Ethnically Diverse HOPE VI Redevelopments: A Community Case Study From the Pacific Northwest

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Abstract

The authors examine a Pacific Northwest Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere (HOPE VI) site that, before redevelopment, was a vibrant, multiethnic community where neighbors united to address personal and community problems. We explore residents' sense of community, trust, feelings toward neighbors, and views about diversity before and after redevelopment. Findings suggest that residents valued diversity before redevelopment and experienced a diminished sense of community after redevelopment. Results are mixed regarding the re-emergence of community. Identifying and meeting the needs of diverse populations is important to mixed-income HOPE VI sites, particularly with the country's increasing diversity. Challenges in building and maintaining community are discussed, with recommendations for meeting the needs of ethnically diverse residents.

Introduction

The Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere (HOPE VI) program originally was developed to address concerns with severely distressed public housing. Although the goals of the program have evolved and expanded over time, Salama (1999), through a review of legislative history and of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Notices of Funding Availability, distilled a list of the program's major objectives. They include reducing the concentration of low-income

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residents, creating mixed-income communities, serving diverse households, promoting family self-sufficiency, building sustainable communities, and involving residents in planning and implementation.

Extensive HOPE VI research has identified a number of wide-ranging outcomes (Hanlon 2010; Popkin, Eiseman, and Cove, 2004; Popkin et al., 2004). General outcomes include significant improvements in the physical quality of housing; increases in residents' incomes, employment, and education (not surprising, because mixed-income communities have replaced exclusively low-income communities); lower crime rates; an increase in racial diversity; and improved property management (Fraser and Nelson, 2008; Holin et al., 2003; Popkin, Levy, and Buron, 2009; Turbov and Piper, 2005). Other studies have found mixed results on the health and well-being of residents, however (Curley, 2009; Goetz, 2010). Case studies of individual sites are less positive and raise concerns about residents' loss of social networks, instrumental support, and access to supportive services (Clampet-Lundquist, 2004; Curley, 2009; Goetz, 2010, 2002; Keller, 2012). Although an initial core principle expressed by architects of the HOPE VI program was the expectation that mixed-income communities would increase the social capital of poor residents, little evidence suggests that this outcome occurs (Curley, 2009; Goetz, 2010, 2002), and mixed-income communities may actually reduce social capital in formerly low-income communities (Clampet-Lundquist, 2004; Curley, 2010; Laakso, 2013).

Although HOPE VI sites have been studied extensively, it often is beyond the scope of the research to determine whether changes attributed to HOPE VI can be sustained over time and whether even the communities are viable. Increasingly, discussions have emerged about the program's feasibility (Abravanel, Levy, and McFarland, 2009; Holin, et al., 2003; Wexler, 2001). Indeed, perhaps growing out of this concern, President Obama replaced HOPE VI with the Choice Neighborhoods program (HUD, 2011), which seeks to directly build on but greatly expand the aims of HOPE VI. Choice Neighborhoods focuses on the broader community and on services beyond housing, particularly services and amenities that have wide appeal across incomes, including schools, retail, and parks (HUD, 2011). What about the communities that have been redeveloped under HOPE VI? What are their prospects to maintain mixed-income and increasingly multiethnic communities?

Challenges of Mixed-Income, Mixed-Housing, and Multiethnic Communities

Although focus on multiethnic aspects of HOPE VI communities has been limited, the literature on income diversity can illustrate some parallels to the benefits and challenges of promoting ethnic diversity. A central aim of HOPE VI was to create and maintain mixed-income communities. Although such communities were viewed as being beneficial for low-income residents because they could foster instrumental relationships in which low-income residents might find employment or other resources, these instrumental relationships may not have emerged for a number of reasons (Curley, 2009; Goetz, 2010, 2002). In fact, low-income residents may have had *more* instrumental relationships and stronger social ties within their former communities (Joseph, 2008; Keller, 2011; Kleit, 2010; Laakso, 2013) and may not feel as comfortable in mixed-income communities (Chaskin and Joseph, 2011, 2010). Public housing residents may feel under increased scrutiny by their

middle-income neighbors, believing that different social norms may lead to disapproval of particular behaviors and habits (Chaskin and Joseph, 2011; Joseph and Chaskin, 2010). Duke (2009) noted that strict rules and expectations in mixed-income communities appear to emphasize the rights of more affluent residents, leading lower income residents to view themselves as not truly part of the neighborhood. The potential costs of mixed-income developments for residents of former low-income communities include loss of support networks, increased stigma, increased isolation, and feelings of relative deprivation (Curley, 2009; Joseph, 2006).

Social networks tend toward homogeneity; neighborhoods usually are homogeneous with regard to socioeconomic status (Kleit and Carnegie 2011; Putnam, 2007), and neighboring relationships are more frequent within homogenous networks than between them (Kleit, 2005; Putnam, 2007). It is not surprising that artificially created mixed-income communities face a number of challenges, including tensions about youth activities, race, parenting, and differences in the ways that parents restrict their children's activities (Chaskin and Joseph, 2011) and tensions among different groups of people, including between renters and owners and between parents and nonparents (Joseph and Chaskin, 2010).

Findings regarding ethnic diversity are mixed. In general, in ethnically diverse neighborhoods, trust, altruism, and community cooperation are less common (Putnam, 2007). In their comparison of two mixed-income communities, Chaskin and Joseph (2011) found more contentious social interactions in the more ethnically diverse community. Similarly, in a Seattle study, Whites viewed ethnically homogeneous neighborhoods as being more harmonious than heterogeneous neighborhoods. In mixed neighborhoods, Whites reported more noise and trouble and less trusting relationships (Guest, Kubrin, and Cover, 2008). By contrast, Manzo, Kleit, and Couch (2008) found that most residents of an ethnically and racially diverse community viewed diversity as an asset.

The variety of housing types, central to mixed-income HOPE VI developments, can also present challenges. Renters tend to have fewer social relationships in their community than market-rate owners and relocated public housing residents (Chaskin and Joseph, 2011). Homeowners have noted the lack of integration between homes and rental units (Kleit, 2005), expressing concerns about interactions between owners and renters and feelings that renters have less commitment to the development (Joseph, 2008). Any correlations between housing type and race or ethnicity can add to the challenges of building community.

Joseph (2008) found that former public housing residents expressed general dissatisfaction with the sense of community in the new development. Barriers to social interaction included minimal shared public space, physical and qualitative distinctions between subsidized and market-rate units, stigma, self-isolation by former public housing residents, segregated residents association structures, and perceived assumptions of property management staff about residents.

Development of Neighboring Relationships

Questions arise regarding how to promote neighboring relationships across income levels, housing types, and ethnic groups. "Proximity is very important in the creation of neighboring relationships" (Kleit, 2005: 1435). More than proximity is needed to foster community, however. Physical

integration can foster interaction, but Kleit found that public housing residents in a Seattle mixed-income development were still isolated from nonpoor neighbors more than would be expected, and residents knew more fellow residents who were of similar income and educational level. Ethnicity and native language are important variables in looking at neighboring relationships, and children also can promote ties across housing type and income (Kleit, 2005). Homogeneity in terms of stage of life, homeownership, lifestyle, and values are more important than proximity (Kleit and Carnegie, 2011).

The expectations of the community also may affect neighboring relationships. Joseph (2008) found that market-rate owners expected little personal benefit from living in the mixed-income community, apart from perhaps meeting some interesting people. Public housing residents valued both the demographic makeup and the more idealized environment that they viewed as less chaotic and potentially providing opportunities for their children. According to Joseph, most did not specifically expect benefits from having new neighbors, however, and planned to keep to themselves. Some public housing residents thought that the potential benefits would include social mobility and also thought that more affluent neighbors would develop more realistic and positive attitudes toward them.

Families in Mixed-Income Communities

Families typically interact with those of similar age and stage of development. Whereas children often provide a connection among parents, Kleit (2005) found that in NewHolly, a housing development in Seattle, fewer homeowners had children, limiting opportunities for mixing across incomes and ethnicities. Thus, another challenge of mixed-income housing is attracting a critical mass of families with children (Varady et al., 2005). Middle-income families may not be attracted to mixed-income developments, and those who are may not have much in common with lower income residents (Popkin et al., 2000). Varady et al. (2005) suggested that, to attract families, communities must have strong public schools, work collaboratively with the schools, and actively market to families with children. Middle-class families with children are absent from many developments because of perceived safety issues in the community and the poor reputation of neighborhood schools. In a comparison of three public housing communities, Varady et al. (2005) found that one Louisville development was attracting families with children, although they speculate that it was because housing location did not determine school attendance. A second site appears to have promoted income mixing but not racial integration. Varady et al. concluded that attracting middle-class families with children was not a prominent goal of any of the developments they studied and highlighted the difficulty of maintaining an income mix that will lead to meaningful social interaction across social class lines.

In Chicago, Joseph (2008) found that middle-income families made housing decisions that met their basic interests and needs, looking specifically at the variables of location and affordability but not necessarily at the mixed-income makeup or ethnic diversity of the community. Similarly, Kleit and Manzo (2006) found that place dependence is important in shaping moving preferences, but final relocation choices may be determined more by family factors such as the size of the family, housing options, and employment opportunities. In addition, income differences exist in how

residents' needs are met in the community. Middle-class residents meet many of their needs outside the geographic community and are less place bound (Joseph and Chaskin, 2010). By contrast, low-income neighboring networks tend to be more place based and homogeneously low income, with more overlapping relationships (Kleit, 2005). Particularly for people who are mobility challenged, poor, or elderly, the neighborhood is still the place where many relationships are formed (Curley, 2010). These differences between low- and middle-income groups can challenge cohesion within the community.

A Northwest Housing Community

Salishan, the community addressed in this article, is named for the coastal Salish First Nation peoples, and the name has been loosely translated as "people of many colors coming together." Thus, this multiethnic ideal is part of the historical fabric and lore of the community. The neighborhood has always been more ethnically diverse than Tacoma, Washington, the city in which it is located. "Salishan was one of the area's first residential neighborhoods that was racially integrated on purpose. Diversity by race, language, ethnicity, national origin, and age has remained a signature and appealing aspect of Salishan to the present day, including the redevelopment of New Salishan" (THA, 2009a: par. 4).

This housing development, along with many others in the Pacific Northwest (see Gibson, 2007; Kleit and Galvez, 2011; Manzo, Kleit, and Couch, 2008), presents a different demographic than many HOPE VI sites in other parts of the country. At the beginning of Salishan's HOPE VI reconstruction in 2003, nearly 60 percent of the residents were immigrants and refugees; roughly 25 percent were Cambodian, 25 percent were Vietnamese, and 10 percent were from countries in the former Soviet Union (NICF, 2007). Many types of families were represented in the development, including two-parent, multigenerational, and single-parent families; grandparents raising grandchildren; and individuals living alone. This diversity is by contrast to many public housing developments, which consist largely of female-headed, African-American families, many of whom have lived in public housing for their entire lives (Holin et al., 2003; Joseph, 2008).

Another difference is the Tacoma Housing Authority's (THA's) goal of eventually *increasing* housing density, from 855 to 1,278 housing units, although final projections are for 290 public housing units, 471 other subsidized rentals, and 100 homeownership units reserved for low-income residents. Of those 100 homeownership units, 28 are sweat-equity homes for those whose incomes are less than 40 percent of Area Median Income (AMI) and 72 are homeownership units for those whose incomes are less than 60 percent of AMI (THA, 2009b). Instead of the highrise apartment model, this community initially consisted primarily of single-family homes, interspersed with fewer duplexes and triplexes, all of one story. The new community has a combination of one- and two-story single-family homes but many more duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, and apartment housing for seniors.

Although the Old Salishan (before HOPE VI) community faced significant issues, they were not to the level of the nation's "most severely distressed" housing, originally the target of HOPE VI. The housing quality was poor, with poor wiring and insulation, no showers, and mold and mildew. Community challenges included crime, drugs, gangs, and poverty, issues that were targeted by the THA and residents. The census tract comprising this housing development had the highest poverty

rate in the Tacoma area, with 56 percent of residents falling below the poverty line in the 2000 census. More than 80 percent of the students in the elementary school serving this community qualified for free or reduced-price meals in 2010. In many ways, the residents of this community were socially and geographically marginalized.

Although the poor-quality low-income housing has been replaced with mixed-income housing, market-rate rentals (18 units) are relatively few compared with primarily public housing and site-based housing choice voucher (Section 8) rentals. Individual family homes consist of market-rate homes (257, primarily on the periphery of the development), fewer (28) sweat-equity (Habitat for Humanity) homes, and some (72) subsidized homes (THA, 2009b). It may seem ironic that, although the goal was a mixed-income development, some displaced residents stated that they were unable to return because they earned too much income to qualify for the rentals but not enough to secure a mortgage.

Methodology

Data were gathered across nearly 4 years. The midpoint evaluation, in 2006, consisted of semi-structured interviews with 52 current and former residents (20 nonmovers and 32 movers) of the community 3 years into redevelopment. In 2009, 26 followup interviews, 7 focus groups, and interviews with eight community stakeholders were conducted. Initial interviewees were heads of household, randomly selected from THA occupancy lists, which were divided by housing situation. Additional recruitment strategies were employed by caseworkers and members of the various ethnic communities to obtain representation from the predominant ethnic groups residing in Salishan and from each type of housing. Followup interviews were conducted with all initial interviewees who agreed to a second interview and could be located and scheduled. Bicultural translators and interpreters interviewed residents from the three major non-English speaking language groups at Salishan: Khmer, Russian, and Vietnamese. All resident interviews were fully transcribed into English from audio recordings.

The focus groups included former and current Salishan residents; some had taken part in the initial and followup interviews and others were found through snowball and convenience sampling, including youth and young adults, who were not part of the interviews. The focus groups included (1) Russian homeowners, (2) Russian teenagers, (3) Cambodian young adults, (4) Cambodian elders, (5) late-adolescent Cambodian and Vietnamese youth, (6) Vietnamese elders, and (7) long-term female residents (four White and one African American). Focus groups also were conducted in the primary language of the interviewees and transcribed into English. Stakeholders were recommended by community members and THA staff and included representatives of local government, clergy, and social service providers.

The transcripts were reviewed, looking specifically at issues relevant to sense of community and valuing of diversity, including questions about trust, participation in neighborhood activities, and views toward neighbors. The data analysis included descriptive coding to organize data and look for patterns in segments of interviews and common threads in respondents' accounts of life in Salishan, using cross-case analysis. To verify the original coding, the data were continuously reviewed for discrepancies or errors. The themes and conclusions were compared with those in the literature.

The primary languages spoken in the homes of the initial 52 respondents were English (39 percent), Khmer (23 percent), Russian (19 percent), Vietnamese (17 percent), and Vietnamese and English (2 percent). Of the English speakers, 60 percent were White, 20 percent were African American, 10 percent were Asian or Asian American, and 10 percent were multiracial or another race. Thus, compared with the housing development as a whole before redevelopment, Vietnamese speakers are underrepresented and Russian speakers are overrepresented in the sample. Exhibit 1 provides a comparison of the baseline and followup respondents with the county, city, and Salishan population.

Exhibit 1

Comparison of Baseline and Followup Sample With Total Salishan Households and Surrounding Area

Category	Pierce County	Tacoma	Salishan	Baseline	Followup
Population	700,820	193,177	2,802	52	26
Household in poverty (%)	9.6	14.1	56.0	67.0	57.6
White (%)	78.3	69.2	24.2	NA	NA
Non-Russian-speaking White (%)	NA	NA	NA	25.0	26.9
Russian-speaking White (%)	NA	NA	NA	17.3	19.0
Asian (%)	4.9	7.4	51.3	NA	NA
African American (%)	6.9	11.2	10.5	9.6	3.8
Cambodian (%)	NA	NA	NA	23.0	26.9
Vietnamese (%)	NA	NA	NA	21.0	26.9
Other (%)	2.1	2.7	2.9	3.8	3.8
Person age 5 or older with disability (%)	19.7	22.9	30.3	63.4	69.2

NA = not applicable.

Source: Data for Pierce County, Tacoma, and Salishan are from the 2000 census

Respondents first moved to Salishan an average of 12.6 years before the beginning of interviews in 2006. Nearly one-half of the respondents (48 percent) were married or partnered, 27 percent were single, 15 percent were divorced or separated, and 10 percent were widowed. Slightly less than one-half (48 percent) of the households included minor children, with an average of 1.84 children per family. Most children (85 percent) were of school age, between the ages of 6 and 17.

With regard to education, 27 percent of respondents (mostly from Cambodia) had completed eighth grade or less, 10 percent had completed some high school, 12 percent had earned a high-school diploma, 6 percent had earned a general equivalency diploma, 15 percent had completed some college, 23 percent had attended technical or vocational school, and 8 percent had earned a college degree. The median combined household income was $903 per month although, as with education, responses ranged widely; nearly one-third of respondents made less than $650 per month, whereas the top 10 percent reported monthly incomes of between $2,500 and $4,000. Sources of income included food stamps (62 percent); Supplemental Security Income, state disability insurance, or Social Security (57 percent); employment (41 percent); and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (10 percent).

Results

Before HOPE VI, residents had developed a strong sense of community with high levels of trust and participation in community activities. Residents valued the multiethnic makeup of

the community. It is not surprising that they felt a loss of community through redevelopment. Ethnic enclaves were disrupted and many, particularly elderly people and minorities, felt isolated. Although they connected with neighbors in Salishan before development, followup interviews suggested reluctance to connect with neighbors after redevelopment, for both those in New Salishan and those living off site; 62 percent of respondents indicated that they associated less with their new neighbors than previously.

Trust

Trust is an important aspect of community and of mixed-income, ethnically diverse neighborhoods. Respondents were asked if they trusted their neighbors and if people in their community generally got along with each other in Old Salishan. Roughly two-thirds of respondents in this multiethnic community indicated that they trusted most people in their neighborhood and more than 80 percent reported that neighbors generally got along with each other, although the responses varied by ethnic group and by age (exhibit 2).

Exhibit 2

Trust and Assessment of Neighbor Relationships

Resident Subcategory	Percent Responding "Yes" to the Question ...		Mean Number of Years in Salishan
	"Did You Trust Most of the People in Your Neighborhood?"	"Did People in Salishan Generally Get Along With Each Other?"	
Cambodian	83.0	67.0	16.5
Vietnamese	78.0	62.5	10.4
Russian-speaking White	50.0	90.0	6.4
English-speaking White	63.0	94.0	15.2
Age 65 or older	87.5	87.5	NA

NA = not available.

The Russian-speaking residents exhibited the least trust for their neighbors although, as a group, they also had lived in the community for the shortest amount of time. The Cambodian residents, as a group, had been in the community the longest and showed one of the highest levels of feelings of trust. The oldest residents, many of whom had lived in the community for the longest time, demonstrated the highest level of trust in their neighbors, suggesting, at least in this ethnically diverse community, a relationship between length of tenure and level of trust.

Many of the open-ended responses suggest a relationship between knowing one's neighbors and feeling trust. As a 60-year-old White woman stated—

> *I've never had anybody that I didn't really trust. We lived next to some ... of the worst gang members in town, but because they grew up with my kids they made it all through high school, most of them, fine.*

From another respondent, a 38-year-old African-American mother of two—

> *Everybody in the neighborhood knew everybody and everybody ... would watch out for each other's kids. ... If I needed something and didn't have it, I could always go and knock on the neighbor's door and ask them.*

Although most respondents stated that they trusted the neighbors, a few did not share this perception, as the following comments indicate. "I don't really trust anyone." "In the old community, I couldn't trust people." Respondents who indicated a lack of trust in Old Salishan said they did not have friends or family there, or they had personally been a victim of or witnessed criminal acts. "My car was broken into. There was crime and violence on the street."

Sense of Community

A clear sense of community pervaded Old Salishan, some of which had arisen out of collective efforts to address crime and other community issues. "By the late 1990s Salishan's crime rate had fallen to what other city neighborhoods were experiencing. By the time THA starting demolishing it in 2001, Salishan was a successful and safe neighborhood that was well organized, tightly knit, and occupied by people who were very fond of it" (THA, 2009a: par. 7). Residents relied on neighbors for needs, including food, childcare, and transportation. The community had developed a telephone tree. People looked out after each other's children. As a 28-year-old Cambodian woman stated—

> On every block, there were always seven or eight families that you knew. And you're always friends with someone next door. And your parents knew everyone on that block. So when you're walking down the street, everyone's like, 'That's so and so's daughter.' ... And you felt safe because they would look out for you.

Although this respondent did not romanticize this community (in fact, she went to on to talk about the crime in her neighborhood), the security of knowing her neighbors of varying ethnic backgrounds and knowing they would watch out for her enabled her to thrive under otherwise challenging circumstances.

More than 85 percent of respondents indicated that they socialized with neighbors in Old Salishan. Respondents listed involvement in various activities, including holiday events and festivals, community gardening, resident council meetings, meetings regarding HOPE VI, and ethnically based activities and meals for seniors. Proximity to an ethnically based agency was one of the positive aspects of Old Salishan for the Vietnamese and Cambodians. One elder spoke of visiting this agency for the "community senior lunch. Four times a week we had lunch together. ... It felt like my own home."

In commenting on community activities in Old Salishan, an elderly White woman stated—

> We would have a night out. When we lived on 40th, everyone would get together, we would have a potluck, everyone would bring a dish, and we would get together and know our neighbors.

Some community ties were very strong and provided instrumental help for residents. As an 80-year-old White woman stated—

> I've got some very close people in Salishan, too. When I was getting ready to move into the (new) house here in January, someone stole my check and my friend gave me money so I could move in. We're very close, have been ever since. That's more than a special friend. There's no adjective for it.

Another resident, a White woman raising her granddaughter, stated, "It was a great place. We had no problems and got along with all the neighbors. (My granddaughter) grew up there from when she was 1 year old. That is the only home she knows." Other residents spoke of the comfort of living in the community for a long time, including the relationships with THA staff, as indicated by this statement from a 63-year-old White woman—

> Well, you really kind of got to be friends with everybody up there (in the THA office), you know. And ... a few years after I moved in, my older daughter ... was killed. And ... her body had been dumped right up here, and so everybody here knew who we were. And that because of (my son with a disability) ... they were really good about, 'You don't worry about taking care of the rent; when you get it in here, that's fine.'

In addition, in the community, people came together to accomplish tasks. As a 63-year-old White woman stated—

> It was really a sense of community. Well, you really got to know your neighbors. The kids all got out and played together. If somebody was driving too fast through there, everybody was up in arms. You'd try to get the license plate. You know, people just kind of worked together.

A 60-year-old White woman stated—

> I like the idea of a community. ... Everybody I know that lives elsewhere, they don't really have that thing where you're coming together. Like, we have private security here. You know? And that's really nice and it's because people got together and said, 'Hey, this isn't safe. We need something.'

These responses illustrate human agency, the residents of the community coming together to tackle a specific problem or issue. As an older female focus-group participant stated, "you ladies were right, when something needed to be done in the community, you ladies were wonderful, you knocked on doors."

One stakeholder, a Cambodian woman who was a former resident and later worked in the community, listed some of the benefits of the community and the shared activities—

> Residents strongly bonded together. ... Housing also threw the Thanksgiving party for residents every year. ... The school offered both Cambodian-language class and Cambodian classical folk dance. ... They also celebrated a night-time fest once a month that brought lots of residents and kids. ... (The) phone tree, ... we had three languages in Khmer, Vietnamese, and English. ... If any incident happened, we contacted one another immediately.

A city councilman made a similar statement—

> People who lived within Salishan were fairly tight knit in terms of banding together. Very active with regards to crime prevention and that kind of stuff, so I would just say the strength of community was ... a sense of community. ... There has always been a relatively diverse community. ... Within each of those (ethnic) communities, I think there is obviously a clustering of folks who rely on one another, but I've also seen over the years people of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds band together as the Salishan community. And so you'd see Asian and Native American and African American and whatever banding together on certain projects.

Valuing Diversity

This ethnic and religious diversity is one of the strengths frequently identified by Salishan residents, stakeholders, and many in the larger urban community. They take genuine pride in the ability of so many different groups of people to support each other, to live together, to be a community. Although they are quite diverse in some ways, a tie held that community together—the common experience of being in public housing, of being marginalized, of surviving trauma, of being vulnerable. One community stakeholder, a member of the clergy, noting that trauma was a part of the lives of many residents, stated that—

> *The strength of the community came together during suffering, death, and tragedy. Dealing with that and helping each other, I see as a strength. It was an authentic community. ... They knew how to celebrate together with a diverse population. There was no dominant minority to claim, like those in the big cities claim.*

Another stakeholder, a school social worker, stated—

> *(Salishan was) a place where cultures could live together and as a whole be nourished. ... When I first came, it was heavily African Americans. That waned as the Vietnamese, ... Cambodians, and Laotians (arrived). It became a place of wonderful ethnic diversity. And now ... Hispanic, ... Eastern European. ... And I think this is very rich.*

A community stakeholder who worked with children and youth commented—

> *There was a strong community fabric. ... It was very culturally diverse. ... There was different cultural and ethnic groups that were tighter knit than others. But there was still kind of woven together, 'Everyone's in this.' ... You can definitely notice when they would blend when we'd all be playing and doing stuff together.*

Residents talked about the "good people," stating that despite different cultures or language barriers, they found ways to communicate. They also expressed positive feelings about the neighborhood diversity—

> *I love some of the people. ... There's a couple of moms down at the school that I can't really communicate with and some of them are learning English and I'm so thrilled we can talk. We've talked through translators and we've got, like, so happy to see each other and they're just so sweet. You just kinda learn about their culture by being around them, ... it's like, I wish I can be more involved with all that.*

An older White woman caring for her granddaughter stated—

> *They would all kinda look out for each other. I didn't speak their language, but they respected me and I respected them. I wouldn't have to worry that someone would break in. My granddaughter at the time was only 2-and-a-half or 3. She'd go out on the block, and the people would watch her. I felt very safe she could go a couple of houses down. I'm very protective of my granddaughter. The Asian ladies would give her doughnuts and stuff. They looked out for her. She's 10 years old (now), and I don't let her go across the street to the playground. I've tried, but there's too much going on. I don't feel comfortable. I don't know these people.*

Her response illustrates the diminished sense of community she felt after redevelopment.

Loss of Community After Hope VI Development

Many respondents talked about the loss of feelings of community. A 63-year-old White female resident stated, "I think there isn't a sense of community there was. There isn't the contact with the people that work up here (THA staff) that there was." She went on to say—

> *I don't really visit with my neighbors or anything much. (In Old Salishan) I had kids that were out and about and made friends. There was a bunch of kids my kids' age and they played together. It seems like the kids that are here that are my children's age, it's like their families are just, I don't know, kind of wild.*

Residents also expressed concerns about the loss of the community center and youth programs. An elderly White female long-term resident stated—

> *We talked till we were blue. Kids need activities. A lot of these activities are leaving. ... What we tried to communicate, that once these programs leave, not everybody has parks, not everybody can get there. How do people get to the centers? Now these things are just broken up everywhere. They're scattered. Not everyone can walk. When someone lives here, you could feasibly walk, but it's a long walk, up the hill.*

This loss of shared common space is echoed by another long term resident, stating, "There's nowhere to congregate now. 'Hi. How are you?' That's what we do. 'Smooches. I have to go in the house now, I have laundry to do.' That's how it is now."

Another resident said of the new community, "People don't have the same values. I'm not really planted here. I'm not invested in the community. I was hesitant about my child going out there, because there's always a fight or something going on."

Some of the seniors with the longest tenure in Salishan described trust, interaction, and sharing with neighbors in their old community, noting less interaction in the community since the redevelopment. Many of their friends have moved out and they don't know their new neighbors as well. Health problems contribute to challenges in getting out and meeting new people. A stakeholder, a member of the clergy, stated—

> *It is the hardest on the seniors, specifically ethnic groups who already had a sense of community. Especially those that had family nearby. ... A lot of the people got used to the space, contributed to the gardens. It has become more dense in the new location.*

Respondents identified other barriers to neighbor relationships, including language differences, busy schedules, and more limited opportunities to meet. "We socialize, but our ties are not as strong. Everyone is so busy in America. No one has time." "I don't know them and I don't speak English. I don't know what to do." Another, a 45-year-old Russian woman stated—

> *I study at the college now and work. There is no time. Another reason is that no one is ever outside. You don't really see people on the street. ... In the old community, people spent more time outside and there was more socializing.*

It is not surprising that ties in New Salishan were not yet as strong as they were in the old community. "We don't know as many people here yet. … In a new place, people are more careful. They just look at each other." "As far as friendships and relations, the old community was much better. It was like living in a small town, where everybody knows each other."

One respondent recognized that New Salishan would have more economic diversity and thought that this diversity was an improvement. "Income will be more diverse and there will be less poor people and crime." Another respondent had a different understanding and was disappointed, saying, "They told me that they built them for low-income people, but it is not true."

Socializing in the New Community

After relocation, 62 percent of respondents reported socializing less with new neighbors than previously, and 35 percent indicated no participation in community activities in their new location. Overall, isolation seemed to have increased among relocated residents, particularly elderly ethnic minority respondents. The Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Russian-speaking seniors thought that being close to others who spoke their language was an important aspect of community life. Some had been involved in strong support networks, such as a Vietnamese phone tree and burial society. As one 73-year-old Vietnamese man said, "The life over here (Salishan) was more comfortable, but here it is nothing; it is just an apartment." He does not socialize much with new neighbors because, "We cannot talk to each other. … No Vietnamese here. Only me. … Living here is very sad." A 65-year-old Vietnamese male respondent expressed the same sentiment: "I am very sad to live here. … The Old Salishan was happier than here."

Cambodians provided mutual aid for each other in times of need, both as individuals and through their temples and churches. One Cambodian respondent explained that the decrease in socializing with neighbors in the new community was "because they are Americans." Another elder said, "I don't know [the neighbors] because we don't speak English and they always go to work."

Some residents, however, do report positive feelings toward their ethnically diverse neighborhood in New Salishan, suggesting that community is beginning to emerge again. A 63-year-old White woman stated—

> We have a Russian family next door; they're from Ukraine. I love them. I mean, we've been to their daughter's wedding. You know the adults don't speak English, so it's hard to have a real … relationship with the adults, but the kids, they do.

She continued, "It really fascinates me, all of the different cultures. And we have a lot of our church people that are from Tonga and Samoa. … I gravitate towards it." Some connections are being made across cultures in spite of language differences. As a 52-year-old Russian woman said, "I could not speak English. I communicate mostly with Russian neighbors. I do not speak with Americans or Mexicans, but I do know them. My husband speaks to them." She did state, however, that what she likes most about the community is "Probably the fact that many Russian-speaking people live in this area. In the evenings, especially during summer, people going outside for fellowship talk, like in Russia." Other signs that community may be beginning to emerge include the fact that 61 percent of parents stated that their children do have friends in the new neighborhood.

Discussion

We see a community that was ethnically diverse but that came together to address common problems and concerns. Residents felt a strong attachment to the location and to each other. With relocation, the existing community was disrupted. Some of the most vulnerable residents, elderly people, in particular elderly immigrants, seem to have been the most negatively affected by this disruption of community and have experienced increased isolation in relocation. Immigrants' feelings of not fully belonging anywhere, neither their homeland nor their new home, may be partially eased by living in a community such as this one, with a critical mass of people from the same cultural background and other immigrants with at least some shared experiences.

When considering the increasing diversity of the United States (see Census Bureau, 2011; DHS, 2012), recognizing and meeting the needs of immigrants in public housing are critical. Based on this examination of the Salishan community, immigrants' adjustment to the community is enhanced by ethnic-specific agencies and onsite case managers who speak their language. The immigrants who lived in Salishan were strongly connected to ethnically based agencies, churches, temples, and groups such as the Vietnamese burial society. The older generation, in particular, relies on this sense of community. It also is important to recognize the circumstances of their immigration and the resources they bring with them, which may include history of trauma, limited access to education, different living circumstances (urban or rural), and different cultural traditions. Putnam (2007) spoke of "bonding ties" (with one's own group) and "bridging ties" (across groups) and stated that they are not negatively correlated, as one might imagine. Rather, strong bonding ties may be important if people are to develop strong bridging ties, suggesting that if one feels comfortable and supported within one's own ethnic group, one may be more likely to bridge with other groups. This comfort and support appeared to be the case in Old Salishan, where residents had strong ties to their ethnic community but also were able to reach out to neighbors. When this concentrated ethnic base dispersed, residents had a difficult time adjusting to new neighbors and the new community. In fact, a key element to the success of Old Salishan may have been this combination of the ethnic diversity of the community as a whole ("I love all the different ethnic backgrounds") and the ability to live near others of the same ethnic background ("There are lots of Vietnamese here").

To sustain the kind of multiethnic, mixed-income neighborhoods envisioned by HOPE VI, then, the community at large must be more willing to accept refugees and immigrants, recognizing the strengths they bring to the community. In addition, when residents have opportunities to interact with each other, they are more likely to build connections. People need shared space to observe and interact with each other and ultimately develop feelings of trust (Curley, 2010). Many participants in this study noted that people are not outside as much as they used to be and that some of the previous shared spaces no longer exist. Several mentioned the need for a common space. The ultimate conclusion was that neighborhood resources such as common spaces, parks, social services, and residents' feelings of safety and attachment to place are more important than a mixed-income community for enhancing social capital (Curley, 2010; Laakso, 2013).

Given that this sample was a small nonrandom sample of residents who lived in Salishan before HOPE VI, the results of these findings cannot be generalized to other populations in public housing. In qualitative research, however, even small samples of a nonrepresentative nature can provide

potentially useful insights. Further, the results of this study ring true when compared with other recent research on HOPE VI that have come to similar conclusions about challenges in mixed-income neighborhoods and the loss of community.

What does the future hold for Salishan? The demographics continue to change, as they have over time in the past. Salishan remains one of the most diverse communities in Tacoma. Whether this neighborhood can regain its true sense of community remains a question, because communities take time to grow and develop. The history of Salishan shows that diverse groups of residents can work together. What remains to be seen is how the greater income spread will affect the formation and stability of the community. Salishan worked because of a sense that "we're all in this together." That feeling may not exist in a mixed-income community. With the increasingly diverse U.S. population and continual flow of immigrants from various parts of the world, public housing will likely continue to be a destination for those immigrants and require attention to their needs.

Recommendations

To maintain a truly diverse community, a critical mass, not dispersal, of immigrants and refugees is needed. The experiences of residents in Salishan demonstrate the importance of institutions such as, in the case of the Russian speaking, the church, and, in the case of the Vietnamese and Cambodian, the temples, church, and a small ethnic-based social-service agency. Another important consideration is the needs of multigenerational families. Many multigenerational immigrant families were broken up as a result of relocation, because either housing units were not large enough or multiple incomes disqualified the families from public housing. We recommend that stringent readmission criteria be waived when appropriate to allow for more former residents to return to these redeveloped communities. Residents also have decried the loss of a community center as a place to meet. The shared space of pocket parks and a few larger parks may not be widely used.

Elderly people and those with disabilities have limited mobility and access and may need some additional support. Housing authorities should develop and enhance partnerships for targeted supports to people with disabilities, children and youth, monolingual refugees, and immigrants.

Finally, rather than adopting the one-sided emphasis on mixed-income and ethnically diverse communities as places where poor people can benefit from interactions with those who have higher incomes, it is important to recognize that all residents can benefit from vibrant, ethnically diverse and income-diverse communities. Indeed, middle-income residents can learn resourcefulness and strategies for building community from their lower income neighbors. The long-term viability of these communities demands this recognition of the strengths of all community members.

Acknowledgments

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