



TRANSFORMING CONFLICT TO EMPOWER COMMUNITY AND DECREASE DISPLACEMENT IN GENTRIFYING COMMUNITIES

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Abstract

Conflict Transformation (CT) is an approach that grapples with and seeks to address deep social conflicts in addition to visible disputes (Lederach, 2003). It has shown success in deescalating violent conflict and creating lasting systems changes across the globe, as well as in US communities. In the US, the environmental conflict resolution movement used the methods to negotiate and address conflict between government entities, local community groups, and private individuals (Madden and McQuinn, 2014). While gentrification does not typically result in violent conflict, it does share similarities with these conflicts including clashing cultures, seemingly intractable problems, and the need for changes in underlying systems and structures. CT holds promise for helping communities navigate the challenges of gentrification in ways that bridge differences, facilitate communication, and further equity.

The principles of Conflict Transformation highlighted in this work illuminate how existing development and equity-focused strategies can be combined to foster true transformation—reframing conversations to encourage truth-telling and acknowledgement of racial disparities. These conversations can be combined with opportunities to build relationships between existing and new residents that can shift the dynamics of power in the community, creating the support needed to lead local government to adopt collaborative governance practices and targeted anti-displacement policies and programs.

The challenges of gentrification require creative thinking. This interdisciplinary analysis across the fields of conflict management, urban development, and community psychology offers the hope of transformation in small and big ways.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank those individuals who contributed their insights and experiences to this work. This includes Tamra Pearson d'Estée (University of Denver), Dominic Moulden (OneDC), Cynthia Parker (Interaction Institute), Mark Chupp (Case Western University), Laura Choi (Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco), Amber Trout (Community Science), and David Chavis (Community Science). Their diverse expertise and careful input enriched all aspects of the work.

In urban neighborhoods throughout the United States, city governments, neighborhood and community organizations, real estate developers, and businesses are wrestling with the challenges of gentrification. These neighborhoods experience planned and unplanned market conditions that have or are leading to increasing housing and commercial costs, which often lead to physical and cultural displacement. Such high-pressure situations create perpetual conflict over control of intangibles such as culture and identity as well as the right to live and thrive in the communities (Brown, 2014; Langeegger, 2016; Kennedy & Leonard, 2001; Martin, 2007). This multilayered series of conflicts requires a dynamic, multilayered response. This paper examines these conflicts and proposes a set of principles, grounded in the discipline of conflict transformation, that provides such a set of strategies to work through the conflict more effectively. The ultimate goal of these principles is to help residents, property owners, and cities create a better future for longtime residents and business owners as well as the overall community.

Statement of the Problem

A common gentrification scenario is for private individuals, municipalities, and developers to invest gradually in building renovations, infrastructure, and new construction in previously disinvested areas. These changes result in an influx of new residents and business owners who are better resourced and are often white. They also result in higher property values, taxes, rental prices, and leasing costs, ultimately leading to the displacement of existing (also known as legacy) individuals, families, and businesses from the community—because they cannot afford to stay, they feel their neighborhood has been stolen, or they do not feel welcome living in the area anymore.¹ As one author describes it, gentrification is “a physical, economic, and cultural process wherein the population of a neighborhood shifts toward wealthier and more educated residents, potentially leading to the physical and/or social displacement of lower-income residents and businesses” (Brown, 2014).²

Currently, considerable thought and financial resources are being invested by foundations, academics, and policy think tanks to identify the most effective methods for making gentrification less harmful to longtime residents and their way of life—to reduce displacement, foster equitable development, and simultaneously support revitalization.³ These efforts tend to group into three types of solutions:

- Those that mitigate the negative consequences of gentrification, such as the Just Cause eviction legislation in Richmond, California, and commercial-development linkages fees to support resident job skills implemented in Somerville, Massachusetts. Houston pushed these efforts further by proposing dedicated small business lending and purchasing to help existing businesses benefit from the new economic expansion and redevelopment.
- Those that build the power of longtime residents to demand fair treatment and protection, such as OneDC’s work in helping residents to form tenant associations, file lawsuits against property owners, and advocate for community benefit agreements.

¹ Cultural displacement has emerged as an important issue as research has shown that, even when secured housing is there to prevent displacement, loss of sense of place and indirect displacement stresses the community (Hyra, 2015; Shaw and Hagemans, 2015).

² Brown uses the terms “transitioning” and “transforming” instead of gentrification because of the “connotation-heavy debate” around the gentrification term. Her definition, though, is in keeping with the framing of gentrification in this paper.

³ See the work being done by UC Berkley’s Urban Displacement project, PolicyLink’s All-In Cities, and the Build Healthy Places Network for a few examples.

- Those that work to preserve the existing culture and build relationships between existing and new residents, such as the work of the Beerline Trail and ARTery extension in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

While important, these solutions and initiatives are rarely integrated. They also do not seek to resolve the conflicts inherent in gentrifying neighborhoods. These conflicts—between new and existing residents, between developers and tenants, between city government and local nonprofits—occur within the broader context of historical disinvestment and the unequal power held by the under-resourced individuals who have lived or worked and continue to live or work in the neighborhood (see Common Conflicts, right). In fact, gentrification can be understood, at the most fundamental level, as a series of conflicts over resources, space, and identity (Rucker, 2018).

These conflicts tend to be polarizing and limit communities’ ability to achieve effective or equitable solutions.⁴ Often, those with power move forward with their development plans, and the richness of a neighborhood’s existing culture, as well as longtime residents’ and businesses’ social networks, client base, and support systems ultimately suffer. Cities, philanthropy, and community leaders have been ill equipped to deal with these conflicts, and as a result, there have been only modest successes in helping some individuals and businesses stay in their communities. There is virtually no evidence that cities have successfully sustained neighborhoods where existing individuals continue to feel they belong and are welcome after gentrification has set in.

There is a need for a comprehensive strategy to consider how the conflicts around gentrification grow and can be addressed.⁵ This is particularly true in areas experiencing early and middle stages of gentrification (i.e., where the housing market is accelerating and the demographics of an area have begun to change) (Moore, Gambhir, & Tseng, 2015).⁶ In these communities, the pressures that cause resident, business, and cultural displacement have begun to occur, but it is early enough in the process for policies, relationship building, and changes in power dynamics to have some influence.

The framework of conflict transformation provides such a strategy. It has the potential to address the multilayered needs and opportunities posed by the conflict present in early- to middle-stage gentrifying neighborhoods. The principles of transformation can lead to different and improved interactions,

Common Conflicts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How land is used • Access to city and county resources • Where/when development and business incentives are given; for whose benefit • The degree of investment in schools and in which schools • Whether money is invested in buses, trains, bike paths, or roads • Whether and which anti-displacement policies are approved • Who represents the voice of the community • Acceptable uses and levels of noise in public spaces • Desirable level of police presence

⁴ As Della Rucker explains, “Conflict [around development in gentrifying neighborhoods] blocks changes that everyone wants at the same time as it tries to prevent loss. It drains time and energy that could be better used. And it creates a legacy of anger, fear and distrust that will have repercussions for decades to come” (2018).

⁵ One example of an existing strategy that is falling short of equity goals is mixed income housing. Researchers highlight the challenges in achieving equitable outcomes for low-income residents in mixed income communities (Chaskin and Joseph, 2015; Fraser and Nelson, 2008; Tach, 2014).

⁶ American Theorist, Phillip Clay, labeled these stages pioneering gentrification and expanding gentrification (Clay,1978)

interactions that help to bridge the negative immediate consequences of gentrification and to create deeper and better systems for these neighborhoods as well as other neighborhoods in a city.

Conflict Transformation

Conflict transformation, an approach to engaging with conflict that has been used successfully in ethnic (in the United States and foreign countries) and natural resource conflicts, holds promise as a framework to name and work through conflicts that comprise gentrification. It is a strategy that aims “to truly overcome revealed forms of direct, cultural and structural violence” (Reimann, 2004). Its principles can help to broker surface and underlying conflicts and create opportunities for balance between the needs of existing and new residents for financial, social, and mental well-being within community, as well as between the needs of longtime residents and the demands of the market.⁷

At its most fundamental, conflict transformation is a “way of looking and seeing” (Lederach, 2003). It’s an approach that goes beyond the resolution of particular, short-term problems to also focus on what is underlying “that lead[s] to mistrust, feeling like one does not belong, and the power imbalances that limit available solutions” (Lederach, 2003). When focusing on the principles of conflict transformation, the goal is to find ways to both address immediate problems *and* to “adjust underlying social structures and relationship patterns that have helped to contribute to the conflict, and create ongoing capacity to focus on root causes and inequities. There’s a desire to both reduce the tensions as well as increase the justice of the solutions” (Lederach, 2003).

Using the framework to think about how conflict presents itself and how it might be resolved, conflict transformation identifies four modes to consider:⁸

- The **personal** level, where (1) individual thinking and decision-making affect the conflict and (2) individuals can grow and change in their approach to conflict.
- The **relationship** level, where emotions (e.g., underlying fears, hopes), the interdependence of people and actions, and communication enter the conflict. Human relationships form the underlying context of any community conflict. These relationships contribute to a conflict’s escalation or resolution. They are the key to understanding conflict and developing ways to bring about change.
- At a **structural** level, institutions, organizations, and structures affect, are sustained, and are changed by the conflict. In the context of gentrification, this might be the way that city councils are structured and make decisions, who is able to weigh in on policy changes, and the extent to which disadvantaged communities and people of color have access to and input into decision-making around how development progresses.
- **Culture** is the level where transformation seeks to “understand how the patterns of culture contribute to the conflict and where there are existing resources and processes in place that might help to handle the conflict and resolve it” (Lederach, 2003). For gentrification, an example might be when existing and new residents have different views on what is appropriate and

⁷ Often gentrification pressures begin when public or philanthropic resources are invested to improve the health, housing, or quality of life in a community. Such investments are often essential to activate the market where access to capital is limited for longtime residents and businesses. Historically, though, these investments have not been accompanied by intentional strategies to ensure that legacy residents and businesses benefit from the improvements. Because of historic lack of protections, longtime residents are often distrustful of outside investment that may accelerate gentrification.

⁸ This section highlights the four modes identified by Lederach (2003) and applies them to the context of gentrification.

comfortable in their community. In this cultural conflict, longtime residents will often have less power and be forced to conform to, or at least endure, the dominant culture's view. Through this, longtime residents may feel their sense of community and belonging is threatened.⁹

Keeping in mind these four levels of understanding and action, city governments and local coalitions can use principles of conflict transformation to guide them in narrowing in on action strategies to best ensure equitable outcomes in gentrifying neighborhoods.

The following section describes the four core principles of conflict transformation most relevant to the gentrification context.¹⁰ These principles help to form a conceptual framework for identifying strategies complementary to the conflict transformation approach and that hold promise for shifting the dynamics in gentrifying places toward more equitable outcomes.

Conflict and complexity hold great opportunity. Conflict and complexity are present in all gentrifying communities; things are changing at many levels, involving many different actors simultaneously. Such a situation leads individuals to feel that the situation is too complex to engage with or, alternatively, to rush to quick solutions, which are unable to deliver meaningful change. If the complexity of the situation can be viewed as an opportunity, though, one starts to see that the complexity opens up multiple avenues for change; if one solution is not working, there are many others to try, and in reality, they need to be tried simultaneously.

The complexity also calls actors to look at key decision points as both/and decisions rather than either/or. Taking this view acknowledges the "legitimacy of different but not incompatible goals." In the gentrification context, this might mean a city asking how it can foster redevelopment *and* ensure that longtime residents can continue to live in the neighborhood.

Relationships can change the trajectory of the conflict. For transformation to be meaningful, there must be spaces and processes that "encourage honesty, iterative learning and appropriate exchanges of communications." In these spaces, a culture can be built where people feel honest and safe to be real about their fears and hopes and hurts and responsibilities. Such spaces are particularly important where power has historically been uneven. In these situations, longtime residents may perceive that they interact with systems and government from disadvantageous positions. New residents may also fear saying the wrong thing and subsequently being labeled or misunderstood. The goal would be to **ensure access** and **respectful participation** and to **understand where past experiences** and ideas limit current efforts toward an equitable and prosperous future for the neighborhood. An example of this work is the cross-racial dialogues that took place in the northeast neighborhoods of Portland, Oregon, through their Restorative Listening Project (see Drew, 2012, for more details). As listening and acknowledgment occurs, relationships are built, and there is opportunity for additional dialogue and discussion. These conversations might focus on ways that stakeholders understand gentrification conflicts and on solutions that could foster greater justice throughout the development process.

⁹ As Langegger describes it, "this is how the gentrification of space operates: the rhythms of public space are changed to reinforce and reproduce gentrifier norms and practices, while the cultural practices of longtime residents become freighted with touristic eroticism" (2016).

¹⁰ The themes in this section were inspired by the writings of John Paul Lederach. All quoted text was drawn from his 2003 piece entitled "Conflict Transformation."

“Reduce violence and increase justice.”¹¹ A strength of the conflict transformation approach is its dual focus on the immediate situation and longer-term change. In the context of international conflict, the immediate goal is often to reduce violence. This is less relevant for gentrification, but the same premise fits, particularly, if we think about violence as the aggressive displacement of residents and businesses from their communities. There is a need to find rapid solutions that decrease displacement *and* there is a need to increase justice in the foundation of the community and systems. From the perspective of conflict transformation, “looking at history creates the opportunity to remember and recognize but that does not have the power to change what already transpired. **The potential for change lives in our ability to recognize, understand and redress what has happened and create new structures and ways of interacting in the future.**” This is a critical part of dealing with various conflicts brought on by gentrification that has little visible connection to the immediate problems that citizens are facing. In addition to the relationship building and truth telling described in other principles, this should be done through actions that change the system of how development decisions are made, such as using a collaborative governance model or participatory budgeting, coupled with community organizing activities that help residents understand the power of their voice and collective action.

Plan for linear action and hold a circular orientation for the work. A firm tenet of conflict transformation is that leaders—those representing longtime residents, those representing new residents, and those representing key institutions—must hold dual perspectives, both linear and circular. A linear perspective focuses on the future, articulating what is needed to address the conflict and “how movement can be created.” The circular perspective reminds stakeholders of the importance of relationship—“that everything is interconnected[;...] things move forward, things move backward, and sometimes, where it seems that you have hit a dead-end, that experience allows a community to go back and see new opportunities.”

Leaders must also work within multiple timeframes for change. In the short term, it may be critical to put in place and fight for solutions to mitigate displacement or to put in enticements and inducements that protect the interests of longtime residents. Over the longer term, though, there is likely a need to focus on systemic changes such as changing purchasing patterns, listening and enhancing decision-making power to all resident groups, and building relationships between those individuals who belong to groups that may have had limited personal interactions previously and likely have a history of animosity and fear toward each other.

Fostering Transformation in Gentrifying Areas

Keeping these principles in mind, we can begin to narrow in on the steps communities can take to increase longtime residents’ involvement and power in decision-making, improve interactions between resident groups, and limit displacement. Our hypothesis is that implementing these strategies in a cohesive way will result in increased short-term and long-term changes in a community, which ultimately will bring about greater justice and equity for both existing and incoming residents, business owners, and property owners (see Exhibit 1). The following section describes strategies critical in any community beginning the process of positively engaging with conflict and working toward transformation. This is followed by a section that details four existing practices that embody the principles described above—restorative listening, relationship building, collaborative governance, and anti-displacement policies and programs.

¹¹ This phrasing is found as a principle in Lederach’s “Conflict Transformation” (2003).

Strategy #1: Articulate the future you are working toward.

It is likely that those involved in a community's effort to decrease gentrification's harms will come with different goals and expectations. Even when organizations and individuals have historically worked toward a common agenda, their priorities in the face of gentrification may vary. One may believe that affordable housing in the neighborhood is the most important priority, and another may view political power for longtime residents as the greatest importance. Other actors, such as those representing city government or local businesses, may want equitable change, but their willingness to engage in conflict or to patiently wait for community-minded developers may be limited. In this context, it is critical to establish a common vision that can be the touchpoint as strategies are debated and conflict builds (Brown, 2014; Kennedy & Leonard, 2001).

The vision must identify what change is desired and for whom. The focus on the beneficiary removes the possibility of considering all change as good change. It squarely places the focus on who wins and loses from redevelopment and creates the opportunity for honest conversation. This is important because, historically in the United States, city leaders, community members, businesses, and other stakeholders have come together under the banner of community, neighborhood, or downtown revitalization without taking into consideration who the winners and losers of the revitalization would be. Equitable development and conflict transformation ask communities to stop and think about who is likely to win and who is likely to lose if intentional action is not taken to protect the interests and legacy of longtime residents. An example of a vision might be a mixed-income community in which development is occurring and where longtime residents continue in and feel connected to their community, where there is a strong and sound business base that has sufficient diversity to support the needs of the range of incomes in the community, and where there are policies and governance in place that can be used to navigate future conflict and interaction.

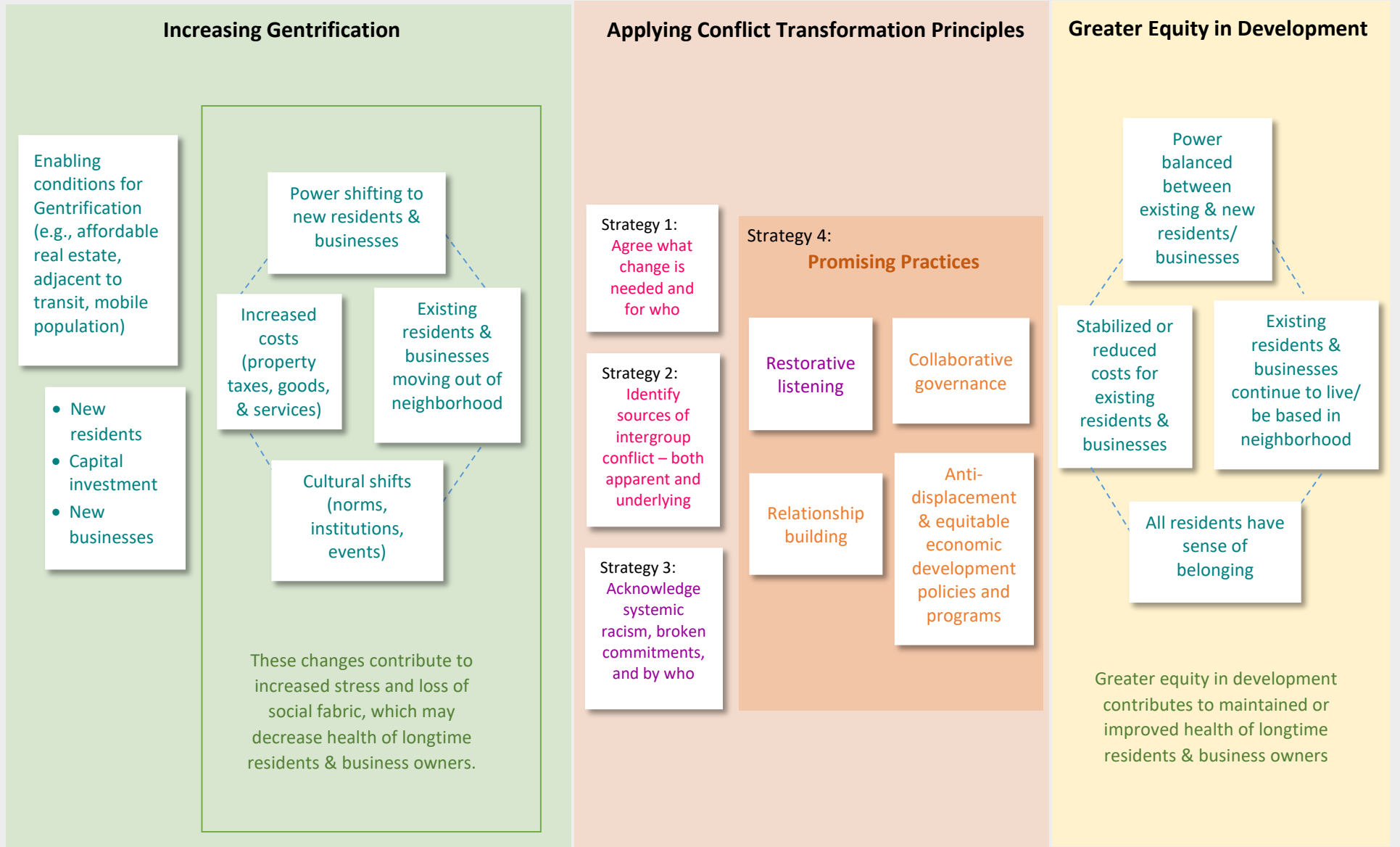
Once this vision is articulated, those involved can use it as a lens to prioritize implementation strategies and assess whether individual actions are directly supporting the vision. When there is not alignment, it will help the community members to refocus efforts toward the vision.

Strategy #2: Document the history and contours of the conflict.

A key step in implementing the approach is to identify (1) the immediate problems fueling conflict (e.g., proposed redevelopment of key blocks and neighborhoods, alteration of zoning to allow for more intense development, quickly escalating property values and rents, absentee property owners not maintaining their units, the decline of local institutions such as churches or service organizations); (2) the actions, including policy changes, that can occur to address the immediate problems, such as tenant protections or the creation of tax increment financing with dedicated increment to support services and programs that benefit longtime residents and business; and (3) the overall relational context that can help to change the patterns of development for the long term. This work can often be formed into a map of the conflict that can be used as a resource to anticipate conflict as development advances and help to navigate conflict when it flares (Wehr, 1979).

Exhibit 1: Pathway for Transforming Conflict to Support Equitable Development

Systemic Racism, History of Disinvestment, Broken Commitments



Strategy #3: Name systemic racism and broken commitments that have occurred in the Neighborhood’s history.

To build trust for this work, it is critical to name the historic racial and ongoing injustices that have occurred in the neighborhood. (The process of mapping the conflict in the neighborhood (Strategy 2) will unearth the history of systemic racism and its harmful impacts on residents as well as broken commitments on the part of city officials and other stakeholders with power.) The naming should be done publicly in multiple forums, whether that be in community meetings, in planning documents, and other ways that may be appropriate in the community.

Identifying and publicly discussing these events creates an opportunity to discern what accountability looks like for the community and the different stakeholders in the process of conflict transformation. This explicit acknowledgement of the harm caused by historic and current/ongoing injustices begins the process of community healing (restorative justice), so that other strategies, such as restorative listening and relationship building, have lasting impact and an ability to achieve their goals.

It is worth noting that Strategy #3 will likely need to be an ongoing process as new information is raised about historic events or as new injustices occur. Forward progress will be limited if trust is broken and there is no acknowledgement or accountability.

Strategy #4: Implement coordinated practices designed to build relationship, shift power, and create equity.

There are a number of promising practices currently being used in U.S. cities to address different facets of the gentrification conflicts. What does not seem to be occurring is an intentional and aligned use of these strategies. Conflict transformation principles tell us that it is critical to (1) systematically name and address underlying root causes of conflict (e.g., systematic racism in development policies), (2) to understand existing relationships while building new relationships in order to understand and to change the direction of conflict, and (3) to work toward fostering justice for the future. These principles help to elevate four specific strategies that communities can focus on to increase their ability to minimize the harm of gentrification: restorative listening, relationship building, collaborative governance, and anti-displacement policies and programs (see Exhibit 2).

Exhibit 2: Promising Practices and the Conflicts That They Address

Common conflicts	Restorative Listening	Relationship Building	Collaborative Governance	Anti-displacement policies and programs
How land is used		X	X	X
Access to city and county resources		X	X	X
Where/when development and business incentives are given; for whose benefit	X	X	X	X
The degree of investment in schools and in which schools	X	X	X	
Whether money is invested in buses, trains, bike paths, or roads	X	X	X	X
Whether and which anti-displacement policies are approved	X	X	X	X
Who represents the voice of the community	X	X	X	
Acceptable uses and levels of noise in public spaces	X	X		
Desirable level of police presence	X	X		

Restorative Listening

Principle: *Create opportunities and forums for truth telling and restorative listening work so there is deeper understanding of each other's lived experiences and acknowledgment of the past policies and choices that resulted in the disinvestment.*

Restorative listening draws on the principles of restorative justice—emphasizing restoration rather than punitive action, and grounding all conversations, motivation, and accountability in community. This is typically done through increasing victims' sense of involvement and empowerment in the justice process, including telling their story, and having offenders empathize with the victim and take responsibility (Zehr, 2015). It is a process of listening, truth telling, and finding ways to create restoration.

Practically, there are two recent examples that can help to illuminate what restorative listening might look like in a gentrifying neighborhood. First, Portland Oregon's Restorative Listening Project is a project designed to "help white people understand the harms of gentrification and racism from those who experience the effect" in order to deepen community members' relationships, reduce interpersonal conflict, and help to build an authentically integrated neighborhood (Drew, 2012). In their work, the project holds monthly dialogues where longtime residents serve as experts, speaking about their historic and recent experiences in the neighborhood. This creates an opportunity for new residents to learn about structural racism and the negative effects of gentrification. The second example is the Kellogg Foundation's Truth, Racial Healing, and Reconciliation initiative. This initiative is investing in fourteen places throughout the United States and using an emphasis on racial healing and relationship building "to heal from the wounds of the past, to build mutually respectful relationships across racial and ethnic lines that honor and value each person's humanity, and to build trusting intergenerational and diverse community relationships that better reflect our common humanity" (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2018).

Restorative listening is an important strategy for transforming conflict in gentrifying spaces because it brings together the need to acknowledge past injustice in gentrifying neighborhoods—the harm that has been caused by past policies and renewal efforts and their ongoing effects—and points toward restoration—finding ways create more justice in the future.

Relationship building

Principle: *Create authentic opportunities for relationship building between longtime and new residents in order to foster new perspectives and collective action toward greater equity in the face of gentrification.*

Relationship building is another critical strategy for neighborhoods or areas that are experiencing gentrification. From the perspective of conflict transformation, relationship building is of central importance because relationships either drive conflict or help to mitigate and address it. There is potential in gentrifying neighborhoods for relationships to create better outcomes for neighborhoods overall and for longtime and new residents. This is particularly true when a neighborhood is early in the process of gentrification. In these places, longtime residents have not yet been displaced and are more likely to still hold power in local institutions and community spaces. Through relationships, there is an opportunity to build a combined culture and to create a vision that leads to protections for longtime residents (Brown, 2014). Transformative relationship building is less likely in neighborhoods where the gentrification process is more advanced because longtime residents have already been physically or culturally displaced and relationships have less potential to change the trajectory of the neighborhood.

To build relationships, it is critical for individuals from different backgrounds, cultures and lived experiences to come together and learn about and from each other. These interactions can build a foundation for common interests and working together to find a shared future. This idea is supported by social capital literature, which has begun to show that inter-group relationships within diverse neighborhoods can help to bridge across groups, increase collective efficacy, residents' willingness to work together, and their ability to influence those who control local resources (Chupp, 2008; Lamore, Link, Blackmond, 2006).

In gentrifying spaces, one of the biggest challenges to building inter-group relationship is that the patterns of community life do not facilitate interaction across groups.¹² Communities must build spaces and processes that “encourage honesty, iterative learning and appropriate exchanges of communications” (Lederach, 2003). People need to feel safe to be real about their fears, hopes, hurts, and responsibilities. This is especially true when power has historically been uneven and longtime residents perceive that they interact with systems and government from disadvantageous position. The goal is to ensure access and respectful participation by all; to understand where experiences and ideas limit current efforts toward an equitable and prosperous future for the neighborhood. Kennedy and Leonard discuss the idea of creating forums to allow old and new residents to “meet on common ground and re-knit themselves to incorporate the new and the old into a unified whole” (2001). Communities also have built relationships by focusing on restorative listening and through intentionally designed community events and local art initiatives that encourage individuals with common interest to come together, share in activities, and indirectly, get to know each other. There are also churches that are bringing an intentional strategy toward inclusion, racial equity and reconciliation in their congregations and in the communities in which they are located.

It is important to acknowledge that this process of building relationships is not easy. Longtime and newer residents may have difficulty finding time to engage, even when they see the value of joining in community building activities. There also is likely to be a substantial amount of distrust on the part of longtime residents. This may be grounded in their lived experience of systemic discrimination, police brutality and mistrust, financial redlining, municipal disinvestment, and a history of detrimental and destructive urban renewal where whole parts of communities were destroyed. Communities have overcome these challenges with patience, authentic engagement by community leaders, activities that are of direct interest to the community members, and using organizing principles.

If communities are successful in building relationships among longtime and new residents, new residents are more likely to understand the harm their presence might do and see ways to act in solidarity with longtime residents. These relationships can help those predisposed to want to minimize their impact in their new communities to find ways to actively engage.¹³ Through coalition building and resident movements, new and longtime residents can change the conversation from “either/or” to one that works

¹² MIT's Media Lab's recent “atlas of inequality” study shows how individuals choose different places to eat, shop, and visit based on income. Whether because of necessity or choice, “where we get coffee, where we buy groceries, and where we grab take-out often reflect our choices, [...]determine the kinds of people we interact with every day” (Misra, 2019).

¹³ These individuals share similarities with those that Japonica Brown-Saracino labeled as social preservationists. Social preservationists “desire to live in authentic social space,” want to preserve the local “social ecology,” and recognize the longtime residents have a culture that can and should be preserved (2009). Schlichtmann and his coauthors described similar feelings as gentrifiers in their communities (2017).

for the benefit of longtime residents (e.g., the coalition supporting co-benefits such as benefit agreements and community land trusts) (Schlichtmann, Patch & Hill, 2017; Brown, 2014).

Collaborative Governance

Principle: *Adopt a collaborative form of governance that is grounded in the principles of conflict transformation to foster justice and generate new solutions.*

While relationships will help to create understanding among residents and other local stakeholders, the strength of these relationships and their influence on equity outcomes will increase through structural changes that balance power and decision-making. An important tool for helping to achieve this is collaborative governance. Collaborative governance is “the processes and structures of public policy decision making and management that engage people constructively across the boundaries of public agencies, levels of government, and/or the public, private and civic spheres in order to carry out a public purpose that could not otherwise be accomplished” (Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2012). This strategy can help to reshape the decision-making table where neighborhood development and investment is shaped. It can also help ensure that the existing community is empowered and educated to participate and direct the decisions. With collaborative governance, citizens and local stakeholder organizations are brought into the process of deciding the strategy for their community in more intentional and deliberate ways, resulting in more shared power.

Collaborative governance is most effective when participants come to see issues differently as a result of their work together (Feldman et al, 2006; Doberstein, 2011; Gray, 1989). As Doberstein observed in his case study, “horse-trading and compromise were not fundamental dynamics at play – rather, it was learning and transformation among collaborative governance members that produced a collaborative advantage in policy terms” (2011). To achieve this, though, certain factors need to be present. Stakeholders’ must have *an* incentive to participate, there must be some balance in power and resources among participants, and there needs to be an infrastructure and leadership that facilitates “face-to-face dialogue, trust building, and the development of commitment and shared understanding” (Ansell and Gash, 2008). Achieving the needed trust and balance of power requires that underlying conflict be understood, discussed, and taken into consideration (Madden & McQuinn, 2014). Collaborative governance and the principles of conflict transformation must be reinforcing. One example of *how this might be done is to establish* clear communication protocols within the *governance* process for (1) *constructively discussing and addressing* immediate conflicts and (2) *creating new patterns of interaction for the future when conflict arise so that there can be productive progress and results.*

Anti-displacement Policies and Programs

Principle: *Draw upon the deep body of anti-displacement strategies to protect longtime residents and ensure their ongoing place in their neighborhoods.*

The final strategy that is critical for successfully using conflict transformation in gentrifying neighborhoods is the use of anti-displacement strategies. Communities are actively pursuing these strategies throughout the country. They include the following (Huston, 2018; Kennedy & Leonard, 2001; America, N., 2005; Rose, 2002; Matsuoka, 2017; Aboelata, Bennett, Yañez, Bonilla, & Akhavan, 2017):

- Facilitating and encouraging anchor institutions to invest in local businesses and local residents

- Putting in place preferential hiring of individuals for large new development projects, extending opportunity to those who have long lived in the area so that they directly benefit from gentrification
- Community benefit agreements
- Inclusionary zoning
- Eviction protections
- Tax freezes/tax abatements
- TIF zones directed to equitable investment
- Workforce development
- Improving schools

Embedded in this list are equitable economic development strategies that are not traditionally labeled “anti-displacement” policies (e.g., investment in local businesses, workforce activities). This inclusion is critical. Investing in local residents and local businesses will strengthen their ability to benefit from the positive aspects of new development. It will also reduce drivers of cultural displacement in that local businesses and institutions will be able to thrive and customers and patrons will have resources to invest.

For each community, it is important to identify and then implement tools that are culturally, economically, and politically viable in that place. The selected tools will be easier to implement and more likely to foster justice through balanced power and preservation of culture, assisting longtime residents in continuing to be present in their homes, their businesses, and in the neighborhood culture. These tools used in conjunction with a collaborative form of governance and coalitions of longtime and new residents hold great potential to alter the negative consequences of gentrification.

There is substantial information available about these strategies and the ways that they can be successfully designed, adopted, and implemented. A few useful compendiums include:

- The Urban Displacement Project (a joint initiative of the University of California, Berkeley and University of California, Los Angeles)
- Gentrification & Neighborhood Change: Helpful Tools for Communities from The Voorhees Center at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
- Democratic Development for Thriving Communities: Framing the Issues, Solutions and Funding Strategies to Address Gentrification and Displacement from the Urban and Environmental Policy Institute
- Healthy Development Without Displacement: Realizing the Vision of Healthy Communities for All from the Prevention Institute.

Conclusion

Residents, community advocates, city staff, and scholars are making progress in bringing the injustice of gentrification to mainstream conversation and pushing forward discreet solutions that are having some success in specific places. There is a strategic opportunity to build upon this momentum, and push toward transformation. This can only be done, though, by elevating and addressing the many conflicts present within gentrifying neighborhoods. The principles of conflict transformation offer a path forward, creating opportunities for communities to examine the root causes of their conflict and providing strategies for discussing and moving through the conflicts to bring about greater equity of the neighborhood’s development. The principles of Conflict Transformation highlighted in this work illuminate how existing development and equity-focused strategies can be combined to foster true transformation—reframing

conversations to encourage truth-telling and acknowledgement of racial disparities. These conversations can be combined with opportunities to build relationships between existing and new residents that can shift the dynamics of power in the community, creating the support needed to lead local government to adopt collaborative governance practices and targeted anti-displacement policies and programs.

The interdisciplinary approach inherent in conflict transformation offers hope of newly framed conversations, altered power dynamics, more intentional listening, and problem solving in ways that can transform gentrifying neighborhoods into places where longtime residents can continue to live and thrive.

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