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During my twenties, I worked as an educator and gained valuable insights that prepared me for a career in social work. After two empowering years in Columbia's MSW program with a significant emphasis on community-focused, evidence-based interventions, I am thrilled to begin my studies toward my Ph.D. in Social Policy and Practice at the University of Pennsylvania this fall.

INSPIRATION FOR ARTICLE

I have lived in the Bushwick community for five years, and during this time, I have witnessed several changes. The chance to regain some of the power within an ever-changing process has inspired me to write this paper. I use the photovoice methodology to integrate images into the narrative and highlight the intersections and real consequences of redevelopment and policing in my neighborhood. The paper was written within a year, and the challenges posed by the changes within the city, such as budget cuts and fluctuations in the number of police, were constant. I hope that readers can understand the impact of gentrification and the significance of community through this piece.

ABSTRACT

The relationship between redevelopment and police presence is demonstrated in many neighborhoods by the influx of new residents from suburban or rural areas and shifts in police response. As property values increase, police may prioritize order maintenance policing, also known as "broken windows" policing (Beck, 2020, p.247). This is disproportionately felt by Black and Brown residents who often suffer the consequences of rising costs, displacement, increased surveillance, and police presence. This paper explores the relationship between urban redevelopment and policing in one of the most popular neighborhoods in the borough of Brooklyn–Bushwick. As a social work researcher of color, I want to share the narratives that often go overlooked. I felt secure and empowered to conduct research and report my findings as a community member who is seeking to support and collaborate with my community. Photovoice allows me to do just this by highlighting the daily realities in my neighborhood. However, having more voices from long-term community members is imperative and will be essential in further exploration of this topic.

Keywords: gentrification, redevelopment, policing, police presence, Bushwick, Brooklyn, New York City, photovoice, etc.

PART I: RESEARCH QUESTION BACKGROUND

After years of protests against police brutality and what critics called a racial reckoning in the summer of 2020 (Payne, 2021), the urgency to center racial justice, community, and police relations has shifted in the past four years. Before taking office, current New York City Mayor Eric Adams campaigned heavily on a tough-on-crime platform that emphasized prosecuting low-level offenses and reducing gun violence by pledging to spend up to \$5 billion on the New York City Police Department (NYPD) (Goldenberg & Anuta, 2022). New York City has recently announced budget cuts that will affect the funding of important community services. While the NYPD will not face any budget cuts in 2024, New Yorkers will have to adjust to significant reductions in services such as library services, school summer programs, and universal pre-kindergarten (Cramer, 2024).

The NYPD has increased its presence in all five boroughs, especially in areas with Black and Brown populations (Morales & Nickeas, 2022). According to the NYPD's end-of-year citywide crime statistics, the overall decline in crime can be attributed to their policing strategies, including deploying more officers in the neighborhoods deemed most needed (2024). One of the neighborhoods where I have felt an increase in police presence is Bushwick. As per the NYC Planning (2018) publication, Bushwick's growing population was about 121,000. I have been residing in Bushwick since the summer of 2019; however, the current heavy police presence in the area under the Adams administration has changed the way many of us, including myself as a Black woman, navigate our neighborhood.

INFLUENCE OF REDEVELOPMENT

Bushwick has a diverse history. It was originally a Dutch settlement in the 17th century; later, through an influx of European immigrants around the turn of the 20th century, it became known for its small family homes and factories (Valli, 2015). The neighborhood significantly contributed to the brewery industry but never fully recovered after the prohibition era (Saraniero, 2022). The Great Migration resulted in the influx of Black people from southern states, Mexicans, and Puerto Ricans moving to northern cities, including Bushwick. This caused many white working-class families to leave the neighborhood (Valli, 2015). Despite becoming desolate to some, the neighborhood remained a significant residence for Black and Brown families and small business owners. During the early 2000s, The Bushwick Initiative was introduced to enhance the quality of life and promote economic growth within the neighborhood (City of New York, 2006). These initiatives encouraged several new businesses, and redevelopments were established. As of 2019, the white population has more than doubled, while that of Latinos has shrunk from 70% to 54% (Murphy, 2019). This research aims to find an answer to the question; to what extent does community policing influence redevelopment?

Most scholarship on redevelopment explores the process of gentrification as a response to public investments in fostering environmental sustainability. Gentrification reinforces the dominant methods of creating physical space while neglecting the disempowered ones. In areas undergoing gentrification, gentrifiers and developers exercise their power to shape the environment while economically and socially vulnerable groups have limited access to space production capabilities (Stabrowski, 2014). Studies concern the growth of new residents in urban areas from more suburban or rural areas, arguing the link between redevelopment and police presence in low-income neighborhoods intensifies during these periods (Beck, 2020). These changes make lower-income neighborhoods more desirable for inhabitants who previously lived outside of urban areas (Harris et al., 2020). The research shows that criminalization disproportionately affects

Black and Brown communities, often leading to the displacement of communities of color due to systemic inequalities (Beck, 2020; Fayyad, 2017; Harris et al., 2020). Social dynamics and expectations undergo a shift when higher-income residents move into low-income neighborhoods, which can lead to long-term residents being targeted by the criminal justice system for minor offenses deemed "quality of life" crimes (Fayyad, 2017, para.7).

PART II: METHODS

This study was conducted independently through photovoice, a qualitative research method. The research was conducted in my neighborhood, which gave me a better understanding of the photos selected. I am familiar with the areas where the police are usually present and have witnessed people recycle cans at local stores. I have personally visited the locations that represent the tension and unity within the community. Photovoice captures images that portray a research topic's realities. This methodology was chosen because it emphasizes visual aspects over written words, uses photography for knowledge development, and is a powerful tool for critiquing law enforcement in a safe and accessible way (Evans-Agnew & Rosemberg, 2016). It is a strategy for advocacy and can assist in raising awareness of community needs and showcasing the structural barriers imposed on achieving those needs. Over three days in March of 2023, I photographed everyday life and its intersections with signs of redevelopment and police presence in the neighborhood of Bushwick in Brooklyn, New York. The photographs were analyzed in conjunction with scholarly research. As a woman of color living in the neighborhood, the images I captured showcase the impact of redevelopment and policing in my community.

More than seven photos were taken, but the ones included in this study highlight the topic of policing and redevelopment. There was a significant police presence on the three days the photos were taken. To grasp a better understanding of the information obtained from the captured images, I searched for supporting materials, academic articles,

and research studies using relevant keywords like "redevelopment and policing," "gentrification and policing," "displacement," and "Bushwick."

Although the images in this paper were taken individually, photovoice can also be done collaboratively with colleagues and members of communities. This allows more people to participate in research meaningfully and can lead to advancements in areas that may have remained hidden from the direct experience of readers. By incorporating participant voices, themes that reflect a wider range of perspectives can be developed (Evans-Agnew et al., 2016). Photography is a quick process that allows images to be captured for research purposes. This approach also ensures safety when the research subject is unpredictable. As a Black woman who moved from low-income to the fringes of the middle class as an adult, I have always been cautious of law enforcement, recognizing the implications of their presence and the challenges of navigating it. This caution has only increased as my research aims to hold our current legal systems accountable by documenting what is truly happening and focusing on individuals and communities that may be overlooked. This is especially important during times of redevelopment and increased policing, when communities may be subject to displacement and over-surveillance without any say in the matter. Through photovoice, I can support my community without risking getting too close to or aggravating law enforcement.

PART III: NARRATIVE OF PHOTOS

During the mornings of March 1-4, 2023, I walked around the Bushwick neighborhood to explore the impact of policing and redevelopment in the area. I planned to capture photos showcasing police tactics such as patrolling the neighborhood streets and subways. Additionally, I aimed to document examples of redevelopment and how it has affected the historically Black and Brown communities. I walked between subway stops on the L train line from Dekalb Ave. to Jefferson St. and captured numerous examples of policing, redevelopment, and community impact. The following best represents my findings.

POLICING IN THE COMMUNITY

Three images were selected to depict the current police presence in the Bushwick community. Figure 1, taken on the morning of March 1, 2023, shows two officers standing beside their squad car. Graffiti, a common sight in the neighborhood, can be seen in the background. Apart from a delivery man, no one else is on the street. It is common for men to spend time socializing by listening to music, smoking weed, and drinking, especially during warmer weather. Although their group may have evolved, they have always been present. Since Figure 1 was taken close to where I live, I better understand what their presence means.

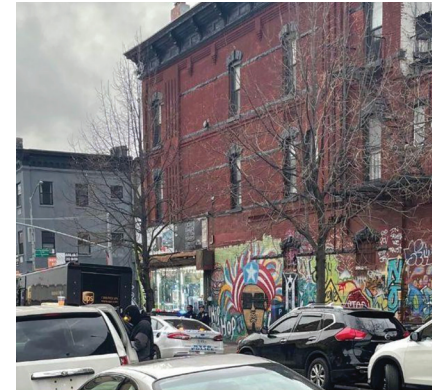


Figure 1. Cops on corner.

On this day, there was no sign of these men or anyone else on the street corner, raising the question of where they had gone. Studies have shown that as more white and middle-class people move into a neighborhood, the level of policing tends to increase (Harris et al., 2020).

In a recent article by Brenden Beck (2020), the impact of police presence on low-level arrests in gentrifying neighborhoods is explored. Beck highlights the correlation between rising housing costs and increased police spending, particularly in terms of order maintenance policing, which concerns maintaining social order and the monitoring of minor offenses.

Figure 2 regards the police presence in the community, which was captured near subway stations within walking distance. I have noticed that most people use the train stations during weekday mornings to commute to work or school. I spotted two police cars parked near the entrances, which may result from the current city administration's efforts

to crack down on lower-level crimes such as fare evasion.

Being a woman of color with my own experiences of law enforcement, I maintained a safe distance while capturing these photos. It was unclear whether the officers were in the car or inside the station. Being able to document such an apparent police presence during commute hours



Figure 2. Cops at subway.

is concerning given that their presence results in the absence of others or induces stress if one cannot pay the current \$2.90 fare for a subway ride. Figure 3 depicts the police presence in a Bushwick community that is prominent and appears to focus more on minor offenses, which will have a disproportionate impact on the lives of the Black and Brown residents.



Figure 3. Additional cops at subway.

REDEVELOPMENT IN THE COMMUNITY

The community is connected to Manhattan via four different subway lines, making it an ideal location for development. By the time the 2007 recession hit, redevelopment was underway and continued as the vulnerable conditions that followed the recession allowed many

developers to take advantage of the situation (Parés et al., 2017). The change in the community continues rapidly, and more local businesses are closing their doors due to rising costs, further accelerating the transformation of the community. While walking home, I came across Figure 4, an infrastructure with development for sale sign, nestled

between the Jefferson St. and Dekalb Ave. L train stops. Seeing signs of redevelopment in my neighborhood makes me reflect on my positionality, as I belong to a demographic that is privileged in terms of economic status but underrepresented in terms of ethnicity.

My economic status grants me access to established businesses that are owned and run by the community, as well as new establishments. However, community members who look like me but are not as economically privileged may not have the same access.

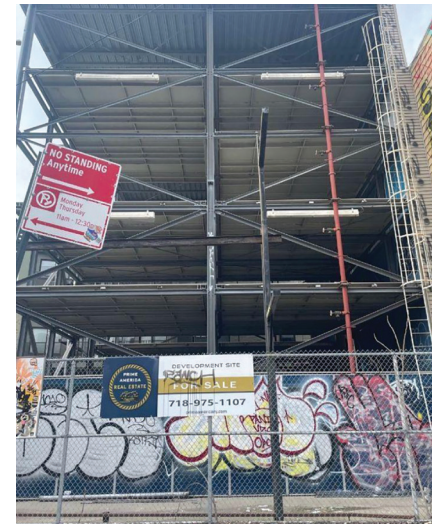


Figure 4. Redevelopment.

Figure 4 could represent the beginning of many things for the Bushwick community, such as a new bar or business. However, there is reason to question the intentionality when new infrastructures appear, as Figure 4 illustrates. “In what Wilson (2018) terms the ‘racial development machine’, gentrification in once low-income communities of color become an intentional strategy to create capital accumulation as low-value properties are replaced by infrastructure valued by white newcomers” (Harris et al., 2020, p. 3).

The location of the building situated between two patrolled stations raises the question of whether there are any underlying reasons or advantages for those who support the presence of law enforcement beyond addressing low-level crimes. Only time will reveal the true nature of this new infrastructure; however, the concerns and questions that arise within communities like Bushwick represent the tension that gentrification presents and its links to police presence.

IMPACT ON COMMUNITY ECONOMIC EFFECTS

New spaces may not be inclusive to people of color in gentrification. It is incumbent upon people of color to prove their credibility and justify their use of these new spaces. Figures 4, 5, and 6 showcase the Bushwick community and illustrate the impact of redevelopment in different ways.

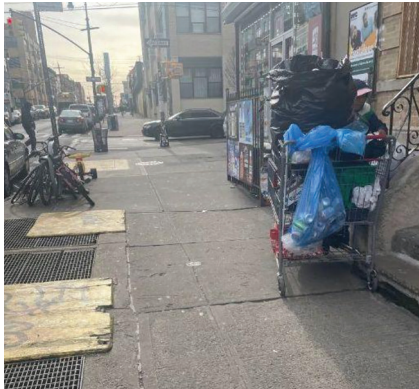


Figure 5. Woman recycling.

Figure 5 depicts a woman bundled up for the cold morning weather and placing recyclable cans and bottles in plastic bags. A large shopping cart, which had come from a nearby grocery store, accompanied her. There are a few places in the neighborhood where one can exchange recyclables for

money. What caught my attention the most about Figure 5 was the size of the bags and the significant number of recyclables she had gathered. Juxtaposed with myself as a fellow community member, the quality of life also comes into question. It again brings up how positionality plays a role in what is expected of us to navigate within our neighborhood. Questions came to mind such as how long this woman had to work to collect as much as she had and how much she would be paid for her labor. As the cost of living continues to rise, the compensation for the number of cans collected in the reverse vending machine should shift to match a shifting economy. The current budget cuts are having a noticeable impact on city agencies which need help to provide essential benefits and services to New Yorkers at historically high levels (Honan, 2023). This will affect everyone, but the extent of the impact may vary depending on individual circumstances.

INCREASE IN POLICING

Figure 6 shows a smoke and convenience shop, which has become a familiar sight across the city since the legalization of recreational marijuana in 2021. It is located on the same side of the street as the development site that is for sale. The shop faces a subway entrance that is regularly patrolled by law enforcement. The presence of police and ongoing redevelopment activities have no end in sight.

An immigrant man from India owns this convenience shop. He was able to employ a recent immigrant as a store clerk. However, the store has faced numerous challenges from law enforcement since its inception. Such attention can be detrimental to smaller businesses like this one which may lack the resources to recover from financial losses and the potential for increased surveillance. As Eric Adams enters another year as mayor, he remains focused on establishing robust policing (Cramer & Mays, 2023). Figure 6 symbolizes his commitment to this promise. It highlights the impact of these changes on primarily Black and Brown neighborhoods, including their businesses.



Figure 6. Smoke shop.

SOLIDARITY

During my walk, I came across the contents of Figure 7, which caught my attention. The scene depicted a painting, Our Lady of Guadalupe (unknown, n.d), enclosed by candles, plants, and debris. Although Figure 7 does not relate directly to redevelopment or policing, it reflects the community's solidarity amidst the transformation.



Figure 7. Community art (Source: Unknown, n.d.).

"Our Lady of Guadalupe" is a significant icon in Mexican culture (Janzen, 2020). It can be seen throughout the neighborhood as artwork in store windows or printed on candles in bodegas. When I see this symbol, I see the people in my community. The painting was placed outside the Bushwick flea market and has been there for quite some time. The flea market is only open on certain days of the week and is home to many plant shops, record collections, antiques, and vintage finds. The flea market

is one of the few places in the neighborhood where you may see people of all demographics existing in the same space as people who work and sell at the flea market are from the community. "Our Lady Guadalupe" is ubiquitous within the neighborhood. The artwork stood out as a symbol of different cultures and an appreciation of those who have historically been here.

PART IV: DISCUSSION

By showcasing the Bushwick community, I aim to encourage conversations among those who find themselves at the intersection of representation within our communities. In various boroughs of New York City, you may encounter people who live their lives differently than you, and that is a chance to examine what privileges our social positions offer us. The photographs portray individuals from the community who may be negatively impacted by increased police presence and gentrification of their neighborhood.

The community of Bushwick in Brooklyn has undergone multiple restructurings over time, and this article aims to shed light on the effects of redevelopment and policing in the area within the context

of the broader changes taking place in New York City. The photovoice methodology provided me with a better understanding of the context of the images as the photos were taken in my neighborhood. The redevelopment of an area can have lasting impacts on the community and demographic composition. Scholarly research has found a link between rising housing costs and increased policing spending, particularly order maintenance policing, which focuses on maintaining social order and monitoring minor offenses (Beck, 2020). Community members congregating outside may feel uncomfortable due to loitering interpretations and economic pressure from rising metro costs as aspects of daily life in the community are scrutinized more closely. Communities often undergo changes which may result in individuals being marginalized and neglected, and there are opportunities to consider the privileges our social positions afford us, learn about our communities' history, and show solidarity with them in various boroughs of New York City.

PART V: LIMITATIONS

While this research method allows for an extended investigation beyond the location of a photo, which in turn provides more time for reflection and a thorough interpretation of the research data, some things could be improved by this methodology. One significant limitation is the risk that my own bias as the photographer and researcher affects how the data is collected and interpreted. Therefore, there is a need to expand this methodology and incorporate the voices of the community to achieve a more comprehensive approach.

I conducted my research in my neighborhood, which gave me a better understanding of the photos. I am familiar with the areas where the police are usually present and have witnessed people recycle cans at local stores. I have personally visited the locations that represent the tension and unity within the community. However, if the photographs are not analyzed in conjunction with scholarly research, they may not hold any significance. My insights might have differed if I had chosen to conduct research in a neighboring area. Using this methodology

challenged my positionality within Bushwick, shifting from neighbor to voyeur. Understanding one's social location and remaining cognizant throughout the process is crucial to avoid skewing the research. To enhance the understanding of the paper, it would be beneficial to involve long-term community members in the research process.

PART VI: CONCLUSION

This research sheds light on the relationship between redevelopment and policing in the growing neighborhood of Bushwick, Brooklyn. Under current Mayor Adams, there has been an increase in officers on foot as part of his push to decrease crime; however, daily experiences are left out when understanding what this looks like on the ground. Many scholars and researchers have found that police behavior tends to change as the demographics of a community change (Beck, 2020; Fayyad, 2017; Harris et al., 2020). Additionally, much of the focus of police work is on order maintenance policing, which perpetuates harmful and inaccurate narratives about Black and Brown community members in Bushwick. Photovoice aims to promote advocacy through images to better understand a community's daily experiences. The selection of images showcased various aspects of policing, such as preventing loitering and fare evasion as well as signs of redevelopment and daily life experiences of community members. By observing these images, we can gain insight into the effects of increased policing on the area.

By capturing and sharing visual representations of communities around us, people can effectively humanize issues and convey the need for policies that are truly inclusive and considerate of citizen needs. As a researcher using the photovoice methodology, I was aware of my social identity and privileges and how they could affect the results and interpretations of the study. Social work researchers like me must be mindful of our positionality when employing this methodology as photovoice can help document and advocate for overlooked individuals and communities, holding our legal systems accountable. Including a participatory component for long-term community members would further enrich the paper's insights. Ultimately, the paper emphasizes the

potential of the photovoice method to generate critical knowledge so that the experiences of those often ignored can be heard.

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