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April 13, 2021

Research Final Draft

The growing gentrification in NYC has displaced communities of color and caused a deeper racial divide for housing in Greenpoint/Williamsburg. The rezoning of the Waterfront in Williamsburg and Greenpoint has significantly impacted communities of color by displacing residents while the population of higher income whites increased significantly (Spivack, 2019). The rezoning of 2005 implemented by Mayor Bloomberg was meant to rezone 75 blocks from “industrial to residential use” (Bahney, 2005). However, it caused a loss of rent-stabilized apartments and accelerated the displacement of communities of color (Churches United for Fair Housing, 2019, p. 6). Although the policy implemented by the Bloomberg administration was meant to provide equitable housing it contributed to the racial segregation of people of color and displacement of people of color from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Kim, 2019). Currently, the de Blasio administration is planning to implement new policies for rezoning and are rezoning certain parts of the city. The gentrification caused by the 2005 rezoning is an ongoing issue that housing advocates and legislators are trying to address to provide equitable housing to all residents in NYC.

In 2005, the rezoning of the East River from Greenpoint to Williamsburg was intended to create a “zoning capacity for a large amount of housing....” which led to “the development of numerous high-rise luxury condos” (Churches United for Fair Housing, 2019, p. 4). The rezoning of the East River was meant to create positive changes for the environment and “land use changes” (Churches United for Fair Housing, 2019, p. 5). However, the outcomes that proceeded disproportionately affected communities of color in Williamsburg and Greenpoint. The Churches United for Fair Housing have gathered data that showed the Latinx community decreased by 15,000 from 2000-2015, and the overall population of Greenpoint/Williamsburg increased by 20,000 (Kim, 2019). The rezoning of 2005 accelerated the displacement of communities of color due to the decreased number of housing that was created, decreased manufacturing space, and the loss of 1,000 rent stabilized housing during the process of creating new affordable housing (Churches United for Fair Housing, 2019, p. 5). The white population in Greenpoint and Williamsburg increased significantly between 2000-2010 by 35,000 and were from affluent backgrounds (Churches United for Fair Housing, 2019, p. 5). Moreover, “In 2018, there were about 162,381 people in Greenpoint/Williamsburg. Median household income in 2018 was \$81,990, about 26% more than citywide median household income (\$64,850) The poverty rate was 23.7% in 2018 compared to 17.3% citywide.” (NYU Ferman Center). Therefore, the median household income in Greenpoint and Williamsburg increased significantly, and the number of rent burden households decreased as Latinx residents were displaced (Churches United for Fair Housing, 2019, p. 10). The advocates and legislators fighting policies that disproportionately segregate and displace minorities argue that “rezonings are one of

the primary drivers of gentrification, which leads to displacement” and therefore benefitting developers and affluent white communities (Spivnak, 2019).

Zoning is an important factor that directly contributes to the growing gentrification in NYC. Zoning is “designed to protect public health, safety, and welfare” (Whittemore, 2017, p. 235). However, throughout history in NYC, officials have mainly focused on rezoning neighborhoods of low-income communities of color (Salamanca & Cabello, p. 2021). Currently, Mayor de Blasio plans to “create and preserve 300,000 affordable housing... and has started to rezone East New York, Downtown Far Rockaway, East Harlem...” and 3 other low-income communities (Spivnak, 2019). This has led critics of zoning in NYC to ask officials why aren’t white affluent communities in NYC being asked to rezone? Whittemore (2017) has researched the history of zoning in our country and concluded that race significantly affects how city officials plan and approach zoning in communities of color versus white communities (p. 246). It is critical that city officials and developers change the way that they approach zoning and make equitable housing decisions when protecting the public, health, safety, and welfare of all communities they serve (Whittemore, 2017, p. 246).

The supporters of rezoning of Greenpoint and Williamsburg argue that gentrification caused by the rezoning has contributed to the positive impacts on the economy and job market. A study conducted by New York City’s Department of City Planning (DCP) shows that gentrification can be a “vehicle for integration and socioeconomic mobility” (Hendrix, 2020). They found that prior to the rezoning in Greenpoint and Williamsburg there was heavy pollution and unused factories (Hendrix,

2020). However, due to rezoning there have now been thousands of homes added and new schools have been created. The population in Greenpoint and Williamsburg has been increasing steadily since the rezoning (Hendrix, 2020). Furthermore, the residents in Greenpoint and Williamsburg have grown wealthier as the median household income near the Waterfront is \$97,000 (Hendrix, 2020). Supporters of rezoning in Greenpoint and Williamsburg argue that more jobs, people, and housing will only benefit the residents living in Brooklyn. Although this data is not representative of all the issues that people of color from lower socioeconomic backgrounds face in Greenpoint/Williamsburg. The data does not account for the loss of rent stabilized apartments that were lost during the rezoning of Greenpoint and Williamsburg which caused displacement of Latinx residents. Last November, the median rent in Greenpoint/Williamsburg was approximately \$3,675 (Hendrix, 2020). This is considered very high and would not be affordable to those from lower economic backgrounds as they would be rent burdened. Gentrification may bring more jobs or housing, but it disproportionately affects people of color and displaces lower income families or residents in Brooklyn due to rezoning in their communities.

The racialized displacement occurring in communities that were rezoned are fighting back. The findings published by the Churches United for Fair Housing have resulted in fair housing advocates to “lobby for City Council legislation that would mandate New York City to perform racial impact study as a result of the rezoning process...” (Kim, 2019). City Council Members have also used the findings from Churches United for Fair Housing to push for racial impact studies to be included in any rezonings and would reject any rezonings if the racial impact studies were not included

(Spivack, 2019). As Alex Fennel, the CUFFH's network director argues, it is important to acknowledge that the "colorblind policies...have gotten us where we are today" and that rezoning directly and indirectly impacts racial and ethnic communities (Spivack, 2019). New York City has implemented policies that give local residents priority for affordable housing, but a recent federal lawsuit "revealed that the practice has exacerbated segregation, putting the city in violation of the civil rights fair housing law" (Kim, 2019). Unfortunately, as more studies and lawsuits are conducted around housing in NYC it is clear that the housing policies being created are harming lower income communities of color.

The de Blasio administration is currently focusing on rezoning neighborhoods that are predominantly lower-income communities of color (Kim, 2019). Advocates and elected officials are urging the de Blasio administration to conduct a "racial impact study" when planning to rezone neighborhoods in NYC (Spivack, 2019). In order to address the issues within the communities that have been affected by gentrification due to rezoning, city officials must be held accountable to address the inequitable housing that is affecting lower income minority residents. In the case of Greenpoint and Williamsburg, it was upzoned while other areas in NYC such as Park Slope were downsized to "protect the brownstone rich parts of the neighborhood" (Kim, 2019). The rezoning that occurred in Greenpoint and Williamsburg in 2005 greatly impacted the communities and the results of gentrification are still present today as many lower income minorities have been displaced and are in legal disputes with landlords to keep their rent freezes or affordable housing (Spivack, 2019). In a statement made from the de Blasio administration, they argued that they are committed to fighting displacement

in communities, offering free legal services for rent freezes and harassment for tenants (Spivack, 2019).

The gentrification caused by the rezoning in Greenpoint, and Williamsburg has led to direct and indirect displacement of lower income minority residents and has further racialized affordable housing in NYC. The rezoning in the communities of Greenpoint and Williamsburg has led to significant changes including many high-rise condos that were developed to transform the community from an industrial use to residential use. Although the 2005 rezoning of the East River implemented by the Bloomberg administration was meant to alleviate the pollution to improve the quality of life for residents the actual outcomes were very different than the city expected. The 75 blocks along the East River were transformed into condos and around 1,000 rent stabilized apartments were lost (Churches United for Fair Housing, 2019, p. 5). The median income increased significantly while the rent-burdened households decreased as more lower income minorities were displaced from Greenpoint/Williamsburg (Hendrix, 2020). Some supporters of the gentrification of Greenpoint and Williamsburg argued that many benefits came from the changes from the rezoned planning such as new jobs, increased population, and diversity. However, it is important to understand that rezoning has been used as a way to gentrify lower income minority communities that greatly benefitted white residents and displaced minorities. Studies and research have been gathered around gentrification and rezoning in NYC specifically focusing on the impacts of the 2005 rezoning which show the segregation and racism that exist in the policies which violate the civil rights fair housing law (Kim, 2019). Currently, the de Blasio administration is taking steps in acknowledging that more must be done when

rezoning communities around NYC. Housing advocates urge the city council and the current administration that racial impact studies must be conducted in order to protect minorities and promote equitable housing in our communities.

There is growing gentrification in Greenpoint/ Williamsburg that is causing a larger racial divide and causing the roots of Greenpoint to begin diminishing, and it needs to be stopped. This is unfair for the people of color in Greenpoint. People of color are being displaced because of increasing rent and prices in the neighborhoods and in the meanwhile White people's income household is continuously increasing. White people's median household income is continuously increasing at the expense of people of color. The 2005 rezoning of Greenpoint and Williamsburg greatly affected the Latinx community and to prevent further displacements of minority groups in NYC and the city must learn from the unintended effects that occurred to provide fair housing for all NYC residents. There are several issues going on in the BIPOC community, being affected by gentrification is only one of the reasons.

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