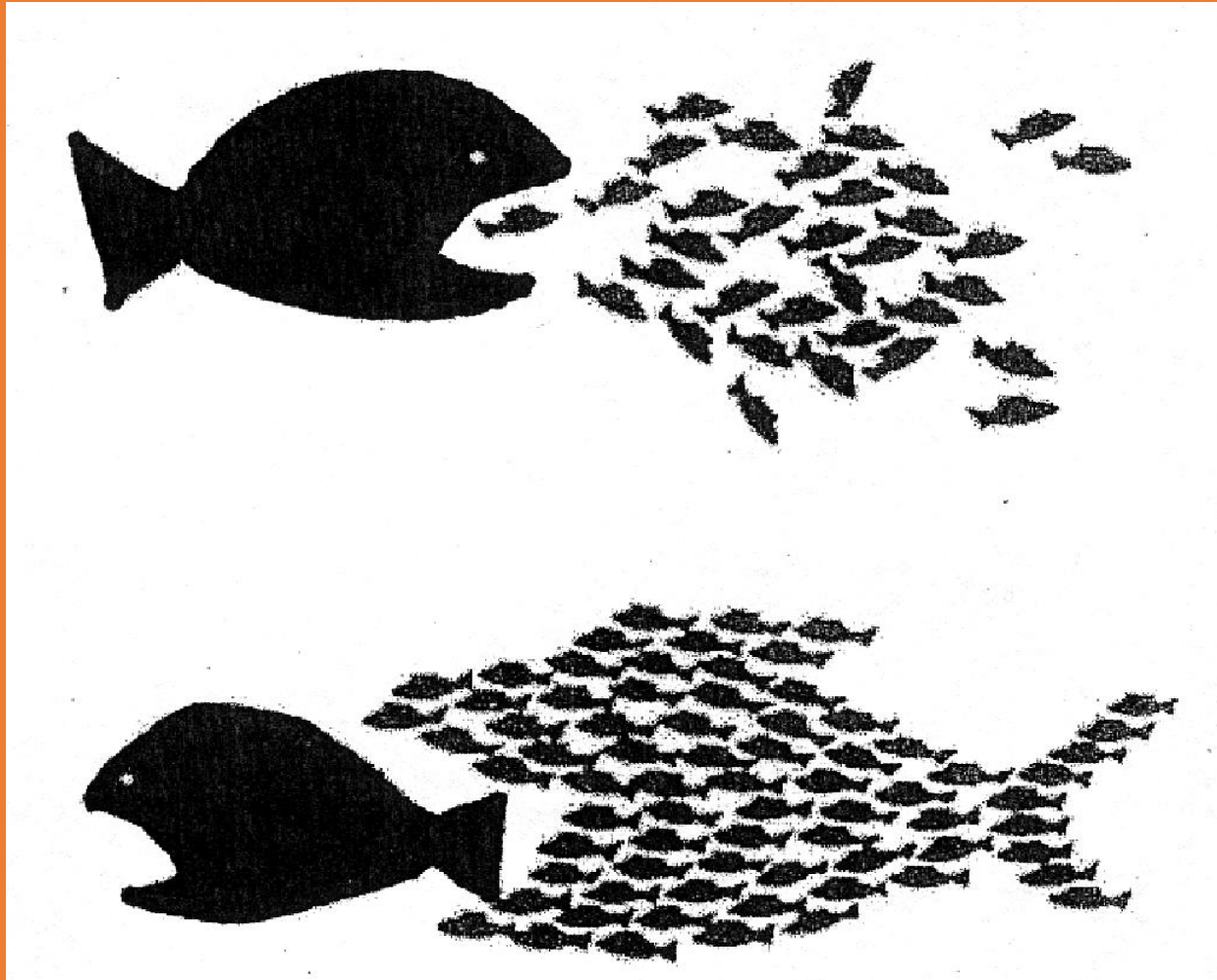
This work was funded by the Tisch College Community Research Center at Tufts
Event Sponsors: Boston University School of Social Work and SkyLab

Forum Themes

- Coalitions building between organizations, municipal leaders and residents.
- Recognizing social and cultural displacement in addition to physical displacement.
- Including residents, especially those who are marginalized such as low-income individuals, elders, youth and people of color, in the decision-making process.
- Affordable housing policies.
- Incentivizing landlords that subsidize rent costs.
- Working more closely with developers.

What can residents do?....

Organize!



Organize!

- Form an action group
- Join an action group
- Be present
- Be visible
- Make your voice heard
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MQiv5TlyCEQ>



Consider the following...

- How is gentrification impacting you, your loved ones, the broader community?
- What are ways you might see yourself and/or your neighbor become more involved?