



Fear of Change in Chelsea: The Effects of New Development on Perceptions of Community Resilience

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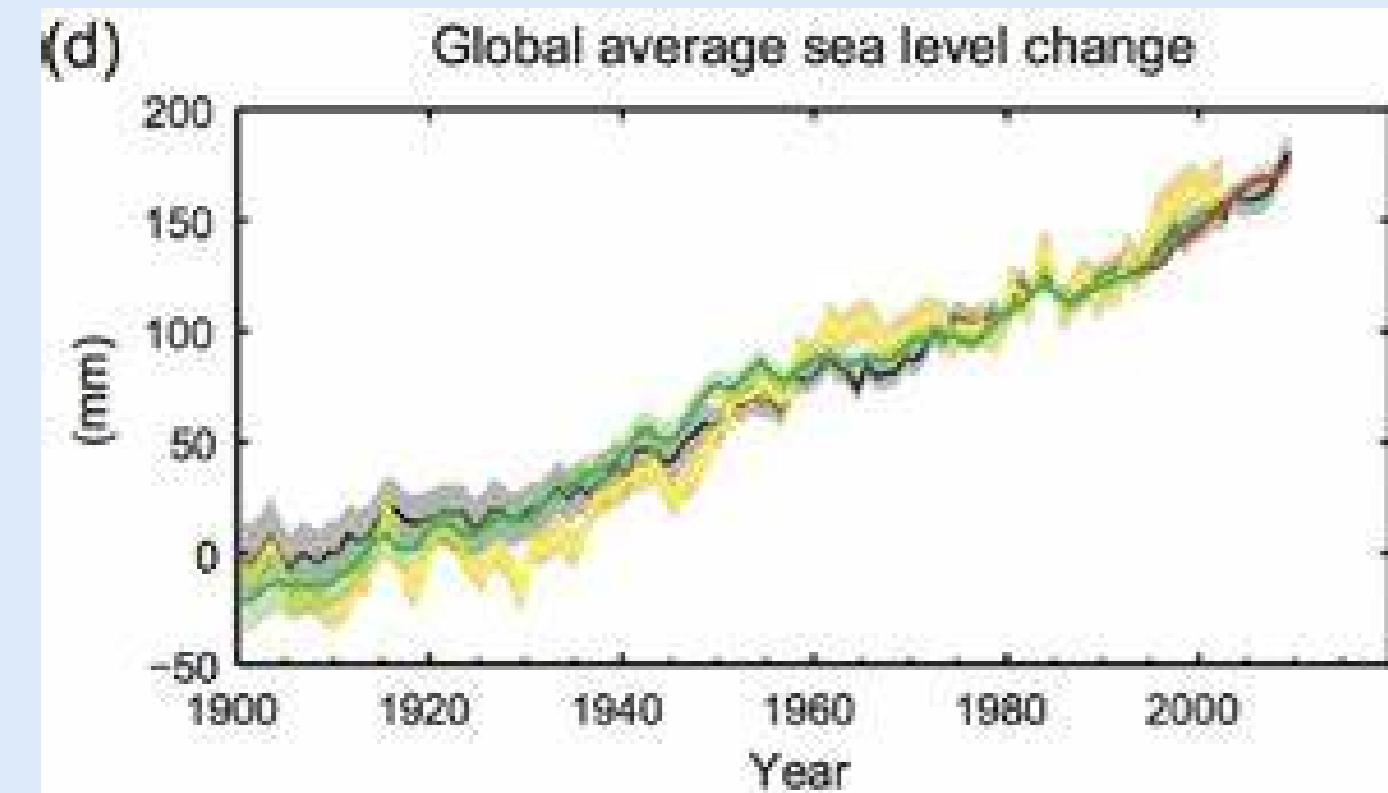
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Introduction

Where are the people in this graph?



Research on climate change and urban development is often focused on numbers:

- 📈 degrees of temperature rise
- 💰 dollars in government budgets
- 🏠 median rents

Absent are the stories of communities, families, activists and decisionmakers.

Climate apartheid instead urges researchers and policymakers to see the human side of climate change, particularly race, class, and gender-based oppressions.

Areas of Climate Apartheid

Disparities of **vulnerability** to climate hazards and uneven **access** to resources/ecologies

Built environment that benefits already privileged populations.

Increasingly exclusive notions of citizenship/mobility/securitization

Research Questions

Chelsea is unique in its vulnerability to climate change and gentrification, but also in the strength of its community.

This study asks, *how do changes in Chelsea's urban fabric stoke or impact residents' fears?*

By **urban fabric**, we mean the elements in a city's landscape that are woven together by the connections people make as they go about their lives

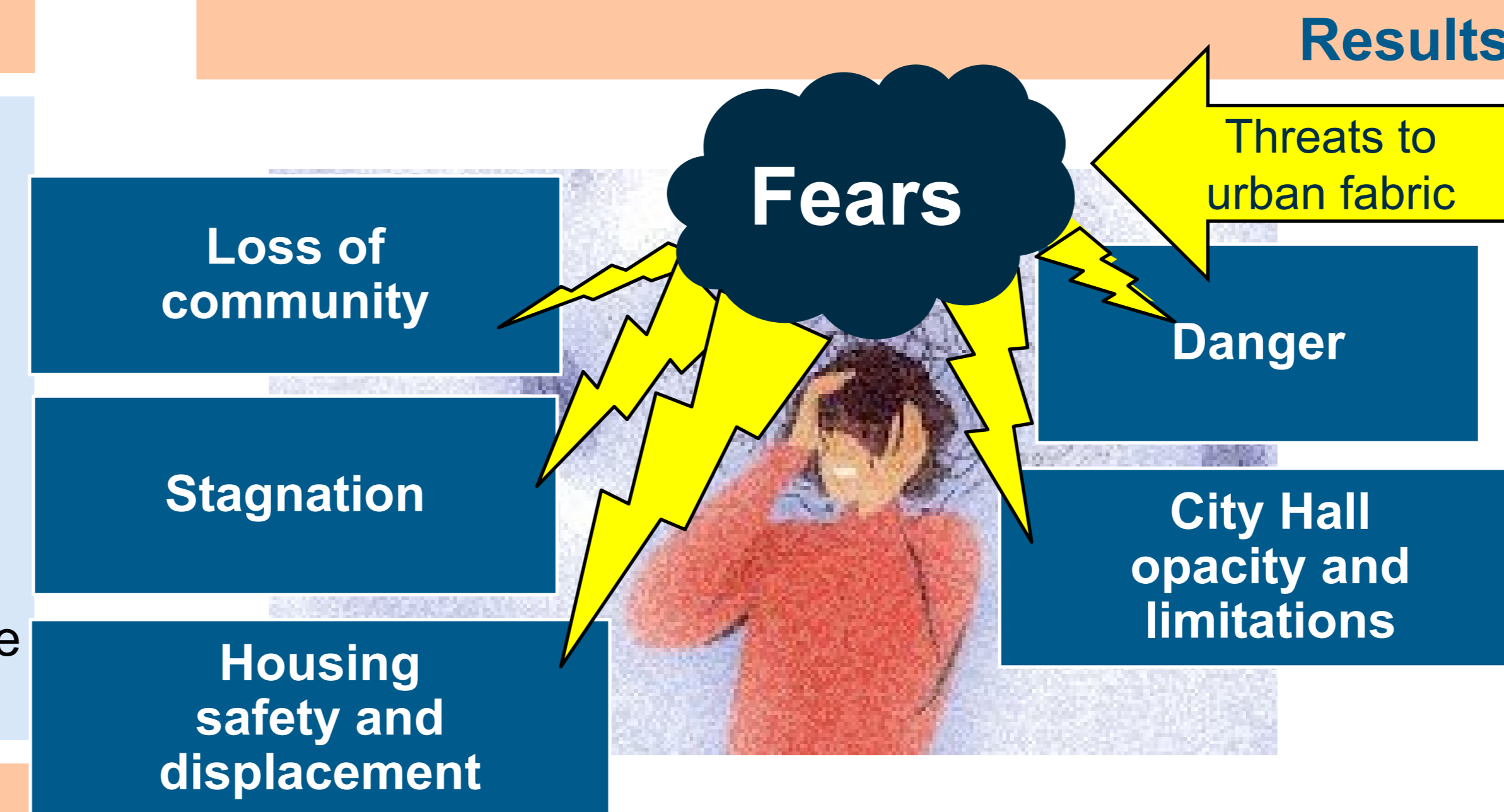
Methodology

This research used qualitative methods to hear and then examine residents' fears through the lens of climate apartheid.

Between 2021 and 2022, we held **42 interviews** in-person or over Zoom with Spanish interpretation as needed.

Who did we interview?

Residents	#	Providers	#
Total	36	Total	8
Homeowners	8	Nonprofit	3
Renters	26	City	4
Latinx	28	Faith-based	1
European	4		
Black/African	2		



📈 Stress of bleak housing futures

"To be honest, I try not to harm myself by worrying about if I'll have a place to live in Chelsea next year. If I did, **I would spend my days dying little by little.**

-Chelsea mom and renter



"At first, I was very hopeful. I said, 'I'm going to live here.' But 800 other people also apply. **You have no hope** accessing a home like that. **Lately, I feel very let down.**"

-Renter living in overcrowded apartment

Results

📈 Fears creep in with exclusions

"There are areas in Chelsea that are very pretty, but only certain people can access them. The white parents don't let their children play with the Latino children in Admiral's Hill. It's very awkward now and it wasn't like that when I came 10 years ago.

Something is happening here. And that's scary for me. We have the Silver Line now and it is attracting other types of families. **If Chelsea is getting whiter, what happens to us?**

-Chelsea mom



Conclusions

Chelsea residents' fears are exacerbated by newcomers and developments that do not recognize their rights to remain in Chelsea. The social fabric which helps Chelsea thrive is being pulled apart by changes in community and the built environment.

The City can build community resilience:

- 📈 Establish a community center
- 📈 Increase rental assistance
- 📈 Remove open space exclusions
- 📈 Diversify public workforce & opportunities