Refugees and Public Housing Redevelopment

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In some US metropolitan areas, increasing diversity among assisted housing residents due to influxes of immigrants and refugees is commonplace and creates new challenges for implementing public housing redevelopment. However, US redevelopment policy does not recognize this diversity. Responding to this gap, this paper summarizes findings from focus groups with Cambodian, Vietnamese, Somali, and Eritrean immigrant and refugee residents of three US HOPE VI public housing redevelopment sites in the Seattle, Washington, metropolitan area, where each site was at a different stage of redevelopment. Results indicate that these immigrants and refugees recognize their differences from mainstream American society and that public housing serves simultaneously to build and maintain in-group social ties while easing their interaction with the mainstream. Additionally, they experience ambivalent relationships to power, expressing gratitude for government and humanitarian agencies, while experiencing distrust of these and other unfamiliar US institutions such as utility companies or the housing authority itself. In addition to the usual stigma associated with public housing redevelopment or immigrant status, these respondents expressed heightened experience of stigma due to the disdainful judgments of non-subsidized co-ethnics. Their experiences suggest that in some ethnically diverse public housing communities, policies that recognize the diversity of experience can improve public housing redevelopment projects and facilitate the successful adaptation of immigrants and refugees to their adopted homeland.

Keywords: *public housing, immigrants, refugees, redevelopment, HOPE VI, adaptation.*

In the US, the restructuring of public housing has been at the forefront of affordable housing policy since about 1990. The purpose of such programs has been to try to ameliorate social and economic isolation, distress and stigma associated with such communities (Kleit and Page, 2008; Turner, Popkin, and Rawlings, 2009; van Beckhoven, Bolt, and van Kempen, 2009). In the US, this effort primarily consists

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of the creation of new mixed income housing developments to replace the most distressed 3 percent of 1.5 million units of public housing, necessitating the relocation of residents. The most visible of these efforts has been the HOPE VI program, which, beginning in 1993, provided grants to local public housing authorities to redevelop selected sites.

While economic mixing has been a central strategy of these programs, issues of race and ethnicity have not. Moreover, evaluations of the impacts of public housing redevelopment on residents in the US have focused on the majority of sites where African Americans and Latinos comprise the racial and ethnic mix rather than on particular areas of the country that house relatively large populations of immigrants and refugees (for exceptions, see Allen and Goetz, 2010; Crump, 2002; Kleit and Carnegie, 2011; Kleit and Galvez, 2011; Kleit and Manzo, 2006). Of these foreign born residents, some are immigrants—voluntary in-migrants to the US—while many are refugees, living outside their country of origin having fled war, or economic disaster and who are "unable or unwilling to return because of persecution, or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group" (Halpern, 2008, p. v). Given a context of globalization and widening immigration patterns, it is likely that the upward trend of immigrants and refugees in US public housing will continue, as is already the case in social housing in most Western European countries (eg: France, Germany, the Netherlands, see Kauppinen, 2002). The goal of this paper, therefore, is to characterize the experiences of such residents during public housing redevelopment and suggest ways in which redevelopment policies, practice, and regulations can be responsive to residents who experience redevelopment in the midst of their adaptation to life in the US.

POLICY CONTEXT AND IMMIGRATION FLOWS

In order to understand the experience of refugees, it is important to first understand how refugees end up living in US public housing. Refugees come to the US under the auspices of the Refugee Act of 1980 (Public Law 96-212 and Section 413(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, enacted March 17, 1980). Many have experienced both physical hardship and psychological trauma due to war, political upheaval or persecution, or years in refugee camps. When they get to the US[1] one of 10 voluntary resettlement agencies receives and places them in their new homes (Bureau of Population, 2010; Refugee Transitions, n.d.). Their status as refugees immediately ties them to public assistance programs for their first five years in the US (Singer and Wilson, 2006).[2] One notable aspect of the Refugee Act of 1980 is that it specifies economic self-sufficiency as one of the most important outcomes for refugee help efforts. Refugees are deemed self-sufficient when the family can support itself without refugee transition support, depending on a combination of earn-

ings and other public benefits (Halpern, 2008). Economic self-sufficiency, however, is very difficult for refuges to achieve, although about 66 percent of those refugees surveyed in 2008 had done so within 5 years of arrival in the US (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2011). The three most prominent challenges to achieving economic self-sufficiency for refugees include: (1) the need for linguistically and culturally appropriate services amidst large caseloads, limited budgets, and a shortage of qualified staff; (2) challenges in obtaining gainful employment because of language barriers; and (3) difficulties getting to and from work. In addition, affordable housing is a problem for them along with other non- refugee low-income immigrants and citizens. Nationally, about a quarter of refugees received housing assistance in 2008, and utilization varies greatly by group—only 8.6 percent for Latin American refugees compared to nearly 38 percent of refugees from Africa, 30 percent for those from the Middle East, and 22 percent for those from East Asia (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2011).

In the US immigrants and refugees are often found in what Audrey Singer and co-authors have called "twenty-first century gateway cities"—places that, since 1995, have seen their immigrant population triple or quadruple, but that still have smaller immigrant populations than more established gateway cities like New York, Chicago, or Los Angeles (Singer et al., 2008). These newer gateway cities— Minneapolis-St Paul, San Jose, Atlanta, and Seattle – are attractive because of the housing and economic opportunities found there as well as their suburban settlement patterns, making them among the top 10 cities for refugee settlement between 1983 and 2004 (Singer and Wilson, 2006). Given their tenuous economic foothold in their new country of residence, it is not surprising, that increasingly more immigrants and refugees live in subsidized housing in these cities.

The Seattle, Washington metropolitan area, the location of this research, ranks fifth in the US in terms of refugee resettlement, the first after the more established and larger gateway cities noted above (Wilson and Singer, 2007). The relatively large number of immigrants and refugees coming to the Seattle metropolitan area during the 1990s has contributed to its emergence as an immigrant gateway city (Singer and Wilson, 2006). Nearly half of the Seattle metropolitan area's foreign-born population arrived in the US between 1990 and 2000, and 18 percent of these recent arrivals are refugees, similar to patterns in other new immigrant gateway cities. In the Seattle metropolitan area as well as in some other gateway cities, refugees are often placed in public housing (Kleit and Allison, 2002; Kleit, Carlson, and Kutzmark, 2003; Manzo, Kleit, and Couch, 2005). Minnesota's Twin Cities, for example, is known for its concentration of Hmong refugees in its public housing (Allen and Goetz, 2010; Crump, 2002).

When public housing redevelopment occurs in the US, developments are usually razed, necessitating the relocation of all residents. Most move out of the neighborhood although a minority (less than one-third) do return (Goetz, 2010b). Those who do not return are usually given housing vouchers and find housing elsewhere,

often in areas with increasing poverty rates, although such rates are lower than original sites (Goetz, 2010a). Additionally, those housing choices appear to be limited to neighborhoods where other minorities live and that tends to be fairly close to the original development (Goetz, 2010a; Kleit and Galvez, 2011; Oakley and Burchfield, 2009). Although refugees are assigned to public housing to create stability in their lives upon arrival in the US, forced relocation arguably challenges that stability.

IMMIGRANT ADJUSTMENT AND HOUSING REDEVELOPMENT

The conditions and processes involved in immigrant and refugee adjustment to their new countries are contested. Berry (1999, 2001) synthesizes decades of research that examines what happens when people from two or more cultural groups meet, and identifies two dominant research traditions. The first tradition explores the process of cultural change that occurs when two or more cultural groups come into contact with each other. Research in this tradition shows that while change may occur in both groups, more frequently the dominant group changes less than the minority group. These group changes engender individual psychological acculturation changes as well. The second research tradition – the ethnic relations tradition – focuses on how individuals "perceive, evaluate, and behave towards one another both within and across ethnic boundaries" (Berry, 1999, p. 13) including everything from ethnocentrism to multiculturalism.

Berry (1999) argues that two basic issues dominate intercultural relations (Figure 1, left hand circle). The first issue is cultural maintenance—the extent to which individuals value the maintenance of their own cultural identity and behavior. The second issue is contact-participation or "the extent to which people value and seek out contact with those outside their own group, and wish to participate in the daily life of the larger society." (Berry, 1999, p. 14) Both have positive and negative poles, and when juxtaposed, lead to processes of integration, assimilation, segregation, and marginalization.

Strategies within ethnic groups (Figure 1, left hand circle) occur in response to the strategies of the larger society (Figure 1, right hand circle), which vary along the same dimensions (Berry, 2001). Only certain societal contexts encourage particular group strategies. Multiculturalism allows for integration, while a melting pot societal stance may prompt assimilation. Segregationist approaches can foster group separation, while societal exclusion may lead to marginalization. The adoption of segregationist strategies is not always voluntary (Boal, 2005).

Policies associated with public housing redevelopment can certainly reflect these varied societal strategies of immigrant and refugee residents. For example, Peach (2005) suggests that assimilation and integration are frequently policy motives concerning ethnic immigrants in European social housing. Assimilation implies con-

forming with the norms, values and behaviors of the dominant social group, while integration takes a more pluralistic, multicultural perspective—although it is often focused on economic integration (access to work), and less on social integration (between-group social ties and interaction).

Figure 1: Maintenance and contact-participation in intercultural relations.
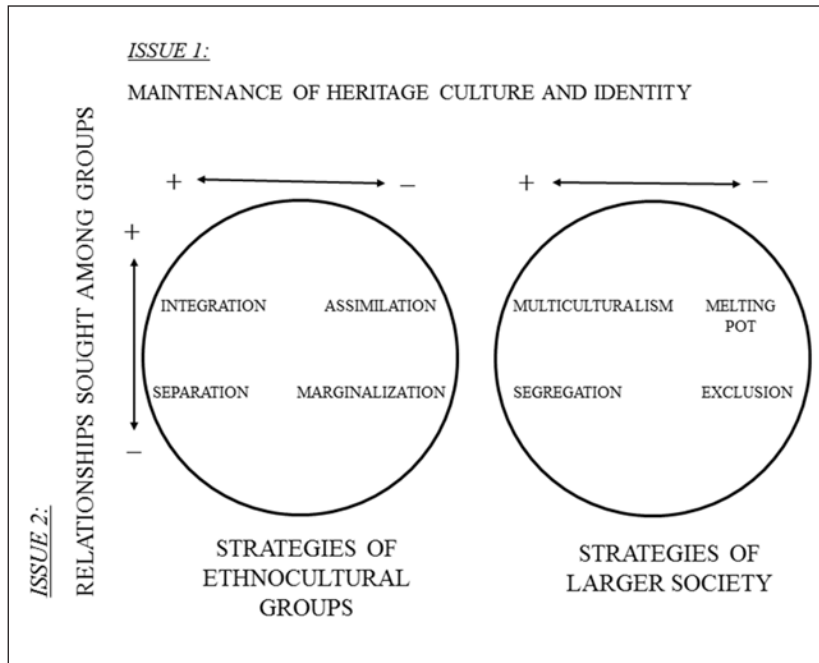
Source: Berry, 2001 (Permission to use this material is granted from John Wiley and Sons Inc. © 2001 The Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues).

An assimilationist policy perspective suggests that concentrations of ethnic immigrants are, or should be, temporary neighborhoods that provide homogenous social ties to help in the transition to a new country. Such enclaves and the social ties within them can be helpful to immigrants in making the transition to living in a new country, depending on the resources within that community, while these relationships exclude outsiders (Portes, 1998). While initially helpful, such community ties that remain beyond the first or second generation may actually prevent transition to involvement in the larger society (Freid, 2000). In this context, as Freid (2000) notes, low income ethnic communities are "a holding environment until people have garnered the inner and out resources to adapt more fully to the cultural and residential patterns of the host society" (p. 198). Attachments to such transitional communities have proven essential for white European, Asian and Latin

American immigrants, as well as for African-Americans moving north from the rural south in the US (Freid, 2000).

In contrast, the integrationist policy perspective does not seek to divest immigrants of their specific cultural identity or encourage the adoption of mainstream societal norms – practices that were increasingly questioned with the emergence of post-modernism, or post-structuralism, which focused on and valued group-based difference (Fainstein, 2010). This shift in values manifests itself in popular debates about suitable metaphors for multicultural cities such as the melting pot versus a mosaic, with the former linked to assimilation and the latter to integration. In contrast, in more recent discourse in urban studies, social anthropology and urban planning arguments are plentiful about cities – or at least some portions of them – being zones where those of different cultures can encounter one another and can be enriched by these encounters (Hannerz, 1996). Yet, despite the increasing diversity in some public housing communities in the US, particularly in these newer gateway cities, there is little acknowledgement, let alone integration, of these concepts in the discourse on US public housing redevelopment.

For public housing residents, physical segregation has long been associated with stigma, and public housing redevelopment is partially aimed at relieving it. Mixed-income housing created through these redevelopment programs is supposed to relieve the stigma by creating a new physical form and promoting economically integrated neighborhoods. The literature on stigma makes clear that stigma serves to maintain power through a "shunning and discrediting" of those who are not part of the mainstream. Stigma consists of social identity that is devalued (Bartz, Joseph, and Chaskin, Forthcoming), arising from Goffman's (1963) work on stigma as undesired differentness from other members of society. Moreover, research on mixed-income housing suggests that stigma remains even after redevelopment (Bartz et al., Forthcoming). The continuation of such stigma undermines not only the social goals of public housing redevelopment but also larger aspirations for the diversity of urban spaces.

While such concerns have made diversity the new orthodoxy in planning, the actual dynamics of implementation are nuanced, complex and difficult (Fainstein, 2005). While ideally diversity would foster tolerance, at least in the long run, evidence suggests that, in the short term, such diversity can yield negative interactions and instead foster stigma associated with minorities and ethnic groups, as has been the case in the Netherlands (Blokland and van Eijk, 2010; Bolt, Phillips, and van Kempen, 2010). Further, in mixed neighborhoods like those created by public housing redevelopment programs, people of different backgrounds may not interact at all (Kleit, 2008; Kleit and Carnegie, 2011). In addition, Putnam (2007), based on a study of 41 US communities, shows that those who live in diverse neighborhoods exhibit less trust in their neighbors than those in less diverse neighborhoods. He portrays non-whites in such neighborhoods as "hunkering down" as a result of this distrust. Trust, in contrast, arises through equal status contacts, as contact theory

has demonstrated in small group settings (Allport, 1979; Pettigrew and Trop, 2006). While equal status often means equal socioeconomic status, such equal status conditions also can be fostered in situations where people of different backgrounds have other types of status markers at equal levels and they have an opportunity to become friends—like working towards a common cause on a committee or being on a sports team together. These small group dynamics apparently translate to the level of the city. As Fainstein (2005) argues, the equity benefits of diversity within urban environments must be fostered by deliberate actions and policies aimed at creating equal status for people of varying backgrounds.

METHODS

To answer questions about the experience of immigrants and refugees in public housing redevelopment, we analyze the results of 9 focus groups with refugees and immigrants who were living in, or who had lived in, one of three public housing redevelopment projects in the Seattle, Washington metropolitan area. At each of the three sites in our study, the focus groups occurred at a different point in the process of redevelopment (Table 1), with 3 focus groups occurring during the pre-redevelopment planning process for one site, 2 occurring with relocated residents who originated from a site that was still undergoing redevelopment, and 4 occurring in a newly redeveloped community at yet another site. Each site housed a remarkably ethnically diverse population prior to redevelopment, with only a minority of subsidized residents at each site having English as their first language.

Sites

These three sites were redeveloped under the auspices of two housing authorities, the Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) (High Point and Holly Park) and the King County Housing Authority (KCHA) (Park Lake Homes). Prior to redevelopment, all of the housing was low-rise, one and two-story wood-frame homes originally built as temporary housing for World War II defense workers; production emphasized speed of construction rather than quality ("Houses for Defense," 1941; Manzo et al., 2005). By the 1950s, the housing was transferred to the public housing program. By the late 1980s, these three sites of so-called temporary housing had undergone several upgrades, but the housing authorities noted in their HOPE VI grant applications that these developments were increasing difficult and expensive to maintain at a livable level. Hence, all housing units at each of the study sites were demolished and replaced with new mixed-income and mixed tenure housing, as is the case in most HOPE VI sites nationwide. However, unlike HOPE VI redevelopment projects in the US's East and Midwest that reduce the number of units on site, redevelopment of these low-rise sites increased the density and number of units.

Table 1: Focus Groups Sites and Participants

| | King County Housing Authority Greenbridge (Park Lake Homes) Before Redevelopment | | Seattle Housing Authority | | | |
			High Point During Relocation		NewHolly Post Redevelopment	
	Ethnicity	n	Ethnicity	n	Ethnicity	n
SE Asia	Cambodian	16	Cambodian	8	Cambodian	10
	Vietnamese	9	Vietnamese	2	Vietnamese	9
East Africa	Somali	2			Somali	11
					Tigrinya	5

Note: More details about the sampling, recruitment, and instruments for the three sites can be found in Kleit, Reder, and Abramo (2004), Kleit, Carlson and Kutsmark (2003), and Manzo et.al., (2005). At Park Lake Homes, we randomly sampled 25 residents in each language group, for a total of 75 among households with a foreign-born head of household. Among relocated High Point residents, we attempted to contact all of the 60 Vietnamese speakers and 28 Cambodian speakers; the majority of both were Housing Choice Voucher holders—only HCV holders came to the focus group. Finding relocated households was challenging, and persuading them to participate was even harder.

KCHA's Park Lake Homes (now Greenbridge, grant awarded in 2001) (Figure 2) is our pre-redevelopment site. The redevelopment will replace the original 569 units of low-income housing with 1,000 mixed-income homes (King County Housing Authority, 2007). Prior to redevelopment, the predominant ethnicity among household heads in Park Lake Homes was Vietnamese (33 percent), with Somali (13 percent) and Cambodian (13 percent) the next most frequent; only about 9 percent identified themselves as White, 6 percent as Black and 2 percent as Ethiopian. In total, prior to redevelopment the resident population spoke more than 24 languages other than English (Manzo et al., 2005).

High Point (grant awarded in 2000), the study site still undergoing redevelopment, was the location for the relocated resident focus groups. The original site contained 716 units serving low-income people; by 2010 it contained nearly 1,700 mixed-income and mixed-tenure units (Seattle Housing Authority, 2012). Of the 352 known families who relocated from High Point, 43 percent spoke English as their first language, 17 percent spoke Vietnamese, and 8 percent spoke Cambodian (Kleit, Reder, and Abramo, 2004).

Holly Park (now NewHolly, grant awarded in 1994)—our post-redevelopment site—saw 871 units of subsidized low-income housing turned into over 1,400 mixed-income and mixed-tenure units. The new development is also quite ethnically and linguistically diverse, and most of that diversity is found among residents with public housing subsidies, with 6 percent White, 30 percent African-American, 21 percent East African, and 36 percent Asian, with Vietnamese and Cambodian as the largest groups among Asians (Kleit, 2005).

Figure 2: Top: Park Lake Homes Pre-redevelopment, 2001; Bottom: Greenbridge Post-redevelopment, 2007.

Source: Authors

The immigrant and refugee populations living in these sites came to the US at varying times; some have had more time to acculturate than others. Vietnamese refugees began arriving in large numbers after the fall of the Saigon government in 1975. Between 1975 and 1979, large numbers of Vietnamese boat people were admitted to the US. After 1983, Cambodian refugees began arriving. Until 2008, two-thirds of refugee arrivals were from Southeast Asia. Since 2002, East Africans have become a significant proportion of the refugees in the Seattle Metropolitan Area. In

2007, East African refugees constituted 29 percent of all refugees admitted. The difference in timing of arrival mean that focus group participants from Southeast Asia were usually older than the East African refugees, usually had older children as well, and had had more time to acclimate to the US.

Figure 3: Top: High Point Pre-redevelopment: Intersection 32nd Ave SW/SW Raymond St., 2001. Bottom: New High Point Post-redevelopment: Intersection 32nd Ave SW/SW Raymond St., 2008.

Source: Authors.

Figure 4: Top: Pre-redevelopment Holly Park, circa 1992. Bottom: Post-
redevelopment NewHolly, 2007.

Source: Courtesy of Seattle Housing Authority.

Focus Groups

Across the three sites, we conducted focus groups among residents speaking the
most common non-English languages among households involved in the redevel-
opment process: Cambodian, Vietnamese, Somali, and Tigrinya. We selected the
focus group method to allow for a more detailed and nuanced understanding of
how immigrants and refugees experienced redevelopment (Krueger and Casey,
2000; Stewart, Shamdasani and Rook, 2006). The focus groups were organized by
language groups to encourage communication among residents of the same ethnic-
ity and to allow for any culturally-based housing concerns and needs, priorities and

lifestyles issues to emerge. Each focus group had also had a bilingual note-taker and was audiotaped. The note-taker or the facilitator transcribed and translated the discussion, which the other reviewed for clarity and content.

Recruitment for the focus groups and number of participants varied depending on the site, ethnic group and its size, their familiarity with research, the convenience of the location (especially for relocated residents), and the availability of lists of residents with current telephone numbers. At Park Lake Home and High Point, we recruited a random selection of residents from lists. At NewHolly we used snowball sampling methods starting with residents who were knowledgeable about the community. Across all sites we had difficulty attracting Somali residents. This problem was particularly acute at NewHolly, where snowball sampling was unproductive because Somali residents were not well connected to others in the community. In the end, we randomly chose names of Somali residents from a list that staff provided and then recruited them one by one with the help of a dedicated bi-lingual Somali resident. Although two of the focus groups became de facto 2-person discussions, when we began to analyze the data, we found that the themes that arose in these smaller focus groups were echoed in the larger groups and that the prevalent themes were common across all three sites. Therefore, we retained even the smaller focus group data in our analysis.

The focus groups were designed to collect information from residents at particular points in the redevelopment process. At our pre-redevelopment site, we designed the focus group protocol to explore residents' relocation decision-making process, their perspectives on the program before the relocation, their thoughts about their community, and their attachments to it. Among relocated residents, we focused on the reasons residents decided to move away from High Point, how they found their current housing, and their social support at High Point compared to their new community. In the post-redevelopment community, the discussion included questions about their experience living in NewHolly, how they connected with other residents, and their use of community services. Such diversity in question content, stage of redevelopment, and ethnicity, along with the small size of some of the focus groups, means that it is difficult to generalize about the experience of the entire redevelopment process at any one site. We are also unable to compare the experiences of each ethnic group with the other across sites because of the variation in questions asked across sites and, again, the small size of some of the focus groups. Yet, all these respondents are immigrants or refugees; having that in common allows us to explore whether there are commonalities across these foreign-born ethnic groups that arise from their history as immigrants and refugees.

Data Analysis

Each transcribed interview was coded and analyzed using the Atlas.ti 6.2 Qualitative Data Analysis software program. The team employed a grounded theory approach for the analysis of data (Andersson, Brama, and Holmqvist, 2010; Corbin

and Straus, 2007; Low, Taplin, and Scheld, 2005). Within this approach, researchers identify themes and patterns in the data, and develop conceptual categories, or codes, to identify and label phenomena that emerge. This process is known as "open coding." After content-analyzing all interviews, we examined them for common meta-themes across all interviews. In this phase the final "axial coding" is conducted through which the data across all respondents and focus groups were compared for themes and patterns. In aggregate, the focus group narratives of various ethnic groups across public housing sites in varying stages of redevelopment provide insights into what anthropologists call the "emic" perspective, enabling us to get a glimpse into their lives, and begin to understand their interpretations of the redevelopment process.

FINDINGS

Themes concerning social relationships across and within groups, the relativity of their current experiences with their pre-US lives, tensions with power and authority, and the experience of stigma arose from the focus groups conversations. First, the complexities of intra- and intergroup relationships among immigrant and refugee residents involve their awareness of what sets them apart, and how they are seen by other groups. Second, narratives illustrate the relativity of immigrants' and refugees' evaluations of their housing, their changing life circumstances, and their adaptability to the changing conditions and contexts in which they live their daily lives. Third, the data reveal tensions in residents' relationships with power, authority, institutions and governmental agencies, something that perhaps non-immigrant residents of public housing share but compounded by the need to adapt to a new society. Fourth, participants' stories show evidence of experiencing the stigma of living in public housing that is exacerbated by the cultural expectations of their co-ethnics.

Intra- and Inter-Ethnic Relationships

Despite the existence of distinct ethnically-specific communities, support among residents across ethnicities was evident, particularly at the pre-redevelopment site. For example, in the Cambodian focus group, in a discussion about living with other ethnic groups one participant commented on how well the varied ethnic groups get along with each other, making the situation positive for the Cambodians: "as a whole, it [the situation] was fair...because every ethnic also has love toward one another." In response to a question about what it was like living in the pre-redevelopment site, the Vietnamese focus group participants noted that, "For the Vietnamese living here, in general, there is no complaint" and that "even for other ethnicities, in general, they are friendly and kind. Conflict is not common here." Basically people from varied ethnic groups got along well.

Diverse neighbors had good relationships in the redeveloped site as well. As one participant in the Vietnamese focus group explained, "It is a very nice community. We have resident meetings every month. This is very good for us to have a chance to meet our neighbors, make friends, and have nice talk. The neighbors are nice, friendly." Similarly, in the Cambodian focus group one member commented, "Sometimes [when] we can't read a letter, we can ask our neighbor to help. Sometimes we can't go somewhere; our neighbor can help bring us to the hospital or things like that…. Because we know a lot of people, we can help each other." In this comment we see that residents for whom English is a second language feel they can rely on neighbors for help.

In addition to the communication and neighboring across groups on site, respondents felt that the presence of so many of their compatriots created a ready community and comforting sense of familiarity. As one Somali resident of the pre-redevelopment site explained, "I am very happy living in [site] because it is safe to live here and also it is good to live around people from your country." Similarly, in the Somali focus group in the post redevelopment site, one person explained that what she liked about the development was that "there were a lot of Somalis that live here." Likewise, Tigrinya-speaking post-redevelopment focus group members expressed surprise and concern about the relatively small size of the focus group (five), given the number of compatriots who lived there. One focus group participant commented, "Well, what I'm saying is that we don't have a small number of habishas[3] here. We have many."

But the presence of co-ethnics did more than just provide comfort and familiarity; it was also a significant source of social support. As one member of the Cambodian focus group at High Point noted:

> The things that are beneficial to us have various categories…. That's why we help one another. Even [when] we're poor or rich, it's happy. I like helping others, because old people can't drive and I can help drive them to sightseeing or to the hospital.

Respondents' identification with and need for their own co-ethnics arose across all focus groups, sometimes in discussions of the separateness of their community. Those who relocated explained that they had no compatriots in their new neighborhoods, but missed them. For the relocated Vietnamese residents, having friends in the neighborhood was the same as having co-ethnics:

> F: Do you have any friends in your new neighborhood?
> R2: No, don't have any.
> F: No?
> R1: There are no Vietnamese there.
> R2: No Vietnamese.
> R1: Just…Just Filipinos…I live around only Filipinos.
> F: Yes.
> R2: No one around.

> R1: I want to move into here [NewHolly]. Is that possible?

This respondent wanted to move to a place where there are more co-ethnics and he perceived NewHolly, the post-redevelopment site as housing them. This desire to be near co-ethnics was also evidenced by Cambodians who returned to High Point, the in-the-process of redevelopment site. Conversely the quote also suggests that for some there is a reticence to join in with neighbors of different ethnicities.

Such clear ethnic identification means that residents' needs, concerns, hopes, and worries become enmeshed with those of co-ethnics, and their responses to the experience of redevelopment are not simply experienced as individual persons or families, but are shared within their co-ethnic community. For example, Vietnamese respondents in the pre-redevelopment site framed their individual experience and views in terms of their co-ethnic responses. Their discussion segued from one resident expressing stress about relocation ("I personally feel very agitated") to supportive comments that transformed the conversation into one about the community's experience as a whole: "I agree with you that we are old and we're afraid of moving….." Another respondent continued with a communal statement about fears and concerns about impending relocation:

> As a Vietnamese saying goes, "Residence needs to be established first, your career is next." So moving here and there is not pleasant at all [participants agrees with nods and murmuring].

This perspective is also evident in dialogues among post-relocation Somali and Tigrinya speakers in two focus groups about community space, its costs, and who deserves a discount for its use. Somali participants thought that, as residents, they should get a discount for the use of the space: "We would like to have a discount to have a party or wedding; we should not have to pay the same as an outside resident; we are entitled to have a discount." Similarly, the Eritrean focus group participants (Tigrinya speakers) also framed their response in terms of the community deserving a discount, and that it was characteristic of their community that they were not always willing to ask for one. As one resident stated, "This is due: the people deserve it. It's made for the people. Our people aren't bold enough." Later in a continuation of an extended discussion about those community facilities, one person observed, "Habishas just come to complain," to which the others agreed with rueful laughter.

Cultural Self-Characterizations

Evident from the comments above, data from multiple focus groups across former and current public housing residents reveal that immigrants and refugees have ways of characterizing the concerns, needs and behaviors of those in their own cultural group that reveal internal narratives of "us" and "we" that distinguish their group from other ethnic and cultural groups around them. One example of this emerged in the Tigrinya focus group during a discussion of the Community Center on site:

> R2: You know that most people use it for meetings and other things. Us, though, when we rent it we use it for--you know how habisha people do it….

> R5: ….Here we can even throw a wedding…. In the times of joy or mourning we use it.

In other instances the self-characterizations were candid descriptions of what respondents perceived as their group's shortcomings. As a resident from the Tigrinya focus group at the redeveloped site noted, "We have a very narrow viewpoint. We need to open our minds to say how we can all improve as human beings and keep a very open mind" to which another resident agreed, "That's right; it's good to understand and know everything."

The complexity and candor in these narratives reveal how these self-described tendencies, customs and behaviors can work for and against respondents—providing social support and a clear identity on the one hand, yet distinguishing them from the mainstream and making it more challenging to be understood by others outside the group, on the other. Residents articulate a number of important realizations about their own cultural group, including recognition of language barriers, and difference regarding religious practices and food that illustrate parallel but distinct lives and experiences in the same community. As the Cambodian residents of the post-redevelopment site explain:

> R1: The Khmer celebrates ours, the Cham [Korean] does theirs and Vietnamese celebrate theirs and [the] other race that wear scarf (sic) on the head, celebrate theirs. But for the American New Year, we join all together. ….
>
> R2: But we went to different places… Chams went to the Chams' temples; Laotians went to the Laos temples.…
>
> R3: We are able to go to the other people's fests [meaning Cham, Muslim], but when we invite them to join us, they don't come since we eat pork [and they don't].

From these and other focus group discussions it is clear that for many refugee residents, what "we" do is different from what "they" do.

Respondents' identification with own communities arose in different ways across focus groups. For Vietnamese residents of the pre-redevelopment site, community self-characterization manifests itself through discussion of how their culture explains their behavior, evidenced in this Vietnamese focus group members' explanation of their culture's approach to achievement:

> R1: In fact, we emphasize too much on self-esteem.
>
> R2: …I remember when I was in Vietnam, our parents used to encourage children to study harder by saying "Study hard to make our family proud." But they didn't say "Study hard so that your life will be better" instead. Those statements alone clearly reveal our Vietnamese mentality.

In these comments residents reveal a nuanced recognition of their own group's foibles. For Somali and Tigrinya speakers at the post redevelopment site, comments regarding struggles with language and culture reflect awareness that limited English language ability can present some barriers for the entire co-ethnic community. As one Somali participant commented, "We need someone to mediate the cultural clash, police, problems; communication in general in our own language; all the

other ethnic groups have someone." Tigrinya speakers blamed themselves for barriers. "For us to leave our language and start speaking another one. We think it's an embarrassment; but it's not true."

Language amplifies pre-existing cultural barriers, evident not only regarding communication across different ethnic groups, but also communication with some housing authority staff and especially housing mangers at the redeveloped site. Interestingly, at the pre-redevelopment site, most of the housing authority staff was multi-lingual reflecting the site's diverse population. This helped with the sharing of information about the relocation and redevelopment process. However, at the redeveloped site, housing managers were less diverse and this posed challenges. Somali respondents discussed their problems participating in block groups: "The problem is that most of the groups [including staff] only speak English not Somali; we need someone to explain; some of us do not read or write."

Inter-group Segregation

Respondents' narratives about their housing and community also reveal that that they engage, to a certain degree, in self-segregation. For example, the post redevelopment Tigrinya-speaking respondents expressed concerns about barriers to involvement in general, but recognized that the choices they are making preclude greater participation in the community: "We get left behind when we don't cooperate." Such comments reflect a certain tension between tendencies toward sticking with one's compatriots and efforts to assimilate or integrate in or to access opportunities. As Boal (2005) notes voluntary self-segregation is not completely voluntary.

Such comments illustrate the fact that specific ethnic groups feel they have distinct approaches not only to life in general, but also to life in the US. Additionally, respondents recognize how their particular attitudes or behaviors can sometimes create barriers to participation in the larger community and society. For example, in the Tigrinya focus group at NewHolly, participants explained that, "We don't have a lot of experience…. to learn about peoples' cultures, traditions and customs. Everything just takes practice. We don't have a lot of experience with that." Here we can see how their inexperience is put forward as a reason to continue to self-segregate.

Tensions occurred both across and within ethnicities, although this typically led to critiques and generalizations about other cultures more than direct conflict. Thus, as noted above, the varied ethnic groups may find it hard to interact in some ways, and this led to separation. Sometimes, respondents were the targets of unneighborly behavior, but here too, it is not always clear whether these were racially motivated actions or triggered by some other issue. For example, one Cambodian focus group member from the pre-redevelopment site blamed another ethnic group for vandalism without having any evidence to support the claim.

> Let's talk about my friend…they are living in the public housing…and they bought a new car…during the night time someone put dog's poop on the

door. [laugh]....this is because of jealousy...probably other ethnic groups or not….

While such periodic comments illustrate some conflicts or evidence of unneighborly behavior and an assumption that other ethnic groups might be to blame, in none of the focus groups was there any discussion of ongoing conflicts among ethnic groups. As the participant quoted above acknowledges himself, it may have nothing to do with race and ethnicity.

Residents' Expectations and Adaptability to their Circumstances

Respondents are clearly happy to live in public housing—whether a pre- or post-redevelopment site. These assessments are based on their comparisons of their housing and quality of life in their homelands with their Seattle lives. Additionally respondents depended on the resources of their new communities to help them adjust to life in a new country, whether learning where services and culturally appropriate shops are located or finding help with basic literacy or English language skills. For example, at the redeveloped site, immigrant and refugee residents have access to citizenship classes and receive help filling out forms. Vietnamese focus group respondents in the post-redevelopment community made these sorts of comparisons consistently, "…In my country, I was very poor and couldn't ever think that I can have a chance to have higher education, but here I can go to the ESL class and I can go college after my English skill getting better."

This sentiment characterized their views of their current housing situation overall: "We are come from Vietnam, the undeveloped country. As you know, we never have this kind of housing or maintenance system like this." Others in that same focus group agreed, commenting, "In my country, just the millionaires can have this kind of house and get the services that we are having here" and "I have never dreamed that I can live in the new and comfortable house like this. I think if I don't come to America, all of my life I couldn't be able to afford to buy the house like this."

For Cambodian focus group respondents at the post-redevelopment site, such comparisons of the resources in the US with their home country led to some pity for those who still live in Cambodia:

> When I've been there and seen them I have pity on them. If I am able to talk to Cambodian leaders I want to talk to them to help Cambodian people. Yes, when I was there in Koh Kong province [a province in the SW of Cambodia bordered with Thailand] I told them about everything in the US…

While such comments were typical of residents living in relocated housing and newly developed sites, such sentiments were also typical for residents living in the public housing site before it was redeveloped. Even residents of the pre-redevelopment site described their housing and community as better than what they had left behind in their homeland.

At the same time, respondents expressed some nostalgia toward the homeland as a primary place of attachment, existing concurrently with a genuine appreciation of their current housing in the US. As one Somali focus group participant from the pre-redevelopment site noted, "In fact, nothing [is] better than one's native country; however, in terms of security and safety when I compare here [US]) to our country, here is better because in our country now there is instability."

A distinct sense that respondents were achieving goals and dreams for themselves and their children arose in these conversations—something that was not possible in their country of origin. This was prominent across all focus groups, and was well expressed by one post-redevelopment Vietnamese resident:

> I have four children who can go to college because we got the financial aid from the government and we save a lot by living in [NewHolly]. That is our dream but it was impossible to happen in our own country.

Some felt safer and protected from violent situations that they faced in the countries of origin. Another Vietnamese focus group member made this point.

> It is already very good to compare to Vietnam. I remembered when I was there; one car hit my bicycle when I rode on the street. I felt down [sic] and that car kept running without stop. The patrol, police and all the people they saw it but no one doing anything. The policeman, who I complained with, said that I was ok and don't bother to tracking that car. They don't have time for these little things. I was so upset but couldn't do anything because that is the way Viet Nam society is. Here, I can have the protection [of the] law from the society. I am glad living here.

However, respondents across all focus groups placed an emphasis on living in a "peaceful" and "easy to live" place for a variety of reasons, but mostly as a result of the violence and chaos that many respondents left behind in their homeland. As one Vietnamese former prisoner of war living at the post-redevelopment site commented:

> Every afternoon, I take a walk around for about one to two hours. I was a soldier serving in the army during the Vietnam War. After the communists took over the country, I was in the prison for nine years. I never think of the day that I can walk peacefully in the United States.

This sentiment was echoed in the Cambodian focus group at the pre-redevelopment site, with comments like "What we like the most is that we have a place to live peacefully, that's all," and "I have the same answer; there is nothing to worry" being common in the discussion. This suggests that some of the sense of peacefulness is also related to a sense of safety, at least for some. Interestingly, this sense of peacefulness was also described by respondents who had relocated from the High Point: "I used to live here peacefully. I've lived her for more than twenty-three years. It was peaceful." This suggests perhaps a sense of nostalgia for the old community, and it is notable that such descriptions were used in reference to public housing communities before they were redeveloped – i.e. designated as distressed and slated for demolition.

Sometimes respondents described peacefulness in a less literal way focusing more on affordability and how (perceived) stability of their housing gave them some peace of mind. As one Cambodian focus group member from the pre-redevelopment site explained, "The important point is that low-income people find this location easy to live. Those with high incomes can't live here" a perspective which others in the group shared:

> R14: I suffered from a stroke...and had been through two major head surgeries...when I came and lived in this housing...they helped me a lot. If we have high income, they will not help.... If we have low income, they'll help...these people charge me a little bit...if we're not working, they'll let us live there for free.
>
> R11: The housing helps us a lot. They help the poor...

At other times the peacefulness and ease referred to help from "management" and "humanitarian organizations." Typically this meant help from the housing authority, the management office in the non-public housing sites and social service agencies, especially those geared toward helping immigrants and refugees. It is possible that immigrants and refugees saw themselves as wards of the state, although other comments suggested that at least some were trying to achieve socio-economic mobility for their children.

In still other instances, peacefulness referred to the convenience of their housing to services and amenities: "It's easy to send my children to school… the school is close to here." And another noted: "it's close to the store...it's easy for me to just walk up there...my husband can't drive...and I also don't know how to drive...so, I just walk to the store...that's why I like this location." In this way, refugee residents expressed the same concerns that research shows other non-immigrant and refugee public housing residents share: having a decent place to live that is affordable and convenient to amenities and services. This desire existed concurrently with their desire to live near co-ethnics, adding a layer of concern and tension for these respondents.

As much as they appreciate peacefulness, affordability, convenient access to services, focus group participants expressed a certain degree of acceptance, resignation, and flexibility about their current situation and their changing life circumstances. Sometimes they portrayed this adaptability as part of the identity of their ethnic group, as one pre-redevelopment Vietnamese focus group resident commented:

> For the Vietnamese, in general, we follow our ancestors' advice. If we live in a tube, we become thin and long. If we live in a gourd bottle, we become big and short. That's why we can adapt ourselves well to different circumstances. For low-income people living in public housing, it can be said that our life is very comfortable.

Notably, this comment suggests that the comfort of public housing is relative to their expectations based on experiences in their homeland.

Attitudes towards Power and Authority

The data reveal tensions in residents' relationships with power, authority, institutions and governmental agencies, not the least of which are housing authorities. More specifically, respondents disclose a certain tension between seeing governmental agencies – such as the housing authority and service organizations – as positive, helpful "humanitarian" organizations on the one hand, and expressing a distrust of some agencies on the other hand. Focus group discussions show that this tension is complicated by the particular experiences of respondents with the governments of their homelands that have been corrupt and despotic. So they know they have been treated well and have received housing and services since arriving in the US and in public housing, yet they articulate a sense of helplessness and powerlessness in the face of redevelopment. As a result, attitudes toward the housing authorities get complicated quickly in resident discussions, revealing ambivalence toward the agency that has housed and supported them but that is also requiring them to relocate.

To begin, refugee residents seem very appreciative of the government's help in providing subsidized housing at the redeveloped site and attribute their family's success to the help they have received. This Vietnamese respondent from the post-redevelopment site explains:

> I like to live in NewHolly. I have a chance to go to school; I got an AA degree and all of my kids have chance to pursue their dreams. In Viet Nam, we didn't afford for the kids go to school. My kids were drop out of high school and some have to stop at middle school. Now looking at them doing homework for college, I am so grateful for the help that I got from the US government!

Similar appreciative remarks were voiced by Cambodian residents in the pre-re-developed site as well, explaining, "Because they're poor…and the state helps them by allow them to live in the public housing."

At the same time respondents were sharply aware of the power differential that sometimes resulted in resignation and helplessness by those facing relocation. As another Cambodian resident commented, "For the moment, it's up to them, where they allow us to live." This acknowledgment was often accompanied by a fear of repercussions from those in power: "No I can't say anything. If we say something …it is like we are bad-mouthing about them."

Yet, others in the same discussion at the as yet redeveloped site respondents were angry about the relocation, declaring:

> They [the Housing Authority] told us that when they find house they let us move out…they told us that if we didn't move out, they'll put us in a far location…they had such a politics…, it's a politics of lying to us. Our boat is short and theirs is long.

This last phrase is an idiomatic saying in Cambodian culture that recognizes there is a clear power differential, and in this context there is also distrust of that power ("the politics of lying to us"). This distrust is also evident in comments in the Tigrinya focus group at the redeveloped site. A lengthy discussion concerned the irregularity and high cost of utility bills, some respondents expressing considerable

suspicion about the validity of the bills and the integrity of the company's billing practices:

> R1: The water, and light bills are the main issues. They need to send a bill which states clearly, how they got to the figure which they sent us. They can't just send a bill with any amount they want on it….
>
> R2: You see, I asked them [former site administrators], "What is this"? They said, "We don't know."
>
> R1: They tell us to call and ask and get a response from them.
>
> R2: It (Electric Bill) just came again for $67, last month it was $249. Now it's $67. What is this? I showed it to them and got no response. Nothing.
>
> R4: Yeah.
>
> R2: Yes, we go to the light company they don't listen. Nothing. So we just stay quiet. What else is there?
>
> R1: Who do you tell?
>
> R2: I went back and forth like that two times….
>
> R1: Iwayi [an expression of disbelief] now talking is making me tired. The last time I paid $200, now water came up to $180. I will pay it. For water $237, someone who owns a restaurant doesn't even pay that much.

Still later in the discussion the issue of water bills came up. In the preceding exchange, there is clear evidence of miscommunication along cultural lines and a sense of mistrust about the utility company.

> R1. Now you brought up a topic. The water company used to be from Texas. Are you listening? They weren't from here. Washington. They were from Texas.… Now the last time he came and checked the neighborhood…. As you know since my brother passed away, they (the people from the habisha community) had come to visit me. He said it's because you have so many guests that your bill is this expensive. Just because people come over does that mean that water is being spilt? This is a bad insult. These are unkind words. We are gathering together with people. He didn't see us spill water, play with water. We were sitting on the sofa, he said the reason your water bill is so high is because people came over to your house…
>
> R3: This is extremely bad manners.

These kinds of sentiments and anecdotes cropped up in other focus groups as well. These stories portray skepticism toward those in power along with a sense of frustration and helplessness in interactions with some agencies. Respondents' particular way of describing the experiences reveals concern about cultural insensitivity toward their group that complicates an already confusing situation.

Public Housing Stigma

Focus group discussions reveal that refugees experience multiple types of stigma that co-exist simultaneously both across and within groups. This stigma is based on assumptions, beliefs and prejudices that not only go across and within particular ethnic groups but also stem from biases regarding whether one lives in public

housing or the private market. Focus group discussions show that respondents experienced stigma related to living in public housing, which is heightened and even more emotionally charged due to the added disdain of their co-ethnics who may not live in subsidized housing. As this pre-redevelopment Cambodian focus group participant observes:

> Those who have high salary...they're looking down on those who live in [current site]...saying that these people…all are the poor people...they even think that if they have a mother or relatives, they will not let them live in [current site]...it's like [current site] humiliates their relatives' dignity.

Later in the same focus group, an exchange illustrates the importance of dignity, and how such stigmas challenge their dignity:

> R1: …those people who live in public housing are sick [poor health]...the healthy ones won't live here. They're afraid of losing their face [dignity]....
> R2: Their dignity is the most important thing...

Concerns about dignity were strongly expressed in the focus groups of Southeast Asians living in the pre-redevelopment site. Both the Cambodian focus group members and the Vietnamese pre-redevelopment focus group participants also talked about dignity and shame related to living in public housing. One Vietnamese respondent even commented that he was ashamed because he was unable to take care of his own home:

> There aren't many public housing areas, except [current site], whose streets are swept twice a week, the lawn is cut, shrubs and tree areas are trimmed. I personally feel ashamed because that kind of task should be mine but I only watch them do that for me. Because they do that for me and I don't have to do it, I feel ashamed about it.

Concerns about how others outside of public housing might view them also emerged regarding dating and how living in public housing might be seen as a liability, as respondents in the Vietnamese focus groups discussed:

> R2: Here is a very simple example. For a man or woman living outside of public housing dating with the opposite sex living in public housing, it's a difficult situation. If we say that it won't be the case, it's not right. Of course, they can still get married but it'll difficult. It's not the case for people living outside of [public] housing.
> R3: It's like a curtain to divide people a little bit…
> R6. For example: A girl dating with a guy who is living in public housing. What would her parents or relatives think about this guy who is living in public housing?

Cambodian residents at the same pre-redevelopment site expressed anger in getting judgmental responses even from family members about their living in public housing:

> …if they're rich, let them alone...I'm poor...let me alone...I don't care or feel heartache because of their words...If I hear those words, I'll talk back to them.

Vietnamese respondents commented on the dynamics of stigma and the unfairness of this criticism:

> P1: It's the US policy to clearly help elderly people with housing. So don't worry about contempt or despise (sic) by other people. So if you want to live here then stay here; if you have money, you can move out….
>
> P2: Nobody here can take care of the elderly or levy taxes on young people. Only the US government can do that.
>
> P3: I think we are the ones who divide ourselves. For example, two people are living in public housing and one is about to leave and buy a home. That person will look at people who still live in public housing differently… [Interrupted]
>
> P1: In fact, we [Vietnamese] emphasize too much on self-esteem.

These comments show an acute and sometimes painful awareness of the stigma respondents' face. However, this stigma is not simply that from outsiders' negative views of public housing residents; it is felt most acutely from the cultural expectations of their co-ethnics thus intensifying these public housing residents' experience of stigma.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Global immigration and refugee transitions to new countries intersect with major efforts to reconstruct public housing in complex ways. Efforts to create urban environments that both reduce the stigma of poverty concentration and achieve the ideals of diversity are not simple achievements. The addition of ethnic immigrants and refugees to the mix makes reaching these policy goals even more complex. Such residents are in the midst of adaptation to the US; understanding their perspectives can both support redevelopment policies in reaching their social goals as well as facilitate their adaptation to the US.

We found that ethnically diverse public housing residents interpret their experiences before, during, and after redevelopment through the lens of their particular socio-cultural and political identities. This happens on two levels: Not only do participants describe individual experiences – things that they themselves or their household's experience – but they also describe their experiences as communally shared with their particular ethnic group, reflecting Berry's (2001) notions of ethnic groups' shared strategies toward adaptation.

The presence of compatriots imbued these sites with a sense of familiarity and comfort, allowing for social support to flow within the sites and to be missed among relocated residents. And while ethnic groups generally got along with each other, respondents' self-characterizations of their cultures revealed perceptions of separateness from the mainstream and from other cultures as well as an awareness of how behaviors rooted in their own cultural heritage may create barriers for interaction with others within and outside their communities. Language differences simply en-

hance these barriers. Additionally, these immigrants and refugees may also engage, to some extent, in voluntary self-segregation from other cultures, which may arise as a result of discomfort or lack of familiarity with difference. Such behavior is likely common, given Berry's (2001) characterization of self-segregation as an adaptive response to dealing with outside groups. Thus, given these dynamics of discomfort or lack of familiarity, such segregation may not be entirely voluntary.

Assessments of life in their home countries serve as a baseline for respondent evaluations of housing and quality of life in the US. Whether pre- or post-redevelopment, they viewed their housing and the resources available as a great improvement from their countries of origin. For some, the relative safety that they found helped them feel protected and able to enjoy a better life. Respondents who had experienced violence and war were particularly likely to put a premium on the peacefulness they found in their new homes. Peacefulness also emerged from a sense of stability that respondents found in subsidized housing. Along with this sense of peacefulness and acceptance, Vietnamese and Cambodian respondents emphasized their flexibility in dealing with the difficulties and problems they were experiencing, demonstrating adaptability to changing life circumstances. This adaptability is tempered by co-existing currents of meekness and skepticism toward housing and service providers, which sometimes resulted in frustration and helplessness. Concurrently, respondents faced the usual stigma of living in public housing compounded by disdain from others from their own cultural group. Unfortunately, these findings regarding the adaptive responses of immigrants and refugees during public housing redevelopment, are poorly understood by those implementing redevelopment policies.

Methodological considerations may limit the generalizability of our findings. First, having a single language and culture focus groups may cause people of the same culture to reflect more homogenous attitudes than they might if interviewed separately; however, the homogeneity helped create comfortable situations in which the residents could speak freely among familiar others. Second, refugees are one category of immigrant. The importance of peacefulness may be overstated as it arises from the experience of refugees; non-refugees may not find the same attribute so important. Third, their happiness with their housing, especially in comparison to their homeland, might be equally striking for immigrants of higher socioeconomic status and be very different for American-born groups or immigrants from other places. That is, the relative standard of living between respondents' countries of origin or refugee camps and US assisted housing may be the cause of such positive assessments. Thus, a study involving a larger number of focus groups and participants would allow for the characterization of the experience of each ethnic group, or allow comparisons among co-ethnic subsidized and non-subsided people, or the exploration of any differences between immigrants and refugees. These sorts of focus groups in combination with key informant interviews would make characterizations of a single ethnic group clearer.

At the same time, the comments of focus group participants do reflect their experiences, and as such, offer some lessons for the redevelopment process. Most striking perhaps is the recognition that immigrants and refugees have a dual perspective: one arising from their individual experience and one arising from that of their community. Therefore, in considering what makes for a successful community for these populations, it is important to understand not only the perspectives of individuals and their cultures, but also consider their group's history and conventions, and how they influence current behavior and attitudes.

The dynamics of self-segregation and dependence on one's cultural community may arise from the situation of these refugees as first-generation immigrants, or upon the combination of what Berry (2001) termed the maintenance of identity in combination with a lack of relations with other groups. Additionally, in the process of immigrant adaptation, first or second generation immigrants often live in spatially segregated enclaves that provide social support. For these first generation immigrants living in public housing redevelopment sites, our results suggest that these communities play the role of the ethnic enclave in the transition to a new country.

The preceding raises several questions about the intersection of immigration trends and affordable housing policy. First, how do we reconcile the first generation's need for and use of their own ethnic communities with the current emphasis on poverty dispersal in US affordable housing policy? The answer to this question has implications for how public housing redevelopment and subsequent relocation occurs in communities with large numbers of first generation immigrants. Dispersal is supposed to reduce both stigma and segregation and increase access to social and economic opportunity, yet the first generation immigrants in this study depend on local cultural and educational resources. These local and sometimes culturally specific resources are essential to meeting their needs, enhancing well-being, and we would argue, helping them adapt to a new place and culture in the long term. The use of multi-lingual staff, staff training in cross-cultural issues, sensitive relocation assistance that helps households maintain their supportive relationships or even creating housing in the new site that provides community continuity – perhaps by allowing co-ethnics to live together, if they want—may be some solutions. Additionally, for those who arrive in the US after experiencing war and tumult, public housing offers a sense of peace. Maintaining attributes of the community that contribute to this sense of peace throughout the redevelopment process could be an important support. Staff engaged with these populations or those undertaking community design may need additional training to understand how best to support immigrant and refugee adaptation to the US.

Second, we can consider these three sites as crucibles for the increasing ethnic diversity arising from global migration patterns. Focus group results suggest that respondents from varied cultures are able to live together peacefully, but look inward toward their own communities for social support. This is particularly true among first generation refugees. The difficulty of creating an urban space where

cultural identities meet and transform each other is highlighted by the relative self-segregation within the sites. Culture and language differences enhance this sense of identity. At the same time, the cross-cultural neighboring that also occurs is still made possible by the ethnic diversity within the community and the common bond among all residents of trying to get by with limited resources (Manzo, Kleit, and Couch, 2008).

These challenges underscore Fainstein's (2005) argument that deliberate actions are needed in order to create equitable yet diverse communities. These deliberate actions would include community building activities across groups, with simultaneous translation, and continuing access to specific resources such as English as a second language instruction and access to culturally specific services and institutions (e.g. cultural centers, places of worship). Both housing authorities involved in these three sites used these strategies throughout the redevelopment process.

In the US, it is expected that Spanish translation will be necessary in public housing redevelopment processes, reflecting their increasing presence in US society. However, moving forward, planning and government policy will need to provide the resources to successfully address increasing linguistic diversity due to global migration patterns. Interestingly, language was the hurdle which beset even the earliest attempts at mixing people of varied cultures in public housing (Wilner, Walkley, and Cook, 1952, 1955).

Debates over the role of diversity in society are not new and for nearly 20 years public housing redevelopment has embraced economic diversity as the path to reducing stigma and creating better communities. However, in the US, this picture of economically diverse places takes into account neither the presence of immigrants and refugees in their first stages of adaptation to their new country, nor the increasing diversity of public housing residents in some locales. The nuances of the experiences of these immigrants and refugees suggest that achieving the dream of diversity takes greater effort than current policy anticipates.

NOTES

1. Refugees formally seek asylum, and most register with the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR). Either UNHCR or the US Embassy then refers the refugee to the US Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) to begin the application process to come to the US. The Department of Homeland Security's US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) receives the application and interviews the applicant. In this interview the interviewing officer determines if the applicant is eligible for refugee settlement. If approved, the refugee has a medical exam, a cultural orientation, and a loan for travel.
2. This eligibility for public programs contrasts with immigrants who enter as legal permanent residents (LPRs) (Singer and Wilson, 2006).

3. "Habisha" is the name that Tigrinya speaking respondents call themselves. These are people who come from Eritrea, in east Africa.

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