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Housing Equity in Golden Gate Village

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Housing Equity in Golden Gate Village

By

Nicole Ivory White

A culminating senior thesis submitted to the faculty of Dominican University of California in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Social Justice.

Dominican University of California

San Rafael, CA

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Abstract

For generations, the African American community has faced many forms of housing discrimination that have created major inequalities in their everyday lived experiences (Lockwood, 2020). This study explores the long lasting effects of discriminatory housing policies in creating disparate housing conditions within the public housing community in Marin City called Golden Gate Village, as well as the role of the Marin Housing Authority in practices of displacement and neglect. The methodology for the study included seven different interviews with Golden Gate Village residents to obtain knowledge about the community as well as grasp an understanding of the lived experiences of the community members. The findings from the research demonstrate that discriminatory housing policies have caused the residents of Golden Gate Village to form a close and strong community for survival throughout generations. In addition, the findings illustrate how the practices of the Marin Housing Authority that make housing less accessible to the residents and lead to displacement negatively impact the sense of community in Golden Gate Village. These practices include a mixed income housing plan that would displace some of the current low income residents, the skipping of section 8 vouchers from the Marin City area code, and the overhousing and subsequent eviction of Golden Gate Village residents. In addition, the Marin Housing Authority's active neglect of Golden Gate Village has led to various inadequate housing conditions among the community that negatively impact the resident's everyday experiences in their homes. Despite generations of neglect and efforts to displace residents of Golden Gate Village, Black people in Marin City have formed a strong, tight knit community as a means to combat the oppressive and discriminatory housing practices that they have experienced throughout the years.

Acknowledgements

I would like to recognize my aunt, Royce McLemore. She is a resident and advocate of Golden Gate Village. She has made amazing efforts in the community and has helped me along the way while conducting my research project. Overall, she has been a major inspiration for me in the work that I am doing. She is an important presence within my life, along with my social justice work.

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Literature Review

In December of 2022, a Black couple in Marin City who was attempting to sell their house found themselves to be victims of discrimination (Johns et al. 2021). After getting their house appraised and receiving a relatively low appraisal rate, they had some friends of theirs who were White act as if they were the owners who were trying to sell the house and had it reappraised. When the White couple got the appraisal, the value of the house skyrocketed and rose by over half a million dollars. The original appraiser greatly undervalued the cost of the house simply because the owners were Black. These types of instances are generally thought to be something of the past, but racism in the housing industry is still very prominent.

In this study, I explore the effects of housing discrimination on the African American community with a specific focus on the housing disparity in Marin County, California. My research explores the relationship between discriminatory housing practices and the effects that these practices have on the predominantly Black and low income public housing community of Golden Gate Village, located in Marin City, California.

In the following sections I discuss five major themes in the academic literature regarding housing inequality. The first theme that I cover is the process of residential segregation through discriminatory practices including redlining and housing covenants. I will be looking at how these processes segregated the Black community and severely limited their access to homeownership. The next theme that I discuss is the role of public housing in creating disparate housing conditions for African Americans and the barriers that public housing residents face, such as the lack of affordable housing and inadequate housing conditions. My next theme will explore displacement and the leading factors that cause displacement, including the demolition of public housing, gentrification, and rising rental prices. I will then turn to the historical

background of Marin City, and explain how redlining, neglect, and displacement continue to impact the community of Golden Gate Village where I conducted my research.

Residential Segregation

Discriminatory housing policies have played a key role in creating disparate housing conditions and limiting the Black community's access to homeownership. This process is very evident in the history of Marin City and the community that I am currently working with. Two major processes that created the segregated and disparate conditions that are seen today in Golden Gate Village, as well as in Black communities throughout the country, were the existence of housing covenants and the practice of redlining.

Housing covenants were contracts that were formed within home associations among homeowners and real estate investors. They mainly operated in suburban areas with the purpose of maintaining all white segregated neighborhoods. They excluded Black people from residing in their neighborhoods by actively prohibiting the resale of houses to people of color. The Federal Housing Administration (FHA), along with realtors who complied with the policies of the FHA, would only sell houses to White families with the agreement that they would only resell their houses to other White people, thereby excluding people of color from purchasing homes in the area. The practice of these restrictive housing covenants created racially segregated conditions which concentrated Black people into certain demographic areas and neighborhoods.

These housing covenants were common in Marin during the mid 1900's and concentrated the Black community of Marin County into Marin City. Moore et al. (2019) explains that even as late as the year 1960 the Marin County Committee on Racial Discrimination reported that housing covenants were still in use to pressure White families who

did not wish to maintain segregation. They did this by ensuring that the families they sold houses to would not resell to people of color.

In addition to housing covenants, redlining created a major gap in access to opportunities for African Americans from the year 1934 to 1968 (Lockwood, 2020). The Legal Information Institute at Cornell University defines redlining as a discriminatory housing policy in which the Federal Housing Administration color coded maps of cities to mark their reliability. Lockwood (2020) explains that areas where majority Black communities resided were color coded red to indicate that homes in these areas were risky investments, while majority White communities were colored in green to indicate that they were safe investments. The ranking started with green which was seen as most desirable and meant that a neighborhood was only resided by White people. This was followed by blue which meant that the area was relatively close to areas where people of color resided but was still somewhat desirable. Next came the color yellow, which meant that an area was declining, referring to the fact that there was an increase in the presence of people of color. Lastly, houses in the red section of the map were deemed a hazardous investment, which meant that the neighborhood had a strong presence of people of color. The neighborhoods that were coded in red were then discriminated against by banks and the people who resided there would not receive mortgages or housing loans. Since housing mortgages played a significant role in acquiring homeownership, Black people were excluded from this process and as a result saw a much smaller rate of homeownership. The effects of this are still seen today, as Black people are more likely to live in poverty and rent homes and less likely to own their homes. The Black population currently has the lowest rate of homeownership within Marin County. According to Race Counts (2022) only 26.1% of Black people own homes within Marin County, compared to White people who have a homeownership rate of 69.1% This is

relevant because homeownership plays a huge role in creating generational wealth and achieving upward mobility.

Public Housing

In recent years, renters in California have experienced a disadvantage in housing prices. Multiple legislative policies that were passed in the 70's have enabled landlords to raise rental prices and decreased renters protections for affordable housing (Chew, 2020). As a result, rental prices in California have gone up exponentially and this has especially disadvantaged marginalized communities such as the Black and low income communities because they have lower home ownership rates. Chew (2020) examines the rise in lack of affordable housing in California, as well as the disinvestment in public housing in California and provides examples of policies that have made low income renters more vulnerable to high rental prices. One of these harmful policies includes the Ellis Act which allowed landlords to evict renters from rent stabilized units in order to convert rentals into condos and businesses. This was followed by other legislation such as the Costa Hawkins Rental Housing Act, along with a series of California Supreme Court rulings, that weakened rent control by prohibiting localities from establishing strong rent control or extending rent stabilization to single family homes. This has resulted in a major push of a large portion of the African American community who can not afford rental units into public housing. Crispell (2021) also discusses how the lack of affordable housing has negatively impacted the Black community in Marin City from 1970 to today by displacing a large portion of the community. During the 1970's rental prices began to increase and this forced a lot of the Black population out of Marin City into lower income areas. As a result, the majority of the Black population that remained in Marin City now resides in Golden Gate Village public housing (Golden Gate Village, n.d.).

The Institute for Research on Poverty (2019) explains how public housing was originally created as a way to maintain segregated living conditions among the African American and White community. Public housing was originally created for all working class Americans to acquire stable living conditions, however it was intentionally segregated by race. Eventually, the rise of suburbs began to draw working and middle class white families out of public housing but Black families were excluded from this process due to racist housing policies. This confined the African American community to their position in the public housing system. Contrary to what many believe, public housing did not start out as impoverished communities. As federal funding in the form of federally subsidized low mortgage rates was funneled into the suburbs, African American communities in the public housing system who could not take advantage of these opportunities because of housing covenants and redlining eventually became concentrated in a state of poverty. Today, according to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (n.d.) public housing exists for low income residents with a majority of them being African American as “forty-eight percent of public housing households are black compared to only 19 percent of all renter households” (US Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2018, paragraph 6). Instead of being founded as a way to aid low income families, the manner in which the public housing system was formed created a major wealth gap among the Black community, which in turn impacted their housing conditions.

Public housing communities are especially vulnerable to inadequate housing conditions. As illustrated by Raymond et al. (2011), it is very common for residents in the American public housing system to experience a number of issues including structural issues. Common issues include faulty electrical wiring, heating and cooling issues, faulty and deteriorating infrastructure along with health issues such as mold, rodent and roach infestations, and other

types of contamination. Raymon et al., (2011) with the Center for Disease Control and Jacobs, (2011) with Prevention and the National Library of Medicine explain that low income African American communities are more likely to live in inadequate housing conditions which include the presence of mold and allergens; plumbing problems; heating issues; infestations; leaks, cracks, or holes in floors, walls, or ceilings; and other infrastructure problems. These problems are disproportionately impacting the African American community. “HS data indicated that 7.5% of non-Hispanic Blacks reside in moderately substandard housing, compared with 2.8% of non-Hispanic Whites” (Jacobs, 2011, paragraph 2). Many of these problems arise because these communities are neglected by their local housing authority. This leads to many health issues including heat related cardiovascular effects and mortality, winter excess mortality due to cold indoor temperatures, contamination due to infestations, humidity and mold in dwellings and related health effects, hazardous exposure causing cancer and other illnesses, hygrothermal conditions which create house dust mite exposure, and an overall lower life expectancy (Jacobs, 2011).

Each public housing community has a local housing authority that is responsible for maintaining the conditions of the units. According to Lew (2016) the root causes of inadequate public housing conditions come down to the poor regulation of local housing authorities. As a result, housing authorities tend to neglect housing conditions and do not make sufficient incentives to repair or improve conditions. Lew (2016) also traces the root causes to a lack of funding for housing at a federal and state level, which makes it difficult to improve housing conditions. “Federal appropriations for the public housing capital fund fell by 34 percent over the past decade and HUD is faced with an estimated backlog of \$26 billion in capital maintenance and repairs (as of 2010)” (Lew, 2016, paragraph 8). Holden (2019) also traces inadequate

housing conditions to the old age and deterioration of public housing, fraud or mismanagement from local officials which can occur when money and resources are not allocated correctly, flaws in the inspection system, and a lack of funding towards housing. The inspection system for public housing is overseen by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development Real Estate Assessment Center, however, HUD often has third parties conduct the inspections and this results in a wide range of passing scores, even when the standards are not being met (Holden, 2019).

Displacement

Displacement occurs when a group of marginalized people are forced to relocate from their original location due to an increase of rental prices, the inability to afford the rent, or some other reason that is out of their control. The Uprooted Project (n.d.) provides a description of the processes of gentrification and displacement by explaining that when rental prices increase, pre-existing residents who have historically held a marginalized position in society get forced out of their homes and communities. As this occurs wealthier people move in, and in turn the rent generally continues to rise.

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (n.d.) explains that gentrification occurs when low income residents are displaced from their homes and is followed by the presence of affluent populations moving in. HUD recognizes that the proposal of mixed income housing has acted as a major factor in gentrification and led to the demolition of public housing communities across the country. This is because instead of fully maximizing the capacity for low income residents, introducing mixed income housing will draw people with a higher income into the housing, taking the place of those low income residents who originally resided there. It also recognizes the demolition of public housing as a means of displacement.

Crispell (2015) provides a local example of how this process occurred in Marin City. He explains that as rental prices began to increase in the 1970's, a lot of low income Black people began to move out of their homes because they could not afford the rent. This has been followed by the Marin Housing Authorities' physical neglect of Golden Gate Village and proposal for the demolition of Golden Gate Village, which would be followed by introducing mixed income housing. This plan would displace residents who wouldn't be able to afford the rental price and allow wealthier people to move in. This is an ongoing set of conflicts that Golden Gate Village has been facing up till this day.

Historical Background of Housing in Marin City

The development of Marin City is deeply rooted in the historical experience of African American western migration during World War II (Harper, 2015; Organized Labor, 1954). Marin City housed nearly 6,000 African Americans who migrated to the Marin City Sausalito area to work in the Marinship, a shipyard company that was created during World War II and located in Sausalito (Harper, 2015). Once the shipyard closed down, the African Americans who migrated here were constricted to residing as low income residents in Marin City. This was because after the war ended, policies like redlining and housing covenants restricted the African American shipbuilders and their families from buying homes in other parts of Marin County like the many White families were doing.

As a result of policies like redlining and housing covenants, the Black population of the former shipyard workers remained in the pre existing war time housing in Marin City and formed Marin County's only Black community. The prior war time housing was then revitalized into residential housing and the remaining African American residents of Marin City continued to reside here. McLemore (2017) and Crispell (2015) talk about the waves of displacement that

have occurred in Marin City from the redevelopment of the war time housing to the present day. Eventually the housing in Marin City was redeveloped into what is called the pole houses, which refers to the individual houses that were built on the hills, along with other types of infrastructures including the highrises and flat houses, referring to the houses that were built on the flat land. Historically, Black people lived in the pole houses, but as the Black community in Marin city experienced various waves of displacement, more affluent White people began to move into the pole houses, and left the Black community to live in the flat houses, high rises, and apartments. This displacement mainly occurred because of the increase in rental prices and inability to pay rent, as well as the resale of homes for much less than they were worth.

McLemore (2017) and Crispell (2015) also speak about the Marin Housing Authority's role in creating barriers for the residents and Resident Council through illegal evictions. The Marin Housing Authority has not provided residents with the access or ability to actually have their housing conditions upgraded and fully repaired. They have also been displacing residents through various different strategies including overhousing people and then evicting them, the proposal to build mixed income housing and demolish Golden Gate Village, as well as skipping over section 8 vouchers from the Marin City Sausalito zip code.

The overhousing of residents and then subsequent evictions has been occurring in Golden Gate Village and displacing residents. The Housing Authority had been over housing people in the units by assigning more people to a single unit than is legally allowed. This was then followed by the Housing Authority evicting those people from their units due to the incorrect size of occupants within the units. This is something that was due to the Housing Authority's wrongdoing but ultimately impacted the residents.

Another major form of displacement that would have impacted Golden Gate Village was the Marin Housing Authority's mixed income housing proposal. The Marin Housing Authority was intending to demolish the housing in Golden Gate Village and then rebuild it as mixed income housing. Many of the residents were opposed to this plan, as they feared that it would displace them. The introduction of mixed income housing would change the demographics of Golden Gate Village from solely low income housing by placing people with a higher income in the proposed new units. This would very likely displace some of the low income residents as their previous housing spaces would be taken up by the new higher income residents.

The last type of displacement is the skipping of section 8 vouchers. The Marin Housing Authority had been skipping section 8 vouchers from the 94965 area code. A whistleblower from the Marin Housing Authority stated that they were given orders from a member of the Marin Housing Authority to skip over the vouchers that came from that specific zip code (McLemore, 2017). This is a form of displacement because it has been keeping people with ties to Marin City who are in need of public housing from relocating to Golden Gate Village and tearing down the sense of community.

In response to the acts of displacement that have been occurring in Golden Gate Village, Royce McLemore took the action of having Golden Gate Village placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register is the federal government's official list of places, sites, buildings, and structures that are deemed worthy of preservation (Golden Gate Village Resident Council, ND). The Golden Gate Village Resident Council (ND) explains how Golden Gate Village was added to the national registry. Golden Gate Village possessed two of the four qualifications to be on the national registry (NRHP) including "association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history" (United States Department

of Interior National Park Service as found on The Golden Gate Village Resident Council website) and “embodying the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or representing the work of a master or, possessing high artistic values, or represents a distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction” (United States Department of Interior National Park Service as found on The Golden Gate Village Resident Council website). In accordance with the National Registry criteria, Golden Gate Village carries the rich history of the shipyard building that took place during World War II. This historical characteristic of Golden Gate Village ultimately fills the first criteria. In regards to the second piece of criteria, Golden Gate Village possesses famous architecture that was conducted by the famous architects, Frank Lloyd Wright, Aaron Green, John Carl Warnecke, and Lawrence Halprin. Consequently, Golden Gate Village’s status as a historical landmark grants it precautions from being significantly altered from its original design, making it much more difficult for Marin Housing Authority to demolish or change the property. This helps to decrease the chances that the Marin Housing Authority will demolish or alter Golden Gate Village, as the Housing Authority would have to go through a Section 106 Consultation, a CEQA, and possibly even a NEPA review (Golden Gate Village Resident Council, ND). However, this does not definitely ensure Golden Gate Village’s perseverance.

Conclusion

The existing literature provides an understanding of the housing disparity that Black America faces through the discussion of the American housing system and the relationship of discriminatory housing practices. It investigates trends around the harmful effects that historical segregation practices have on present day communities, as well as the American public housing system and the barriers that residents face while attempting to secure adequate housing, and the

processes of displacement and gentrification. The existing literature also provides crucial background information regarding the community of Marin City, as well as the public housing community of Golden Gate Village, including its history and ongoing debates within the community. However, few studies in the literature have explored how this history shapes the perspectives of public housing residents today, or how residents continue to organize and advocate to improve their housing conditions.

The purpose of my research was to better understand the housing disparity impacting the lives of the low income African American community in public housing. Specifically, I investigated what kinds of inadequate housing conditions the residents of Golden Gate Village experience and what barriers the residents face when attempting to better their housing experience. I also looked at the assets and strengths that community members hold and how these assets support housing advocacy in the community. Finally, I considered how residents' historical experiences have shaped their present day concerns about housing in Marin City and specifically in Golden Gate Village.

Methodology

Research Question

This project was designed to better understand the housing disparity in Golden Gate Village, a predominantly African American public housing community in Marin City. The research analyzed the current problems regarding housing conditions in Golden Gate Village as well as the barriers that residents face when attempting to address inadequate housing conditions. It also explored how the history of Marin City shapes current residents' perspectives on housing and their vision for the future. This project explored the public housing experience for the African American community through the following research questions: What kinds of inadequate housing conditions do the residents of Golden Gate Village experience? What barriers do residents face when attempting to better their housing conditions? What are some of the assets and strengths of the community in Golden Gate Village and how have these assets supported housing advocacy in the community? Lastly, how have residents' historical experiences with housing inequality shaped their concerns about housing in Marin City, and specifically in Golden Gate Village?

Description and Rationale for the Research Approach

My research approach is informed by a series of social justice theories and methodologies that I find applicable to the goals of my research. These frameworks have served me in gathering information to answer my research question and addressing the social justice issue of housing disparity, while valuing community members. The first theoretical framework that informs my work is Critical Race Theory. Critical Race Theory recognizes that racism is deeply embedded within our country's systems and institutions. It impacts different group's access to resources and opportunities, ultimately restricting resources for underprivileged people

of color. This approach is relevant to my social justice issue because many of the barriers that the community of Golden Gate Village faces stems from institutional racism. The housing disparity in Golden Gate Village is a direct result of historical racist policies and institutionalized practices such as redlining and the role that the federal housing administration and real estate agencies have played in creating and encouraging housing covenants. Through my research I have examined the ways in which historical practices and racist policies shape the lives of the Black population in America. I chose to interview the residents of Golden Gate Village as they have experience in the public housing system and face many of the structural barriers that come along with it, as well as the structural barriers that the African American community has faced due to discriminatory housing policies like redlining. This has helped me to better understand the day to day challenges that they face and illustrate how it shapes their lives.

The other social justice framework that I used in my approach to my project is community engaged research. This approach recognizes that community members have a unique and irreplaceable perspective on the issue at hand and in turn values that perspective. Community engaged research places an emphasis and an importance on the insight of the community members and uses their wisdom as a source of knowledge. This approach is critical for my research project as I will be interviewing community members and using their insight as a main source of information about the housing disparity that exists in Golden Gate Village. My research will ultimately support the community and my community partner site by helping create a way to better distribute information to the community. From the beginning of my research design, one of my goals for this project was to use the results of my research to make a social media platform that shares information about Women Helping All People and what they are doing in the community.

Lastly, I will be approaching this research project through a lens that values community cultural wealth. Community cultural wealth is described as the assets and capital that marginalized communities possess. This includes navigational capital: one's ability to navigate their way through unjust systems, resistant capital: the ability to resist oppressive power dynamics and the status quo, familial capital: the knowledge that is passed on through family, linguistic capital: being able to communicate in multiple languages or speaking styles, aspirational capital: the ability to maintain aspiration even in the face of adversity and inequality, and social capital: the strengths and skills that exist within a social group. Using the lens of community cultural wealth, I designed my project to examine community assets including navigational capital, resistance capital, and familial capital. This is because the work that Women Helping All People and the Resident Council have done to preserve Golden Gate Village resists gentrification and displacement. For example, the efforts that took place to achieve its status as a historical landmark shows navigational capital. Familial capital also plays a major role in my research because much of this knowledge is passed down to me through my family, especially my aunt Royce McLemore. Golden Gate Village has a variety of strengths and has long persevered in the face of adversity. It is important that when working with a marginalized community, we are not only looking at it from a view that is based on its deficits or weaknesses, but that we also encompass the many strengths and assets that the community has.

Research Design

Research Site and Entry into the Field

Golden Gate Village is a small public housing community with about 700 residents, located in Marin County. It sits within Marin City, bordered by the cities of Mill Valley and Sausalito, and located along the Marin Headlands Nature Preserve. Despite existing inside one of

the most wealthy counties in the country, it is very segregated and is greatly deprived of the wealth that this county holds (A Portrait of Marin, 2012). It is a predominantly African American population that is low income and some of whom live under the poverty line. Golden Gate Village is currently operated by the Marin Housing Authority and Golden Gate Village's Resident Council. The Resident Council was formed by Golden Gate Village residents, as each public housing community is legally required to be able to form a Resident Council that advocates for the wants and needs of the residents in their living environment. Golden Gate Village faces structural barriers including the inadequate housing conditions caused by the neglect of the Housing Authority.

Women Helping All People is a grassroots non profit organization in Marin City that was established by a group of women in the 1980's, including my great aunt, Royce McLemore. The purpose of Women Helping All People is to provide low income and underprivileged residents of Marin City with important resources such as housing assistance, educational opportunities, job opportunities, and economic support so that residents can achieve self sufficiency. They are located in one of the units in the high rise buildings of Golden Gate Village and play an important role in connecting and supporting the community. Despite having limited resources and space, they are a strong group of individuals and play a major role in empowering the community.

My positionality and connection to this community have played a significant role in the research that I have conducted. My father grew up in Marin City along with many of my other family members. Throughout my life I have spent time in the community and built a sense of belonging with Golden Gate Village. The pre-existing relationship that I have with the community through my family has provided me with the opportunity to gain entry into the field.

Having this connection to the community has made me more familiar with Marin City as I have already had a relationship with the community prior to working there. This connection to the community has given me insight into Golden Gate Village and Marin City and provides me with a very different perspective than from what others may have. It has also allowed me to establish a relationship with the community members that is based on trust. This has aided me a lot in my work that I am conducting here as it has allowed the community members to be open with me. This is crucial because when working with a community, having open communication has allowed me to grasp a better understanding of the community. Possessing this fine tuned awareness of the community has helped me to better serve the community members and create positive and effective change. Another factor that has played an important role with my relationship with the community is my identity of being part of the African American community. As I am working in a predominantly Black community, being Black is a similarity that other community members can relate to and creates a sense of belonging for me within the community. This potentially fosters a sense of comfortability or familiarity among both myself and the community members. As a fellow Black woman, many of these issues that impact the Black community are personal and hit close to home. I share some of the same struggles that come along with being Black in America such as being treated differently by institutions within our system and even regarding experiences that I have on an interpersonal level. Even if some of these issues, such as housing, are not currently affecting me personally, they are affecting fellow people in my community and this fosters strong emotions within me. It allows me to respond to these issues with passion and to interact with community members compassionately.

Sampling Procedures

I personally invited community members to participate in the interview during my hours at Women Helping All People's Finders Keepers Shop. When I came across the community members in the shop I asked if I could contact them about the possibility of setting up an interview. If the individual agreed, I got their phone number and made a call to set up an interview at a day and time that would work best for that person. I also reached out to certain individuals that I personally knew, including family members who live in Golden Gate Village and Marin City and invited them to participate in the interview. I was also introduced to certain individuals by the Founder of Women Helping All People.

Participants

I completed a total of six interviews. All of the participants that I interviewed are part of the African American community. They are mostly low income and live in subsidized housing in Golden Gate Village. A few of the participants that I have interviewed are family members who currently live in Golden Gate Village. The participants' ages range from 18 and older, although a majority of them are in their middle ages as well as elders.

Table 1

Below is a list of participants with assigned pseudonyms.

Pseudonym	Resident Status	Race	Gender	Age Range
Amara	Resident	African American	Female	70's-80's
Larissa	Resident	African American	Female	50's-60's
Shantel	Resident	African American	Female	30's-40's
Aisha	Former resident	African American	Female	20's-30's
Aliyah	Former resident	African American	Female	30's-40's
Tanya	Marin City resident	African American	Female	70's-80's

Instruments for Data collection

A total of 14 interview questions were created with the objective of better understanding the lives of residents in Golden Gate Village and what they would like to see occur in terms of housing equity. The questions began by asking the participants to explain their background and how they came to be residents of Golden Gate Village, as well as Marin City. I followed this by asking what the typical day in Golden Gate Village was like to get a better sense of what it is like to live there. They were then asked multiple questions about their connection to Golden Gate Village as well as the assets that the community carries. I then got into more depth by asking about any issues that are faced concerning the housing conditions as well as the barriers that residents face when attempting to address these issues, including their relationship with the Marin Housing Authority. I then led the interview into a direction to better understand the residents' concerns of gentrification by asking them what has been occurring as well as how displacement would potentially affect them. I ended the interview by asking them how they would ideally like to see Golden Gate Village in the future (please see Appendix A for a complete list of interview questions).

I also documented my weekly field notes on Givepulse after spending 2 hours in the community weekly. Every Tuesday I spent 2 hours working at Women Helping All People's Finders Keepers Shop during the 2022-2023 academic year. Prior to this year I spent one semester working at Women Helping All People's after school program, tutoring students. This exposed me to important interactions with the community and I used this information to connect to the themes that I have been covering in my academic research. After my community engagement ended, I wrote notes explaining an interaction or experience that I had in the community in detail and then connected it to a concept in my research. This has helped me to

develop a better understanding of the community of Golden Gate Village and the issues that are occurring there.

Procedures

After obtaining informed consent from the participants I conducted the interviews in the community of Golden Gate Village. The interviews each took place separately so that the participants could comfortably express their thoughts without judgment from others. The interviews were audio recorded on my iphone and transcribed through the app, “transcribe”. I then listened to the recording while reviewing and editing the document to make edits for accuracy. The data was then stored in my password protected iphone and notes were stored in my password protected computer.

I recorded weekly field notes after my two hour sessions of community engagement in the Finders Keepers Shop. After leaving the shop I identified experiences or interactions that connected to my academic research and pre existing knowledge of the community. I would also note experiences and interactions that brought up new insights that were not yet discovered through my research or pre existing knowledge. These notes have helped me grasp a better understanding of what is occurring in the community. I also ensured confidentiality by leaving out the names or any identifying information of all participants.

Data Analysis

After transcribing the interviews I began to analyze the data by coding the data based on findings from my literature review. The main categories that I coded my data in consisted of the expected codes of the historical roots of Golden Gate Village, neglect and housing conditions, and displacement. I coded the transcripts by creating brackets and writing key words that I associated that portion of the data with. The interviews also presented me with unexpected codes

including the significance of generational relationships within the community and the implications that displacement has on these relationships. In addition to coding my transcripts I also coded all of my fieldnotes. I then created a concept map that helped me visually lay my ideas and findings out and structure them. This allowed me to find emerging themes in my data. My concept map was then reviewed by peers which provided me with a more broad view of perspectives. After using the concept map, I then returned to the transcripts and completed focused coding to identify specific data that either supported or contradicted the emerging themes. Next, I returned to my concept map to revise themes based on the results of the focused coding. Finally, the identified themes were used to answer the research questions, and specific data was identified as evidence to support the conclusions for each research question. I also used this same process of coding for my field notes as well.

Validity

Reactivity occurs when the presence of the researcher affects participants' behavior or the researcher's positionality affects the ways in which participants respond to the researcher's questions (Maxwell, 2013). The participants may be inclined to provide the researcher with results that they think they would like to hear based on the content of research. While it is impossible to completely eliminate reactivity in participants there are a few ways that it can be decreased. My positionality in the community has been effective in decreasing this threat to validity. Since I have an existing relationship with most of the participants they were more likely to be open and honest with their responses. Spending prolonged time in the field has allowed me to develop relationships with the community members and deepen pre existing relationships. This establishes a sense of comfortability between me and the participants and ultimately decreases reactivity.

Another major threat to validity is researcher bias. Biases can lead the researcher to select data that fits into existing theories, personal goals, expectations, values or preconceptions (Maxwell, 2013). While this is also impossible to completely eliminate, I am conscious of my biases and maintained awareness of it during data collection and analysis. I feel strongly about issues of housing disparity, as well as systemic racism within the housing system. I am also in favor of the resident plan for Golden Gate Village and this has clear implications on my research and the direction that it heads in. This has caused me to favor the resident plan over the Housing Authority's plan.

My positionality also has an influence on my bias as I have family that would be impacted by displacement in Golden Gate Village. With this being said, there is an existing bias towards the belief that Golden Gate Village is experiencing neglect by the Housing Authority and that gentrification would be harmful to the community. However, I have done my best to enter all conversations with an open mind and acquire all information from my interviews. I have also specifically looked in the data for discrepant examples of emerging themes during the data analysis process to increase the validity of my findings. I have engaged in peer debriefing during the coding process. In this process, peers looked at my data and contributed with their own findings which provided me the possibility of alternative interpretations of the data. This created a more diverse and open minded range of findings. I have also combatted any further research bias by providing the audience with thick, detailed descriptions of my findings so that they can analyze them themselves and form their own conclusions.

Findings

Introduction

Discriminatory housing practices have shaped the community of Golden Gate Village into a predominantly African American community that shares a strong sense of community and resilience, as well as negatively impacted the conditions and sense of community in Golden Gate Village through acts of displacement. The Marin Housing Authority has created multiple processes of displacement for the Golden Gate Village community. Some forms of displacement occur through explicit racism including the discrimination against Marin's African American community that receive housing vouchers, as well as unlawful evictions that have taken place. There are also more nuanced forms of displacement that occur through the intentional neglect of Golden Gate Village. However, despite these negative impacts, residents have maintained a strong sense of community and collectively fight for better housing conditions.

In the findings presented below I dive deeper into the ways in which discriminatory housing practices have impacted the community of Golden Gate Village. First, I provide a description of the historical background and current state of Golden Gate Village. My findings demonstrate how discriminatory housing policies such as redlining affected the predominantly African American community of Golden Gate Village, and specifically how it played a role in shaping the close-knit community that exists today. I then turn to a discussion of the multiple processes of displacement and neglect that are impacting the community. I provide evidence to illustrate how displacement and neglect contribute to poor conditions of the units as well as a lost sense of community in Golden Gate Village. Finally, I highlight the community's active role in responding to the threats of displacement and neglect that are disadvantageous to the residents in

Golden Gate Village. Using evidence from my research I detail how the community has mobilized to combat these oppressive forces and advocate for their conditions.

Golden Gate Village “This is Home”

The formation of the Golden Gate Village community traces back to the shipbuilding efforts that took place during World War II. In the year 1942 a shipyard site called the Marinship opened in Sausalito, California as an effort to support the military during the war. They began hiring people to work in the shipyard, building war cargo and ships to help supply the military with supplies for war efforts. The Marinship was opened for three and a half years and closed in 1946 as the war ended. This created many job opportunities and encouraged a large population of African American families to migrate from the South and other areas of the country to Marin City and other parts of the Bay Area. For example, my great grandfather, Oscar Lee White, was one of the original residents of Marin City, migrating from Baton Rouge, Louisiana to work in the Sausalito shipyard in 1943. He then brought over his family which consisted of my great grandmother and grandfather, along with my grandfather’s brother and sister to live in Marin City with him. He wanted to make sure that his family had a safer environment to live in. At the time, racial discrimination and racially motivated terror were very active in the South. Lynchings and racially motivated murders were common occurrences. Another major reason for his migration was the job opportunities and better pay that the shipyard work provided. This was the case for most of the families that migrated into Marin City during that time. As Tanya, a resident of Marin City whose family came during the shipbuilding effort, explains, “it was dangerous living in the south for a Black person.” She also adds that “They were coming here for employment, better employment, better life, here in California.”

Marin City is situated in the Southern end of Marin and is bordered by the city of Mill Valley and the city of Sausalito, as well as the Marin Headlands. It is an open space that is surrounded by green hills and trees. It also sits right by the water on the San Francisco Bay. These characteristics make the areas a very desirable and beautiful location. It was originally formed as war time housing for the shipyard workers and their families. The presence of these families played a very vital role within the community. Ultimately, they established the tight knit relationships that came to exist in Marin City. Marin City was a rather small community so this made it very easy for all of the original families to form connections and trust one another. During this time, the neighbors all knew each other well and had a lot of trust for each other. “Neighbors would watch after children, other family members’ children, other mothers' children. It was just a very loving community, a very close knit community” (Tanya). Most of the families shared close relationships with each other and really engaged themselves within the community. Tanya describes the activity that went on within the community. “We did have a playground. We had a recreation center where the kids could go. There were a lot of picnics and a lot of socialization going on within the city.” At this time the housing in Marin City was integrated with both African American and White families residing there. A former resident of the early community described the relations between these different families as overall well and easy going. The war time housing that the early residents occupied consisted of barracks and only existed as rental property so they were not able to buy homes there at the time. There were rows of barracks that were connected to each other from the sides of each unit. This created a close proximity between the neighbors. Tanya described the situation in this way, “They were right next to each other. You could literally step out of your residence and you could reach your hand over and knock on the neighbor's door.” There was also housing that was set up like

condominiums with two houses attached to each other. The early community of Marin City also had a plaza with a cafeteria and many different stores. All of these factors played a key role in transforming the area into a community for the people who lived there. The strong sense of community and family ties that were established during this era continue to exist within Golden Gate Village and play a crucial role in the community. Overall, the people of Marin City greatly valued the strong sense of community. Tanya remembered that, “it was just, um, a very loving community, very close knit community.”

As the war was coming to an end, the Marinship eventually closed in 1946. Many of the former shipyard worker families continued to live in Marin City. At this point, no housing had been developed in the area so they continued to reside in the old war time housing. These families soon found themselves to be facing a prominent form of systemic racism that targeted the African American community in the housing industry. Racist housing policies, including redlining, severely limited the African American community's access to homeownership in Marin County. During the 1950's white families that had previously lived in Marin City had begun to buy homes in the suburbs. Meanwhile, the African American community that resided in Marin City was excluded from this process and, as a result, the former shipyard housing in Marin City was the only place that they were able to reside within Marin County. Tanya remembers this time distinctly. She recounted, “White people were able to move out and buy homes in other parts of the county. Whereas Blacks weren't, there was redlining at that time. They weren't allowing Blacks to buy homes.” Likewise, a Golden Gate Village resident, Larissa explained that “We could have went on if they would've piled Black people in those other areas, but they didn't. So we were never given the option to live any place else because they didn't offer it to Black people. So we were in a catch 22 from the start.” These discriminatory housing policies had a

significant impact on the community that is seen today in Golden Gate Village. This resulted in a demographic change in which the community of Marin City became predominantly African American. Redlining had a detrimental impact on the community as it excluded them from the process of homeownership and a lot of the benefits that are reaped with it, including the ability to create generational wealth.

In the following years, Marin City went through multiple phases of housing construction, including the development of Golden Gate Village, one of the many housing developments that were built for the families who continued to reside in Marin City after the shipyard building was over. Despite the negative outcomes that discriminatory housing practices have had on the African American population in Marin City, they have maintained a strong sense of community. Today, Golden Gate Village exists as a very tight knit community in which most of the residents have relationships with each other and know each other. Many of the residents are very fond of the strong sense of community that is shared here. Larissa explains the close relationships that exist among the community members. “It's knowing everybody and everybody, even though we fussed, we help each other. We still love each other. And we do today. When something comes down, if somebody's hurt, the next person is running to their rescue, and that's what I like, is really the love.” This closeness that exists within the community can be traced back to the strong generational ties that have been present in Golden Gate Village.

Many of the original families that came to Marin City during the shipbuilding era have remained in Marin City and further expanded their families within the community. Most of the residents of Golden Gate Village are familiar with each other because of these tight knit family ties and will even identify each other with their family names. The original families have such a vital role in the community and their names have continued to be passed on to the present

day. These names have left a legacy within the community that is still practiced today. When talking to Aisha, who is a former resident of Golden Gate Village, she explained the significance of family ties within the community. “And what I mean by families, I mean families of people who came here in the forties and fifties and worked in the shipyards and stayed here and created a community when they weren't welcomed elsewhere throughout the county.” In her interview Aisha emphasized the strength of the family assets that exist within Golden Gate Village. Overall, the generational relationships serve as a major source of power for the community.

Another important aspect of the community that the residents emphasized is the strong sense of safety. When asked about one thing that she loves about Golden Gate Village, Aisha said that she feels safe there. “A lot of folks still could leave their doors unlocked here. A lot of our kids for the most part could still walk around and be safe here. So I love how I still feel safe here.” Aisha also explains that Golden Gate Village exists as a place where Black people in Marin County can feel safe. Another resident pointed out, “Why not wanna live in Marin City, it's the most beautiful place in the county, and it's the safest place for Black people, which it is” (Amara).

Efforts of Displacement in Golden Gate Village

An overall trend of gentrification has been seen in the community of Marin City throughout the past decade. As rental prices began to rise, this created a lack of affordable housing all throughout Marin County, including Marin City. This led to a major demographic shift as a good portion of the African American community in Marin City was displaced because they could no longer afford to live there. From the year 2010 to 2021, the African American population dropped by about 14.8% from 40.6% to 25.8% (US Census Bureau). For example, Aisha, who was a former resident in Marin City, was hoping to purchase one of the pole homes

but was not able to due to the prices. She explained, “We don't even have a chance. You know, a lot of my friends and I are from here and we're talking, three or four generations here. We went to college, did what we were supposed to do... and we can't afford to live here anymore.” The displacement of the African American population was then followed by a wealthier White population of homeowners who moved into the pole houses in Marin City. As the African American community was displaced, this left Golden Gate Village as one of the only affordable options within Marin City for the low income African American population.

Within Golden Gate Village, a critical ongoing issue that impacts the community is the process of displacement. As the rest of Marin County began to realize what a desirable location Marin City sits in, there have been many efforts made to displace the community so that wealthy people could move in. This effort of displacement even expands to Golden Gate Village, as it is a barrier to the gentrification that is occurring in Marin City. Larissa explains the county's motives for Golden Gate Village. “And nobody bothered us for years and years. But when they saw what they thought was bad was good, then the rich wanted to come in and take it.” As a result, Golden Gate Village residents have been experiencing multiple processes of displacement. Some of these processes are explicit while others are implicit.

One major form of displacement is the actions that Marin Housing Authority has been taking in order to prevent people from returning to Golden Gate Village. The Marin Housing Authority has been denying people who have roots in Marin City their right to reside in Golden Gate Village. The Marin Housing Authority has an active role in providing people with access to housing in Golden Gate Village. Public housing exists as affordable government housing for low income people. In this system, low income populations will apply for housing through section 8 vouchers, a form that is sent to the Housing Authority who will then grant the individuals with

housing. Marin Housing Authority is responsible for providing people with section 8 vouchers in Marin County housing in a local area. In this case, the 94965 area code consists of Marin City as well as part of the neighboring town of Sausalito. Therefore, if someone from the 94965 area applies for housing with their voucher, the Marin Housing Authority is supposed to house them in Golden Gate Village.

Within Marin County there are many African American people who either previously lived in Marin City or have family members that have roots in Marin City and wish to return. It has been discovered that the Marin Housing Authority has been skipping over the section 8 vouchers of people from the 94965 area code. A member of the Marin Housing Authority said under oath that they were told not to house people from that particular area code. As a result, the African American population from the area was skipped and was not able to return back to their community. This is a form of displacement because it is aiming to hinder the sense of community that has existed in Golden Gate Village and Marin City. Larissa explains the effects that this has on the community. “That would force us out of Marin City.” The process of excluding current residents from housing in Golden Gate Village had devastating effects on the African American community. Aisha reflected wistfully “I mean it's still community here, but it's nothing like when I grew up where it was just families, generations of families here in Golden Gate Village. I mean families upon families just interacting and having fun and looking out for each other. That I do miss.” This form of displacement takes away from the sense of community that was once here in Golden Gate Village.

Another form of displacement in Golden Gate Village that concerns the residents are unlawful evictions. There have been multiple instances where the Marin Housing Authority has overhoused people in the units. This occurs when the number of people assigned to a specific

unit is higher than the capacity of people that the unit is made for and leads to overcrowded units. The Housing Authority then followed this by evicting the overhoused residents, that is, they forced them to leave their households. The Housing Authority is responsible for housing people in the correct sized units. There are specific guidelines that the Housing Authority must follow when housing the residents. If residents are overhoused, the fault is traced back to the Housing Authority but instead the Housing Authority is responding to their errors by evicting the residents. The overhousing of residents is something that had begun decades ago, however the Housing Authority has just begun evicting the residents within the past several years. Residents that had been living in their units for years are just now being told that they need to leave. A couple residents of Golden Gate Village expressed their feelings about this process and explained that it is not fair. Larissa described this unjust in this way, “It was their fault. They housed us. They over housed us. We didn't over house ourselves because we're not in that position. They did it. Now it's our fault. Now we have to suffer for it when it's been like this for over 60 years.” One of the options that was provided to the residents who were overhoused was to be moved elsewhere, outside of Marin City. This further displaces the residents from Golden Gate Village and breaks down the sense of community there.

Demolition by Neglect

The Marin Housing Authority is legally responsible to provide the residents with adequate housing and maintain the property of Golden Gate Village, but they are not upholding their responsibilities. The federal agency, Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has specific guidelines for public housing conditions and the local housing authorities must make sure that these conditions are met. Specifically, the local housing authority must provide the units with repairs and maintenance as needed so that the conditions of the units are in accordance with the

guidelines. Golden Gate Village residents have continuously voiced their concerns about the conditions in the housing, however the Marin Housing Authority does not take action to address these issues. Multiple residents have presented the specific issues that they are facing in their housing, but they have been met with a lack of initiative from the Housing Authority.

Marin Housing Authority has been neglecting their responsibility to maintain the units which in turn has caused the conditions of the units to decline. This has been a prominent issue for the residents of Golden Gate Village. The concept “demolition by neglect” refers to a strategy in which the Housing Authority intentionally neglects the public housing units so that they have probable cause to demolish and rebuild the units. This process of demolition by neglect is believed by residents to have been an active strategy for the Marin Housing Authority to gentrify the community of Golden Gate Village.

The residents experience many issues with the physical infrastructure of the property. Some of the most prominent issues described by residents is the lack of heating in the buildings. Aisha spoke about the ongoing lack of heat in the buildings and said, “We haven't had any heat in the buildings for at least two or three weeks now. And the temperatures have been crazy, which is why everybody is double jacketed up.” During the winter the temperatures in Marin City can drop down to the low 40's (WeatherSpark, n.d.). With the cold temperatures that Marin City receives, it is essential that there is heat present in the units.

Residents have also expressed their concerns about rodent infestations and roach infestations. Another resident, Aliyah explained that rats were even making holes throughout her and her neighbors walls. “All of a sudden we started getting woodrats. You could hear them in the wall scratching. So they got to the point that between my house and the next two houses, they were making holes going to each other's house.” She then brought her issue to the attention of

the Housing Authority but they did not deal with the infestation sufficiently. “Instead of maintenance really trying to get 'em out, they would just come and patch the holes up” (Aliyah).

Another issue with the infrastructure of the buildings is the faulty infrastructure and deteriorating structures. When referring to the external structure of the highrise units, Aisha said “and then the outside, these railings are falling apart, a couple railings in the buildings actually have instead of that thick cement there to protect anybody from falling over, it is just boarded.”

Aliyah described how the poor living conditions in Golden Gate Village affected her and her family. This resident had to be moved from their original unit because their initial unit became infested with rodents. When they were moved to their next unit they found that there was a major roach infestation in the new unit. Aliyah explained, “I made a meatloaf, got ready to fix my kids something to eat. My whole pan was full of roaches.”

After this they were moved to a third unit. Upon arrival they discovered a terrible presence of mold. The presence of mold is a very prominent concern for the residents. A fellow resident who saw Aliyah’s final unit comments on the mold presence. “And this one was supposed to been completely redone. And [Aliyah] invited me into her apartment and she showed me a whole wall. At first I couldn't see it. So [Aliyah] said look from the side. So I looked from the side, they put one layer of paint over a wall that was filled with black mold.” If a family is forced to go through the major transition of having to move to a new unit, it should be in top tier condition, but this was not the case. The poor conditions that are seen in Golden Gate Village have dangerous implications for the residents and the long consequences for their children’s health. The presence of mold has specifically been described as a threat to the health and safety of the residents. Aliyah explained the consequences for their children, "That mold is

terrible. It's all around the window seals and the door frames. I mean, it is terrible. You know, like my kids have asthma, that's hard on them to breathe.”

Another prominent issue that the residents face is the lack of maintenance and substandard services. The maintenance doesn't fully address the issues that the residents call for. Multiple residents have explained that when they call maintenance to address an issue, they do not fully fix the problem. Aliyah explained, “They don't want to redo the structures. They want to half fix these places up and say that they remodeled them. Putting a new cabinet up or trying to put a new pipe in the wall. That's not fixing these places up. Fixing them up is actually getting rid of this mold. Getting these rat problems, getting these roach problems and cleaning this place up.” Another resident described their experience with maintenance. One of the fellow residents, Larissa, experienced a leak in their unit’s pipes. When she called the Housing Authority to send somebody over to fix it they were told that they would have to wait until the next morning. They ended up having to call the fire department to fix the issue.

Many of the residents have expressed that they do not feel heard when talking with the Housing Authority. When asked about how they felt when talking with the Housing Authority Larissa gave the following response. “Like we're being lied to...You know you're gonna be lied to already. They can look you straight in your eyes and tell a lie.” Another resident explained that despite constantly attending meetings and advocating for better housing conditions, little to nothing is done. When asked how she felt when interacting with the Housing Authority she emphasized the Housing Authority’s lack of concern for the residents. She said, “It's really hard to explain because once you go to these meetings and keep going and keep going and you see little done, you are just like, okay, these people, they don't care” (Aisha).

The neglect that Golden Gate Village faces has serious implications for the community. All people deserve to live in sanitary and adequate conditions. The poor conditions and neglect that Golden Gate Village residents face acts as a more nuanced form of displacement. Although they are not explicitly displacing people, these factors are still a threat to the residents presence in Golden Gate Village. The poor conditions and constant struggles that the community faces within their housing has caused a number of former residents to leave Golden Gate Village and reside elsewhere. Aisha, a former resident of Golden Gate Village, expressed that she has a deep love for her community and would like to live there and the only thing stopping her from returning are the living conditions. She also explained how she knows others who previously lived in Golden Gate Village but decided to move out because of the conditions and the problems that they create. She explained, “I think a lot of my friends and family have left just because overall the conditions of the units are not the same [as they used to be].”

In response to the residents' complaints about the conditions of the units, the Marin Housing Authority proposed the plan of mixed income housing. The Marin Housing Authority aimed to demolish the entire property of Golden Gate Village and then reconstruct it as mixed income housing. They claimed that this would be an appropriate way to respond to the residents' needs and improve the condition of the units. However, the mixed incoming housing proposal would transform Golden Gate Village from a public housing community and begin to house people from higher incomes in addition to the remaining low income residents. Undoubtedly, this proposal would displace some of the former residents who would no longer afford to live there. A majority of the Golden Gate Village residents highly oppose this plan and expressed concern that it would lead to increased displacement. Multiple residents have explained that the Housing Authority has intentionally neglected Golden Gate Village so that they would have a probable

cause to demolish the units. Larissa stated that “the lack of maintenance was due to them wanting to shut us down, it was done deliberately.”

Golden Gate Village: A Community of Resilience

The community of Golden Gate Village has responded to these threats of displacement and neglect by mobilizing themselves to combat these oppressive forces through engaged community action. The grassroots organization Women Helping All People exists as a major support system within the community. It provides the residents with many services and resources, especially with housing. Many of the residents go to Women Helping All People when they are in need of guidance or assistance in regards to their housing situations. If they are having issues with their housing conditions, the Housing Authority, or even rent they can go to Women Helping All People for assistance. The residents in Golden Gate Village have expressed the value of Women Helping All People and the services that they provide.

The community also takes legal action to combat the oppressive practices that they are faced with. A number of residents have formed the Golden Gate Village Resident Council where they meet as a group to discuss current matters and issues that are prevalent within the community and advocate for the residents’ concerns. The Resident Council has been very active in advocating for better housing conditions in Golden Gate Village. If residents have issues or concerns they can take them to the Resident Council who will then present these issues to the Marin Housing Authority during meetings. Issues regarding inadequate housing conditions and concerns of displacement are often discussed during Resident Council meetings and then presented to the Housing Authority with demands to address the issues. Aisha described what occurs during the Resident Council meetings, “It’d be a lot of us there just listening and sharing, you know, and speaking up and speaking out.” The Resident Council plays a very important role

within the community as it acts as a platform where the residents can come together and advocate for their conditions.

Royce McLemore is a major advocate in Golden Gate Village and has a very active presence within the community. She is in charge of the organization Women Helping all People and also sits as a member on the Resident Council. She has demonstrated strong leadership and resilience through many actions. Through her major efforts she has prevented the displacement of many Golden Gate Village residents by advocating on their behalf, as well as combating the Housing Authority's plans to demolish Golden Gate Village. Due to the rich history that took place during the shipyard building, she was able to have Golden Gate Village placed on the national registry as a historical landmark. This ensures the preservation of Golden Gate Village, making it much more difficult for the Marin Housing Authority to demolish it. She is following this act with a community based plan to revitalize Golden Gate Village. The Resident Plan consists of a deep green renovation and revitalization in the units while maintaining the original layout. This would provide the units with all the necessary repairs and improve the condition of the units in an environmentally friendly way. Ultimately, the Resident Plan values the wishes of the community by providing Golden Gate Village residents with overall healthy and adequate living conditions that are much needed, while preserving the property.

Conclusion

My overarching question aimed to understand how discriminatory housing practices have impacted the community of Golden Gate Village and explore how residents' historical experiences with housing inequality have shaped their concerns about housing in Marin City. My findings demonstrate that discriminatory housing policies such as redlining have had negative implications for the African American community in Marin City. It prevented them from

participating in homeownership and the opportunities that come along with it, such as the accumulation of generational wealth. Despite the negative impacts that this had on the community, they came together and formed a strong, tight knit community in Golden Gate Village.

My research questions also address what kinds of inadequate housing conditions the residents of Golden Gate Village face and what barriers they experience when attempting to better these conditions. My findings demonstrate that multiple processes of displacement have been occurring in the African American community of Golden Gate Village. The displacement that has been occurring has an overall negative impact on the sense of community in Golden Gate Village. It breaks down the sense of community and shared family ties that exist within the community. The community also faces multiple issues with the property in Golden Gate Village due to the constant neglect that has been occurring. Overall this has created poor, inadequate housing conditions in Golden Gate Village.

The residents have faced multiple challenges when attempting to better their conditions due to the negligence of Marin Housing Authority. They have expressed that despite constant meetings and requests about addressing the issues in the units, the Housing Authority does not make any sufficient changes. Overall, the residents feel that the Housing Authority is not concerned about the wellbeing of the Golden Gate Village community and would like to see them addressing the issues while listening to their concerns.

Lastly, my research questions focused on the assets and strengths of the community in Golden Gate Village and how these assets supported housing advocacy in the community. The residents in Golden Gate Village have come together and mobilized to combat the oppressive aspects of housing inequality that they face. They have created a resident council where they

come together to discuss the issues that they face and advocate for one another. They also have a very strong organization that helps the community members and acts as a safe space for the residents. These groups have taken many actions to address the prior issues that I have mentioned through community and legal action. Overall the community has shown strong qualities of resilience and perseverance when responding to the systemic racism and discrimination that they face.

Discussion

Introduction

I have uncovered multiple similarities between the academic literature and my findings. One overlapping theme that I have discovered is the negative consequences of redlining on African American communities (Lockwood, 2020). The process of redlining prevented African Americans from engaging in the process of homeownership by denying them mortgages, which had a detrimental effect on the African American community as it prevented them from acquiring generational wealth on a wide scale. This theme is evident in my findings as well. Through my findings I have found that the early residents of Marin City were impacted by the process of redlining. Multiple residents expressed that they were not included in the homeownership process due to the process of redlining. They explained that during this time, White people were able to move out of the war time housing and purchase homes throughout Marin County. However, the Black population of Marin City was not able to do this and as a result they remained in Marin City.

Another overlapping theme that I have discovered are the inadequate conditions that exist within the public housing system and the consequences of the consistent neglect from the local housing authorities (Raymond et al., 2011). The implications of this are deteriorating public housing units that exist in a poor state. Public housing units experience inadequate conditions with the physical infrastructure. This has negative consequences for the residents that reside in the units, such as health conditions. This theme was confirmed through the interviews that I conducted among the Golden Gate Village residents. I found a positive correlation between the Marin Housing Authority's negligence and the conditions in Golden Gate Village. The residents expressed that the Marin Housing Authority does not maintain the conditions of the property. As

a result, the residents have reported a number of issues with the units. They reported a presence of rodent and roach infestations. They described a lack of heating in the units as well as poor maintenance services. They also expressed their concerns about the presence of mold and the faulty infrastructure within the buildings. My findings also show how poor housing conditions have negative effects on the health of the residents. An example of this is that the presence of mold makes it difficult for them to breathe and is bad for people and children who have respiratory issues.

Lastly, I found that low income and predominantly African American communities are more vulnerable to processes of displacement and gentrification (The Uprooted Project, n.d.). My research also demonstrates that public housing communities are also vulnerable to experiencing displacement (US Department of Housing and Urban Development, n.d.). This occurs when residents, typically people of color and from a lower socioeconomic status, are forced to leave their residency due to factors that are out of their control. The academic literature documents how public housing communities often experience demolition as a prominent form of displacement or that the introduction of mixed income housing acts as a form of displacement. The process of displacement in Golden Gate Village has been made very evident from my findings. The community of Golden Gate Village experiences multiple processes of displacement, including the proposed demolition and mixed income housing proposal, along with other forms as well. The Marin Housing Authority has been displacing community members through unlawful evictions. Multiple residents explained that the Marin Housing Authority overhoused many of the residents and then began to evict those residents that occupied the wrong sized units. The Marin Housing Authority had also intentionally denied people who had roots in Marin City the option to return to the community. They did this by throwing away

the section 8 vouchers of people from the 94965 area code. Ultimately, displacement was described as one of the most important issues that is affecting the residents and overall community.

Implications for the Literature

In addition to the similarities between my research findings and the existing academic literature, I have also uncovered several unexpected findings through my research. One prominent theme that I was not aware of until I conducted my interviews was the significance of generational relationships. From my findings I have uncovered that generational relationships play a major role in the close sense of community that exists within Golden Gate Village. Many of the residents expressed the importance of generational relationships in Golden Gate Village. Marin City was originally formed from a community of families that migrated to the area during the shipyard building that occurred during World War II. Throughout the decades these families came together and supported each other during times of adversity. They were able to lean on each other and provide one another with help during difficult times. Together they formed a tight knit community that would be passed down over generations. Residents have expressed the grief that they feel due to some of the generational ties that are no longer present in the community. This is a major foundation for the community as it unites the community and acts as a shared sense of familiarity and belonging.

Another finding that is not currently emphasized in the academic literature is the manner in which displacement disrupts the sense of community in Golden Gate Village. The academic literature explains the processes of displacement that occurs, as well as some of the implications for it, however it does not include the social and emotional implications for community and individuals. During the interviews, multiple residents expressed the concerns of how processes of

displacement negatively impact the sense of community in Golden Gate Village. One example that I was provided with was that the Marin Housing Authority was skipping over the section 8 vouchers of people from the 94965 area code. This was ultimately preventing people who had roots in Golden Gate Village from returning back to the community. This is a strategy that tears down the sense of community in Golden Gate Village and possibly makes further displacement in Golden Gate Village easier to occur.

Lastly, an important theme that I had come across from my findings that should be added to the conversation in the academic literature about discriminatory housing practices is the process of neglect as a form of displacement. is the role that neglect plays in fueling displacement. Going into my findings, I was expecting to find neglect and displacement as two separate themes, as this is typically how these concepts are described in the academic literature. Throughout my research regarding displacement I did not find much about how neglect exists as a form of displacement. While there is some content about demolition by neglect, I did not uncover any content that explained the manner in which neglect causes people to leave their communities. However, I have uncovered the interwoven connection between the neglect that occurs in Golden Gate Village and the displacement that is also occurring there. The Marin Housing Authority's neglect of Golden Gate Village has caused the units to experience many issues with the physical infrastructure. As a result of the inadequate conditions that the residents face, some of the former residents have left Golden Gate Village and moved elsewhere. It is not because they do not like the community. While they are very fond of the community, they do not want to live in those kinds of conditions. Another manner in which neglect displaces people is through the process of demolition by neglect. Instead of making the repairs to the units that are needed the Marin Housing Authority attempted to address the conditions by completely

demolishing Golden Gate Village and reintroducing it as mixed income housing. This process would displace residents because many of the former people living there would no longer be able to afford the rent. Instead they would be replaced by people with a higher income.

My study has filled the gap in knowledge that I identified by acquiring qualitative information from residents of Golden Gate Village. The qualitative information that they have provided me with is based on what they have witnessed and experienced within the community. Their responses are built off of their time in the community and the change that they have seen take place in the community. This knowledge has provided me with a deeper understanding of what processes are occurring within the community and what the implications of these processes are for the residents. This specifically provides me with a better grasp of the processes of displacement and the impacts that this has on the community. The information that I have acquired from this study has also demonstrated the ways in which the community of Golden Gate Village has mobilized to combat the systemic racism and discriminatory housing practices that they face. They engage in multiple forms of advocacy and have taken up both community action and legal action in response to the forms of oppression that they experience. This sets an example for how other communities can respond to similar threats.

Another insight that should be added to the conversation in the academic literature is the importance of community. In Golden Gate Village the community has come together to advocate for themselves through both legal action and community action. They have demonstrated an outstanding amount of strength, strategy, and perseverance within many of their actions. They have accomplished a number of steps, including having Golden Gate Village placed on the national registry to prevent displacement from occurring. They have also formed a resident council as well as the grassroots organization Women Helping All People, to advocate for the

needs of the residents and conditions of the units, while providing the community with important resources. These factors play a significant role in aiding the cause in Golden Gate Village and should be better known among the general population. Oftentimes, in academic literature there is not enough focus on the assets that exist within marginalized communities. It is important that the academic literature is more aware of the assets and strengths that communities that are impacted by these issues hold, and how they can respond to these threats. Overall, community action is an important plan of action that serves as a way to empower the community and community members.

Implications for Practice and Policy

My findings can be used to learn more about the community of Golden Gate Village, as well as better understand the challenges that the community faces. This will better inform outsiders of the processes of displacement that are occurring in Golden Gate Village and the harmful implications that this has on the community. Once the public is better informed they may then be more inclined to act as allies and support the Golden Gate Village community. With this information they can strive to create a more equitable community for everyone by including the Golden Gate Village community in decision making processes throughout the county. This could also incentivize the public to advocate for the rights of Golden Gate Village residents and support policies that will help the community, such as advocating for Golden Gate Village's resident plan and against the displacement that is occurring at the hands of Marin Housing Authority.

A central aim of this project is to support a process in which Women Helping All People can implement effective ways of sharing information among the community. Currently, residents mainly acquire information from direct contact with Women Helping All People. Women

Helping All People also has a website where they have information accessible. However, I think that a social media platform that the residents can easily visit would be very beneficial and make information more accessible to the community. This way, information can be shared quickly and easily to a wide set audience. This would be specifically effective at targeting the younger generations. This can be used to inform the residents about what is occurring in the community and inform them about any actions that they can take to ensure their wellbeing.

Limitations of the Study

A central limitation in my study was the limited number of participants I was able to interview. While my data collection provides information on the processes of displacement that occur in Golden Gate Village, there is limited data about how these processes affect the individual community members. Future research might explore how displacement impacts the residents from an emotional standpoint, specifically what feelings the processes of displacement produce among the individuals in the community. Future research might also explore the history of residents' families before migrating to the Marin City area. Many of the families of Golden Gate Village came here from the South or from other areas of the country during the shipyard building. While the job opportunities were described as a major incentive for migrating here, future research could document the larger systems of racism and oppression in the United States that led to the development of the African American community in Marin City.

Another factor that may have produced limitations for my study is my positionality. Since my family is from Golden Gate Village and is very active in the advocacy that takes place within the community, I had pre-notions about what is occurring in Golden Gate Village. I also foster sentiments that align with my family's advocacy in the community. Going into this study, I was opposed to the processes of displacement that is occurring in the community. I see the aspects of

neglect and displacement as major issues that are occurring in Golden Gate Village. I am also in favor of the resident plan that has been introduced by the Resident Council. It is possible that my biases have prompted me to create questions that place an emphasis on the processes of neglect and displacement that take place in Golden Gate Village, as well as the harmful effects that the Marin Housing Authority's presence has on the community. I also have not included members of the Marin Housing Authority within my interviews, and as a result do not have the input of that institution within my findings.

Future research could continue to advance this line of study by investigating the role that neglect plays in contributing to displacement in public housing communities. Throughout my study I have touched on multiple processes of displacement, but it would be beneficial for future researchers to go more in depth of how the neglect that public housing communities face leads to displacement. Neglect as a form of displacement is not thoroughly covered in the academic literature, but it is a prominent occurrence that exists within the public housing system.

It would also be interesting for future researchers to specifically investigate the ways in which marginalized public housing communities have engaged in activism. Looking at the ways in which Golden Gate Village residents have advocated for their conditions has been very fascinating. It is important that the academic literature does not just focus on the oppression that these communities face but also recognize the assets that these communities hold. This could serve as a way for people to better understand the strength that exists within these communities, and how communities have gone about utilizing these assets. This will explain how advocacy and community action has benefited people within these communities and how different forms of advocacy have led to change within the community. This could set a model for other public housing communities who are facing similar issues to address these factors.

Conclusion

The overall purpose of my thesis was to understand how systemic racism manifests within the American housing system, and what the implications of this are for the African American community. This is important because it limits their access to acquiring generational wealth and achieving upward mobility. It also has critical implications for the quality of living that this group of people experience. My thesis investigates the predominantly African American community of Golden Gate Village to understand how the processes of redlining, neglect, and displacement have shaped the community. Golden Gate Village is a sector of the African American community and provides the audience with insight into how these harmful processes manifest.

As a result I have learned that there are many forms of displacement that are occurring in the community of Golden Gate Village. The process of neglect is an implicit form of displacement that is very significant within the community. It has caused former residents to leave Golden Gate Village and could potentially displace many more through Marin Housing Authority's threat of demolition and proposed mixed income housing. In response to these threats the residents have shown much strength and resilience while exercising great efforts of advocacy. Through these efforts they have made positive change within Golden Gate Village. Ultimately, my findings help to combat a very prominent form of systemic racism that is evident in the community by addressing the issues that the residents face and educating the public on the matter. With this knowledge, I encourage the public and Marin County residents to pay attention to Golden Gate Village residents' concerns and demand that the county of Marin takes action on this matter.

The findings that I present in this study also have the potential to inspire other communities who are going through similar issues to engage in self advocacy. Golden Gate Village residents have engaged in important community action that has benefited the community a great deal. They have made their voices heard and taken action to combat the oppressive forces that they are facing. This work could set a model for how others could mobilize to respond to similar threats.

My family roots have been a driving force behind my interest in the community of Golden Gate Village. These issues that the community is facing directly impact my family members and loved ones. This makes the matter personal for me and fosters strong emotions within me. My aunt, Royce Mclemore's advocacy in the community has also inspired me in many ways. It encourages me to make my voice heard and to challenge the processes of injustice within society. For these reasons it is crucial that I take a stand against the injustices that have been occurring within the community.

Golden Gate Village is a strong and resilient community that values family and togetherness. The residents have used these assets to combat the oppressive structures and processes that have discriminated against them and threatened to displace them. Despite the many adversities that they have been dealt, they continue to prevail as a community.

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Appendix A
Interview Questions

1. How did you come to live in Marin City?
2. How did you come to Golden Gate Village?
 - a. How long have you lived in Golden Gate Village?
3. Can you tell me about a typical day in Golden Gate Village?
4. What connections and relationships do you have now in Golden Gate Village and Marin City?
5. Can you tell me a story about something that you love about Golden Gate Village?
 - a. How did that make you feel?
 - b. What strengths have you seen in the community of Golden Gate Village?
6. Can you tell me a story about an issue with the physical infrastructure and maintenance regarding housing conditions in Golden Gate Village?
 - a. How did that make you feel?
 - b. Do you have other stories about issues that you have witnessed or experienced?
7. Can you tell me a story about how you addressed issues with the physical housing conditions?
8. Can you tell me a story about how the housing authority has addressed issues?
 - a. What are some things that the housing authority lacks when addressing issues?
9. How do you feel when talking with the housing authority?
10. Can you describe the gentrification that has been occurring in Marin City these past years or decades?
 - a. How does it make you feel?
 - b. How does gentrification affect you personally?
11. Can you tell me about anyone who has been displaced from Golden Gate Village through evictions or acts of gentrification?
 - a. Where did they go?

- b.** What was the move like for them?
- 12.** If you were displaced from Golden Gate Village what alternatives would you have?
- 13.** What would you like to see change in Golden Gate Village?
- 14.** What do you want to be preserved in Golden Gate Village?

Appendix B
IRB Approval Letter

January 10, 2023

Nicole White

50 Acacia Ave.

San Rafael, CA 94901

Dear Nicole,

On behalf of the Dominican University of California Institutional Review Board for the Protection of

Human Participants, I am pleased to approve your proposal entitled An Inside Look at the Community of Golden Gate Village (IRBPHP Initial IRB Application #[11075]).

In your final report or paper please indicate that your project was approved by the IRBPHP and indicate the identification number.

I wish you well in your very interesting research effort.

Sincerely,

Michaela George, Ph.D.

Chair, IRBPHP

Cc: Jennifer Lucko