

# **Gentrification and policing: evidence and implications for reducing criminalization of people who use drugs**

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# Collaborators, Funding & Conflicts

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- ▶ **Conflicts of interest:** None



# Background & Introduction

- ▶ Policing is increasingly considered a health risk, concentrated among minoritized communities
- ▶ Gentrification posited to be one factor that increases police exposure
- ▶ “the process in which neighborhoods with low socio-economic status experience increased investment and an influx of new residents of higher socio-economic status” (Hwang & Lin 2016)
- ▶ Gentrification tends to affect Black, Brown, and majority low-income neighborhoods
- ▶ In the U.S., CDC named gentrification a public health issue



# Study Objective

## ▶ Overall goal

- ▶ Explore the state of the current global literature regarding gentrification, policing, and racialized health outcomes using a scoping review

## ▶ Objectives

1. Systematically map research on health outcomes and racial disparities associated with gentrification and policing;
2. Characterize and describe literature regarding study locations, discipline, definitions of gentrification, and findings;
3. Identify gaps in the literature and make suggestions for future research



# Search Results & Study Characteristics

- ▶ **N=2,680** abstracts/titles retrieved
  - ▶ N=114 duplicates removed
- ▶ **N=2,566** abstracts/titles screened
  - ▶ N=2,524 did not meet inclusion criteria
- ▶ **N=42** studies for full-text review
  - ▶ N=16 excluded
    - N=5 historical analysis
    - N=3 no policing included (general crime)
    - N=4 no empirical research results
    - N=4 no gentrification (general neighborhood improvement)
- ▶ **N=26 studies included in review**

- ▶ **Study Locations**
  - ▶ 21/26 in North America (17/21 in US)
- ▶ **Discipline**
  - ▶ 5: Public health or medicine
  - ▶ 3: Psychology or social work
  - ▶ 12: Urban studies/geography
  - ▶ 2: Criminology
  - ▶ 3: Anthropology or sociology
  - ▶ 1: Unclear
- ▶ **Methods**
  - ▶ 14 qualitative + 3 multi-method with qual
- ▶ **Definitions**
  - ▶ 13/26 provided explicit definition
  - ▶ Of quant studies, only 3 included changes in racial composition

# Results: Direct Policing

- ▶ *interpersonal interactions between individuals and police (e.g., harassment, violence, arrest)*
  - ▶ Overall, studies found a clear and consistent relationship between gentrified or gentrifying neighborhoods and increased police presence and direct interactions
  - ▶ However, studies differed on identifying the driving forces behind this increase
- ▶ **Identified three potential mechanisms for direct policing-gentrification relationship**



# Mechanisms Driving Direct Policing

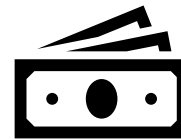
## Citizen-led

- ▶ 311 or 911 calls for service from new residents/gentrifiers
- ▶ Group threat/Racial threat hypothesis
- ▶ Though gentrifiers are fewer, they tend to have greater political/economic sway



## Economic or political-led

- ▶ Keep new gentrification-led businesses, sports arenas, or other amenities “safe”
- ▶ Protect the fiscal interests of new developers
- ▶ Appease constituents by being “tough on crime”



## Police-led

- ▶ Police perception of public safety
- ▶ Police’s view that their role is to keep new citizens “safe” in gentrified areas
- ▶ Often intersects with other two drivers





# Results: Indirect Policing

- ▶ *vicarious experiences of policing through others or the environment*
- ▶ **Ambient surveillance**
  - ▶ General police presence increased (no interactions)
  - ▶ More surveillance cameras (private, police instituted)
- ▶ **Increasing tension, unease**
  - ▶ Feeling of always being watched
  - ▶ Expressed feelings of needing constant vigilance, tense interactions
  - ▶ Black and Latino residents (especially men) most affected
- ▶ **Unexplored areas**
  - ▶ Findings mostly from qualitative studies, but few
  - ▶ Lack of research on vicarious trauma, especially quantitative





# Effects on Health and Related Outcomes



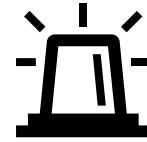
## Mental Health

- ▶ Depression
- ▶ Anxiety, stress



## Physical Health

- ▶ Violence from police
- ▶ Reducing access to health-promoting resources



## Behavioral Changes

- ▶ People who use drugs, sex workers avoid police
- ▶ Increases HIV, violence, overdose, and SSTI risk



## Other Effects

- ▶ Erosion of cultural practices
- ▶ Social cohesion: loss of home, community identity



# Conclusions & Next Steps

## Gaps

- ▶ Limited study designs (qualitative)
- ▶ Few studies from public health or medicine
- ▶ Retrospective
- ▶ Lack of explicit, consistent definition of gentrification

## Opportunities

- ▶ Mixed or multi-method designs
- ▶ Multidisciplinary approaches
- ▶ Longitudinal, prospective studies

