Reinventing Older Communities Through Mixed-Income Development: What Are We Learning From Chicago’s Public Housing Transformation?

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Mixed-Income Possibilities

1) Impact on people (low-income families)
   - Quality of life
   - Social Networks
   - Social Control
   - Behavior and Role Modeling
   - Local Power and Influence

2) Impact on place
   - Physical revitalization: social costs ↓, tax base ↑
   - Win-win: market rate and affordable housing
Mixed-Income Limitations

- Dramatic loss of affordable units; Public housing can be well-run (Vale)
- Focus on attracting middle-class; deficit perspective of families in poverty (Pattillo)
- Potential downsides of mixed-income developments: relative deprivation, stigma, loss of local power (Briggs)
- Does not address macrostructural causes of urban poverty, including structural racism (Turner)
- Market-driven approach; public sector relinquishing responsibility to house the poor (Fraser)
HOPE VI Background

- Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere
- 1992 - 10 yr/$5 billion
- As of 2006, 236 HOPE VI grants in 127 cities
  - 149,000 units demolished
  - 49,000 units to be developed
- Challenges: loss of units, delays, low return rates
- Impacts: revitalization, relocatee’s quality of life
- House bill H.R. 3524 approved January 2008
National experience thus far

- Very complex to finance and operationalize
- Mixed-income developments can be successfully marketed to higher-income residents
- Relatively high levels of overall resident satisfaction
- Some social friction, levels of social interaction are low
My Research Questions

1) What is the process of creating and sustaining a mixed-income development?

2) What are the experiences and outcomes for public housing residents and residents of other income levels?

3) What is the nature of social relations and community use and engagement?
Background Context: Chicago

- Plan for Transformation – 1999 - 2014
  - 15 years, $1.5 billion (plus)
  - Demolish 22,000 units
  - Build or renovate 25,000
  - 11 new MI developments
    - 17,000 total units, including
    - 7,700 for public housing
## Qualitative Data

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>MI Sites</th>
<th>Sample</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developers and social service providers</td>
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<td>Public housing relocated residents</td>
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<td>Jazz on the Boulevard residents</td>
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<td>3-site case study: resident interviews</td>
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<td>3-site case study: stakeholder interviews</td>
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<td>3-site case study: meeting observations</td>
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Early Status and Insights

- **Development process**
  - Complexity of development process
  - Strength of early market demand
  - Impact of current housing market crisis
  - Challenge of recruiting public housing residents

- **Early resident experiences**
  - Improved quality of life
  - Tensions around use of public space
  - Low levels of social interaction
  - Tenure-segregated governance structures
  - Multiple relevant forms of “mix”
Implications

- Who benefits: support for relocators and returners
- Balancing screening with inclusion
- Support “housing plus” strategies
- Role of non-profit developers
- Promoting and sustaining well-functioning developments
  - Safety
  - Inclusive governance
  - Neighborhood amenities
- Building housing vs. Building community
  - Design
  - Property management
  - Inclusive services and amenities, community outreach