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From Beverly Hills to Boyle Heights: Manifestations of Housing Injustice in Los Angeles

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Community Engagement and Social Change Minor Capstone

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Abstract

Housing injustice is prevalent in Los Angeles. To determine how housing injustice differs in distinct areas of Los Angeles, six zip codes were studied: 90210/Beverly Hills, 90033/Boyle Heights, 90017/Westlake, 90036/Mid-Wilshire, 90028/Hollywood, and 90013/Skid Row. Various aspects of housing were compared between each area, and three public data sources and an interview with a representative from Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (LAFLA) were employed. *Eviction Data from 2.2023 to 12.2023* from LA City Controller's Eviction Data showed eviction type, cause of eviction, eviction notice type, and rent owed (LA City Controller, 2023). Los Angeles Housing Department's *ULA ERAP Workbook* included data from rental assistance applicants, such as monthly rent, back rent owed, demographics, and area median income (ULA ERAP, 2024). Neighborhood Data for Social Change Platform's *Neighborhood Data for Social Change* illustrated percentages of renters and of owners, housing stability, overcrowding, rent burden, and median household income (USC Lusk Center for Real Estate, 2024). Housing injustices were found to differ in the distinct areas of Los Angeles that were studied; each revealed some inequalities, but the lower-income areas, such as Hollywood, Mid-Wilshire, Westlake, Skid Row, and Boyle Heights, differed from each other and had more injustices than the higher-income area, Beverly Hills, showing that injustices impact lower-income areas disproportionately. As community-engaged research, these results allow LAFLA's Housing Justice Hotline volunteers to employ this knowledge as a further resource and a deeper understanding of injustices that callers may experience in the areas studied.

Key words: housing injustice, housing inequality, Beverly Hills, Hollywood, Mid-Wilshire, Westlake, Skid Row, Boyle Heights

From Beverly Hills to Boyle Heights: Manifestations of Housing Injustice in Los Angeles

Housing injustice is widespread throughout Los Angeles, and it may have different causes in distinct areas of Los Angeles. Housing inequality can arise from a myriad of factors including impacts of gentrification, unaffordable housing, eviction notices, and more. The 2022 LA County Annual Affordable Housing Outcomes Report by California Housing Partnership shows that as of 2022 Los Angeles County was lacking 499,430 affordable homes (County of Los Angeles, 2022). Affordable homes are needed in order to remedy the homelessness crisis and reverse the impacts of housing inequality. In Los Angeles, the typical home value has drastically increased 280%, from \$216,288 in 2000 to \$824,093 in 2022 (Martichoux, 2023). This increase makes it almost impossible for the majority of people to find affordable homes to buy and rent and can result in evictions when people can not afford the increase. Most evictions are due to non-payment of rent, and those who receive eviction notices are mostly low income and located in areas with a higher percentage of people of color, who are most vulnerable due to persisting social inequalities (Blasi, 2020, p. 5, 8). 95% of landlords have representation by lawyers in eviction cases, while only a small percentage of tenants can afford one (Blasi, 2020, p. 11).

Housing injustice is an inequality of conditions related to housing due to historical and current circumstances and policies that disproportionately disadvantage tenants, resulting in a lack of affordable and safe housing; for this paper, housing injustice includes lack of housing affordability, causes of eviction, eviction notice type, owning or renting homes, overcrowded housing, rent burden, lack of housing stability, and requiring rental assistance. The housing injustices that people in Los Angeles experience are caused by imbalances of structural power, both from the past, such as impacts of redlining, gentrification, and the construction of freeways,

and the present, such as discrimination from landlords and the eviction system. The social significance of housing injustice and how it manifests is widespread as Los Angeles is a large area with about 10 million people living in the county (United States Census Bureau, n.d.). Housing inequality and injustices can impact everyone in Los Angeles or surrounding areas, from tenants to landlords or anyone else living in the county as a witness. The power imbalance that exists is between the population of renters in Los Angeles and those creating and enforcing the housing laws and restrictions that disproportionately disadvantage tenants, including those who have experiences, identities, and backgrounds that have historically been oppressed.

Vulnerable areas are most impacted by housing inequality, contrasting with more affluent areas. Some of Los Angeles' most wealthy areas include Beverly Hills, Malibu, Bel Air, and the Pacific Palisades, which have median home prices that range from \$3,950,000 to \$13,000,000 (Theiss, 2023). This shows a stark contrast with other areas in Los Angeles that suffer from housing inequalities and lack of housing, such as Boyle Heights, where the population mainly consists of renters and there are injustices due to gentrification and displacement (Lin, 2019, p. 169; USC Lusk Center for Real Estate, 2024). Those who are displaced may not have other housing options and may become unhoused. In Northeast Los Angeles, homeless encampments have increased, conveying that policies made a century ago such as redlining enable displacement or homelessness.

Housing is a basic human right, and learning more about the causes and effects of housing inequality and how it differs in distinct areas of Los Angeles can provide a better understanding or resources for organizations, such as Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles' (LAFLA) Housing Justice Hotline, to help those experiencing housing inequality as well as to show patterns and data to LAFLA's volunteers. To do this, the present research asks: How does

housing injustice manifest in Los Angeles, and how does it differ in distinct areas of Los Angeles?

LAFLA is a nonprofit law firm that “protects and advances the rights of the most underserved” in hopes to ensure equal access to the justice system (LAFLA, 2020). LAFLA includes many services regarding veterans, employment, student loans, immigration, housing, medical needs and more. LAFLA offers four self-help centers, three domestic violence clinics, and five community offices (LAFLA, 2020). LAFLA has many divisions, including the Housing Justice Hotline, which provides free legal services to vulnerable community members experiencing housing issues, such as eviction, and also vital resources for callers.

Literature Review

Manifestations of housing injustice include redlining, gentrification, evictions, impacts of the pandemic, homelessness, environmental injustice, and racial injustice.

Gentrification, a form of housing injustice, is defined as when wealthier, typically white people move to neighborhoods of working-class residents or residents facing poverty, who are predominantly people of color; the new residents, which can include businesses and individuals, displace the previous ones, and the costs of living and property values increase (Mkrtychian, 2023). Gentrification can also result in breaking up familial neighborhoods and impact employment, as workers may have to move farther from their jobs or find new jobs due to displacement. In the 1930s, in order to try to determine the likelihood of repayment of home loans, the Home Owners' Loan Corporation and the Federal Housing Administration created maps with redlining that divided cities: blue and green areas were desirable and yellow was a greater risk (Mkrtychian, 2023). The red areas convey a space where people who were not white could not receive mortgages or insurance policies as they were seen to be higher risk

(Mkrtychian, 2023). Gentrification and displacement are “cultural manifestation[s] of long-standing government practices,” such as redlining, Interstate Highway construction in the 1950s, and contemporary zoning laws (Mkrtychian, 2023). As Jan Lin describes, gentrification is a systemic issue as Los Angeles urban planning centers and city officials give support to larger developers using “new market-rate housing” to replace vacant lots and multi-unit apartments (2019, p. 168). Similarly, Joe Hoover discusses gentrification as an urban injustice relating to housing and argues that gentrification should be considered through experiencing its negative impacts (2023). It can lead to inequalities of power, displacement, violence, and marginalization (Hoover, 2023). Impacts from gentrification and redlining still affect many communities today as many residents of previously redlined neighborhoods are low-to-moderate income residents (Castro, 2022). Lin illuminates specific examples of gentrification and displacement that contribute to housing inequality in different areas of Los Angeles. In Highland Park, gentrification has occurred from York Boulevard to the commercial district through the Metro Gold Line and North Figueroa Street. Those who are displaced may not have other housing options, so they must find other housing or they will become unhoused. In Northeast LA, gentrification causes the threat of displacement to immigrant working-class Latino/a families with rent increases, mass evictions, and social uprootedness, leading to “sharpening socioeconomic and racial overtones” (Lin, 2019, p. 169). In Northeast Los Angeles, the number of homeless encampments have increased. This conveys that policies made almost a century ago such as redlining have enabled gentrification to impact many people across Los Angeles and can cause them to become displaced or unhoused.

Housing injustice can also manifest through unlawful detainers and eviction notices, which may stem from past inequalities such as gentrification and redlining. Evictions are

increasing in recent years due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts, such as effects of housing inequality and loss of income or jobs (Blasi, 2020). During the pandemic, many residents in Los Angeles lost their jobs and became unable to pay rent, leaving many with housing insecurity, especially those who already resided in vulnerable neighborhoods. Neighborhoods with fewer white tenants and more Latinx ones are the most vulnerable to eviction, while those with more white tenants and fewer Latinx ones are the least vulnerable; immigrants are clustered in higher-vulnerability neighborhoods, and twice as many Black Angelenos live in communities with high-vulnerability than low-vulnerability (Blasi, 2020, p. 7). Additionally, the pandemic has had lasting impacts on evictions. At the start of the pandemic, on March 4, 2020, Los Angeles County's COVID-19 Protections Resolution was put in place; it allowed protections for renters who were impacted by the pandemic (*About L.A. County's COVID-19 Tenant Protections Resolution*, n.d.). It expired on March 31, 2023, and although it helped many tenants stay in their homes, there are many who are still being affected by COVID-19 but no longer have the same protections (*About L.A. County's COVID-19 Tenant Protections Resolution*, n.d.). Unequal housing policies such as gentrification and redlining still generate this social inequality, even with moratoriums such as this one that attempt to help tenants. Many minority neighborhoods that were redlined are still occupied by low-to-moderate income residents (Castro, 2022).

During the pandemic, Los Angeles' unhoused population was expected to increase by at least 120,000 tenants who were evicted as well as 184,000 children (Blasi, 2020, p. 20). The protections on rent during the pandemic did alleviate unlawful detainers and help tenants, but during March 2023, these protections were taken away, causing unlawful detainers to be at or above pre-pandemic rates in some areas of Los Angeles (Wagner, 2023). Additionally, service

providers for people that are unhoused anticipate that evictions will continue to increase, predicting a rise in homelessness (Wagner, 2023). The pandemic has caused this crisis, which was already happening, to rise to unforeseen levels (Blasi, 2020, p. 20). In a report published by the University of Pennsylvania in 2024, they found that in the city of Los Angeles between 100,000-150,000 households were behind on payment of rent and that there was a chance about 60% would not be able to pay back rent by February 2024 (Nelson et al., 2024, p. 2). Additionally, more than 10% of those surveyed were behind on over a year's rent, and these households were more likely to identify as Latinx or Black, to have a disability, or to have children (Nelson et al., 2024, p. 2). Being behind on rent or not being able to pay rent makes these tenants susceptible to evictions.

Housing injustice can also manifest through homelessness and impacts of marginalization. Homelessness is an urgent and prevailing consequence of housing inequality in Los Angeles (UCLA Data for Democracy Team, n.d.). Housing inequality and homelessness impact thousands of people across the country and in particular Los Angeles, where 69,144 people were unhoused in 2022, and the number is only continuing to rise (County of Los Angeles, 2022). Moreover, Los Angeles is the city with the highest number of unhoused people in the United States (Camp, 2012, 655). Hoover illustrates this through the example of a homeless woman, Anne Moody, in Los Angeles (Hoover, 2023). She was arrested about 87 times between 2007-2013 by the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) for misdemeanor charges that do not allow lying, sleeping, or sitting on a sidewalk. LAPD called her situation "Operation Bad Moody" as she advocated for her friends and confronted the unfair treatment (Hoover, 2023). She was marginalized, as are the other thousands of homeless residents of Skid Row. Skid Row had the highest concentration in the United States of homelessness, poverty, and policing

(Camp, 2012, p. 666). Skid Row includes the “routinized militarized policing of racialized space,” and community organizers have called Los Angeles the “First World capital of homelessness” (Camp, 2012, 654).

Additionally, Camp describes the history of housing and houselessness. For example, Proposition 14 was passed in California in November 1964, undoing the Rumford Fair Housing Act that restricted racial segregation in housing (Camp, 2012, 663). Additionally, after Ronald Reagan was elected as President, there was an attack on funding from federal sources for housing that was affordable, leading to widespread homelessness, which became criminalized in certain areas (Camp, 2012, 666). Skid Row became a place for those “deemed disposable,” and “deindustrialized black workers from South LA were forced to migrate to Skid Row” in order to survive and receive necessities, such as shelter and food (Camp, 2012, 666). From the 1970s to the 1980s, Skid Row’s composition changed from being 21% Black to being a majority Black (Camp, 2012, 666). Those who live on Skid Row are racialized and criminalized (Camp, 2012, 655). Those who are marginalized are more vulnerable to the impacts and dangers of gentrification and housing injustices as they are less equipped with resources and are often displaced from their environments (Hoover, 2023).

Many areas in Los Angeles are marginalized environmentally and racially, further creating injustices in relation to housing, as Bhavna Shamasunder and Gabriel Petek independently illustrate. Climate change and environmental injustice impact housing through insurance and housing costs, which disproportionately affect residents who are low-income and live in areas and housing that are more susceptible to effects of climate change (Petek, 2022, p. 1). The Los Angeles Basin contains one of the highest concentrations of crude oil in the world (Shamasunder, 2018). Although oil wells are located throughout Los Angeles city and county,

communities of color and underprivileged areas are located closer in distance to the oil wells than whiter and more affluent communities (Shamasunder, 2018). Those who live in crowded urban neighborhoods see oil drilling as a threat and danger to their safety, health, and the environment. For example, there was a leak underneath Belmont High School in Downtown Los Angeles, which is located over an oil field (Shamasunder 2018). The school had to be closed as it was dangerous, and fixing the issue cost the district 10 years as well as \$17 million (Shamasunder 2018). Communities living inland of the ocean often consist of working-class communities of color who have been disproportionately subject to the impacts of drilling since World War II (Shamasunder 2018). This causes more exposure to the contamination, which is an inequality in relation to housing and a standard of living. Climate change and environmental injustice can also increase the risk of wildfires, floods, droughts, and higher temperatures (Petek, 2022, p. 2). This can impact where new housing will be built. The Inland Empire contains some of the fastest growing counties, but it is an area that is susceptible to excessive heat and expected to have increased temperatures in the future (Petek, 2022, p. 3). Climate change will also impact how new housing is built, such as new housing necessitating access for evacuations in case of fire (Petek, 2022, p. 4). Existing housing was built with different standards, so residents are more vulnerable to impacts of climate change (Petek, 2022, p. 4). Communities in which residents cannot afford to pay to update their housing or build new homes are disproportionately disadvantaged and at risk of environmental threats.

There are also disparities in housing affordability, as Eileen D. McConnell, who studies race, nativity, and legal status in relation to housing affordability in Los Angeles, found. She used data from 2000-2002 from the Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Survey (McConnell, 2013, p. 173). As spending a significant amount of one's income on housing can lead to

difficulties, she explored the likelihood of spending 30% or more of one's income on housing costs. McConnell studied the differences of the impacts of nativity, legal status, and race on US-born Latinos, whites, African Americans, documented Latino immigrants, and undocumented Latino immigrants (McConnell, 2013, p. 173). She cited that those who spend more than 30% of their earnings on housing are "considered to be cost burdened" and that the gap between income and housing costs is widening (McConnell, 2013, p. 173). 60% of those studied were cost burdened, which likely also burdens them in gaining other basic necessities. She found that around half of all of the groups had experienced problems with the affordability of housing. She also found that legal status had a larger effect on predicting housing affordability problems than nativity or race for those considered to be low-income in Los Angeles (McConnell, 2013, p. 173). Undocumented Latino immigrants had larger disparities than the other groups.

Housing injustice can manifest through effects of gentrification and redlining, evictions, homelessness, impacts of the pandemic, environmental injustice, and racial injustice. For example, as shown in the literature, areas, such as Skid Row, are impacted by homelessness and marginalization, while Downtown Los Angeles is affected with health concerns and environmental impacts, and Highland Park remains impacted by gentrification measures. This study will attempt to illustrate the current state of housing injustice in Los Angeles and how distinct areas manifest with different injustices. The literature provides a comprehensive view of different aspects of housing injustice in Los Angeles, such as what different injustices may include and how they may manifest. The research will attempt to further this knowledge and add to the existing literature as it will combine an examination of current housing injustices with where they manifest in Los Angeles.

Methods

To learn how housing injustice differs in distinct areas of Los Angeles, methodology that included obtaining and analyzing descriptive data of housing inequalities and injustices in Los Angeles was employed. Six zip codes or areas in Los Angeles were studied through examining the most and least represented zip codes in the data sets. The zip codes and areas include: 90210/Beverly Hills, 90033/Boyle Heights, 90017/Westlake, 90036/Mid-Wilshire, 90028/Hollywood, and 90013/Skid Row. Three main data sources were used. *Eviction Data from 2.2023 to 12.2023* from the LA City Controller's Eviction Data includes data from February 2023 to December 2023, to show, by zip code, eviction type, cause of eviction, eviction notice type, and rent owed (LA City Controller, 2023). The second source is the *ULA ERAP Workbook* from the Los Angeles Housing Department, specifically the City of Los Angeles United to House Los Angeles (ULA) which created the ULA Emergency Renters Assistance Program (ULA ERAP) to provide rental assistance for up to six months for tenants who are low-income and at risk of homelessness from non-payment of rent due to the pandemic or other hardships (ULA ERAP, 2024). This source includes data up to April 27, 2024 and conveys details of applicants of rental assistance by zip code, such as monthly rent, back rent owed, race, and area median income (AMI). The third data source is titled *Neighborhood Data for Social Change* from the Neighborhood Data for Social Change Platform, which is from 2022 and includes percentages of renters and of owners, housing stability percentages, overcrowding, rent burden, and median household income by zip code (USC Lusk Center for Real Estate, 2024). Descriptive statistics from these sources were created and averages and percentages of the categories by zip code from each source were analyzed.

Additionally, Nicole Rivera-Vazquez, who is the Managing Attorney in Client Intake at Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles, was interviewed to gain insight from someone who sees the impacts of housing inequality each day. The semi-structured interview took place via Zoom, where she was asked between 15-20 questions, including follow-up questions, about her perspective on housing injustice in Los Angeles and directions for the future. After reviewing the data, it was coded, and descriptors, themes, and relationships to housing injustice were marked, in addition to its causes, effects, and manifestations and how they differ in distinct parts of Los Angeles. Patterns and analyses using the codes were created.

Results

Overall, in zip codes with lower incomes, there were found to be more housing injustices, such as inequalities that those who are evicted or apply for rental assistance face, than in higher income areas. The sections below describe the forms of injustices from the three data sources as well as an interview with Nicole Rivera-Vazquez, LAFLA's Managing Attorney for Client Intake.

Evictions

Eviction Data from 2.2023 to 12.2023 from LA City Controller's Eviction Data, which is from February 2023 to December 2023, included data, by zip code, regarding number of evictions, type of eviction, types of eviction notice, the reason for eviction, and the rent owed at the time of eviction (LA City Controller, 2023). As shown in Figure 1, out of the selected zip codes, Beverly Hills was the area with the smallest numbers of evictions, with five eviction notices. Hollywood had the most eviction notices with 371, followed by Mid-Wilshire with 272, Westlake with 182, Skid Row with 81, and Boyle Heights with 27. Hollywood had the highest number of evictions and number of 3-day notices, while Skid row had the highest number of

10-day notices, Westlake had the highest number of 30-day notices, and Beverly Hills had the highest number of 60-day notices.

Tenants can receive either an at-fault eviction or a no-fault eviction. At-fault evictions occur when landlords believe the tenants are at “at-fault,” such as for nonpayment of rent or a violation of the lease (State of California Department of Justice, n.d.). Landlords who evict tenants because the owner wants to withdraw the unit, remodel the unit, or move into the unit create a no-fault eviction, where the tenant is evicted even though it is not their fault (State of California Department of Justice, n.d.). Figure 2 shows that in Hollywood, Mid-Wilshire, Westlake, Skid Row, and Boyle Heights every eviction was an at-fault eviction, whereas in Beverly Hills there were two at-fault evictions and three no-fault evictions (LA City Controller, 2023).

Within each category of at-fault and no-fault evictions, landlords evict tenants for a majority of reasons, such as nonpayment of rent, violation of the lease, withdrawing units, and the landlord or their family moving into the unit. As revealed in Figure 3, in Skid Row, Westlake, Mid-Wilshire, Hollywood, and Boyle Heights, the majority of evictions were given for non-payment of rent, followed by a fewer number of lease violations and disorderly behavior (LA City Controller, 2023). Westlake had the highest number of evictions given for violations of the lease. In Beverly Hills, there was only one eviction due to non-payment of rent and one due to disorderly behavior, while there were three for withdrawing units.

Additionally, the average rent owed at the time of the eviction ranged from around \$2,600 to around \$4,600 in Skid Row, Westlake, Boyle Heights, Mid-Wilshire, and Hollywood (LA City Controller, 2023). As Figure 4 demonstrates, the averages include \$4,655.5 owed in Skid Row, \$4,294.6 owed in Westlake, \$2,605.68 owed in Boyle Heights, \$3,445.62 owed in Mid-Wilshire,

and \$3,891.13 owed in Hollywood. In Beverly Hills, the average rent owed at the time of eviction was \$675 as only one of the five tenants in Beverly Hills who were evicted was evicted for non-payment of rent and owed \$3,375.00.

Figure 1

Number of Eviction Notices by Type: 3-Day Notices, 10-Day Notices, 30-Day Notices, and 60-Day Notices

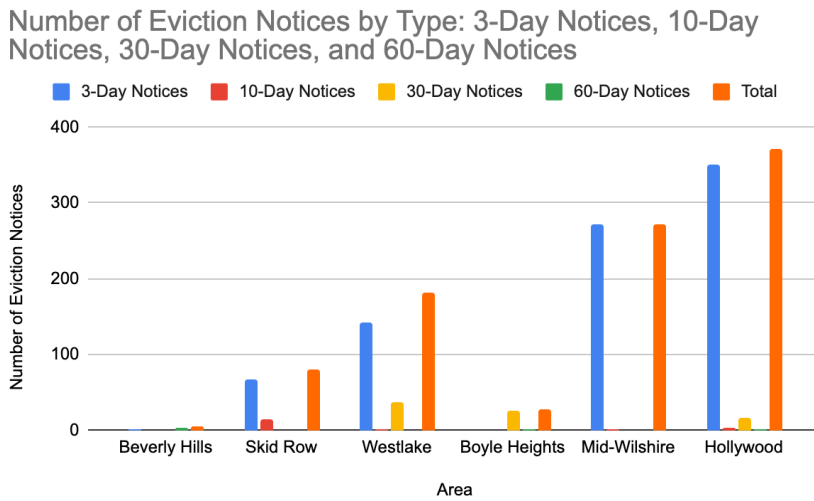


Figure 2

Number of Evictions by Type: At-Fault or No-Fault

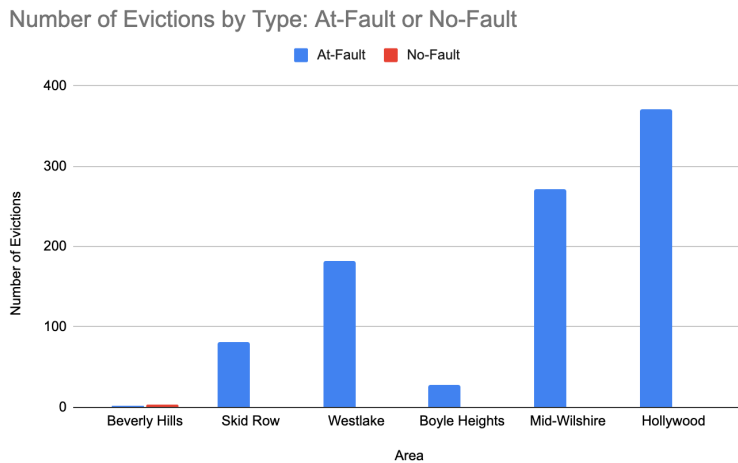


Figure 3

Reason for Eviction

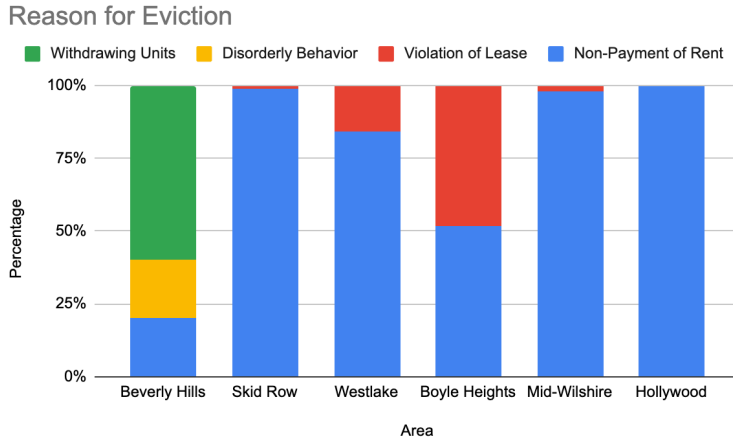
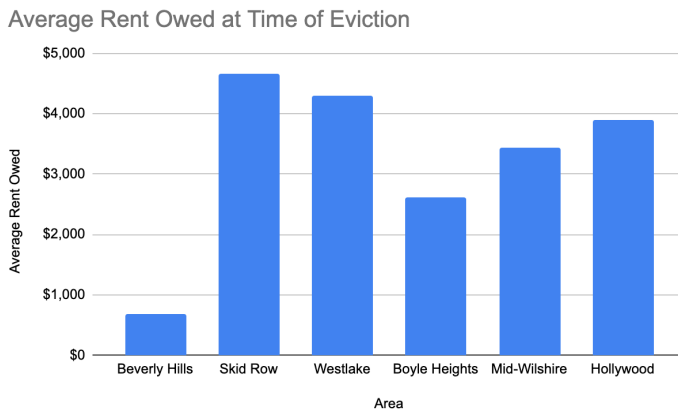


Figure 4

Average Rent Owed at Time of Eviction



Rental Assistance Applicants

The *ULA ERAP Workbook* from the Los Angeles Housing Department illustrated data regarding rental assistance applicants, including the number of applications, the average monthly rent, the average backrent, demographics of the applicants, and average area median income (AMI) in each of the zip codes (ULA ERAP, 2024). As shown in Figure 5, Hollywood had the highest number of rental assistance applicants with 697 applicants, followed by Westlake with

518, Mid-Wilshire with 340, Skid Row with 336, Boyle Heights with 283, and Beverly Hills with 17.

The order from highest to lowest average monthly rent is Beverly Hills, Mid-Wilshire, Hollywood, Westlake, Skid Row, and Boyle Heights, which is the same order as highest to lowest average back rent (ULA ERAP, 2024). Figure 6 reveals the average monthly rent in each zip code: \$3,693.65 in Beverly Hills, \$2,426.31 in Mid-Wilshire, \$2,120.54 in Hollywood, \$1,673.71 in Westlake, \$1,439.39 in Skid Row, and \$1,428.69 in Boyle Heights. The average back rent in each zip code includes \$33,996.56 in Beverly Hills, \$20,227.95 in Mid-Wilshire, \$15,792.31 in Hollywood, \$13,322.28 in Westlake, \$11,781.92 in Skid Row, and \$11,010.25 in Boyle Heights.

In terms of demographics of rental assistance applicants, as Figure 7 shows, Beverly Hills predominantly consisted of people that identified as white (47%) or other (35%) (ULA ERAP, 2024). Skid Row predominantly consisted of people that identified as Black (45%), Hispanic (21%), and white (14%). Westlake consisted of about 39% people who identified as Black, about 30% of people who identified as Hispanic, and 14% of people who identified as other. Boyle Heights consisted of the majority of people who identified as Hispanic (80%). Mid-Wilshire consisted of about 29% of people who identified as Black, about 32% of people who identified as white, about 12% who identified as Hispanic, about 13% who identified as Asian, and about 14% who identified as other. Hollywood was split between people who identified as Black (34%), White (26%), Hispanic (20%), and other (14%).

AMI is the median income earned in an area (Metropolitan Council, 2018). There are three thresholds of AMI in relation to housing: 30% or below AMI, 31-50% AMI, and 51-80% AMI (Metropolitan Council, 2018). Figure 8 shows that in each area, the average AMI for rental

assistance applicants was very similar: 30.33 in Skid Row, 30.71 in Mid-Wilshire, 30.73 in Westlake, 30.76 in Hollywood, 31.02 in Boyle Heights, and 32.94 in Beverly Hills (ULA ERAP, 2024). Within all of the areas, almost all of the applicants' AMI were around 30, with some higher outliers.

Figure 5

Number of Rental Assistance Applicants

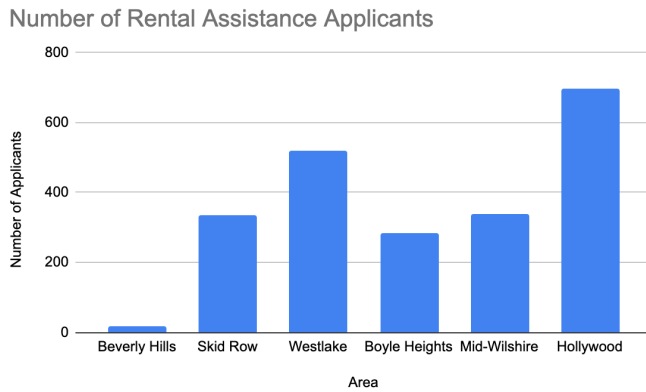


Figure 6

Average Monthly Rent and Average Back Rent

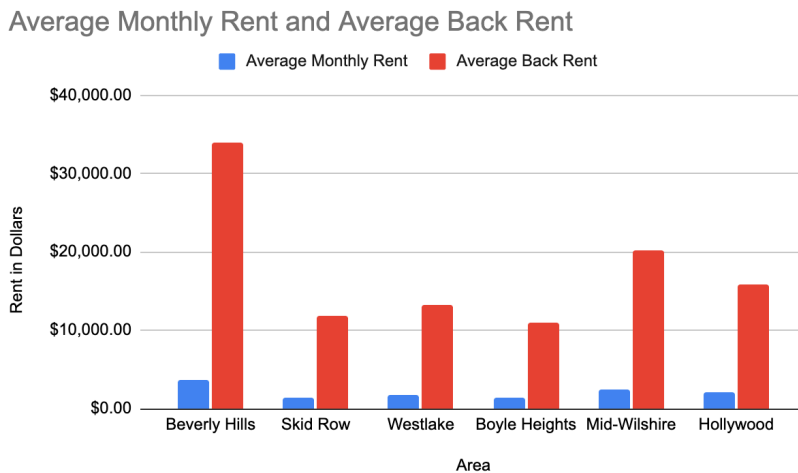


Figure 7

Demographic Information by Race

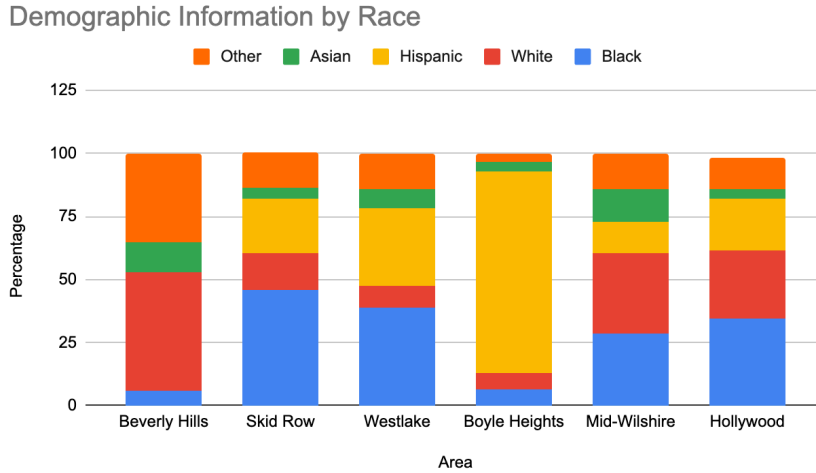
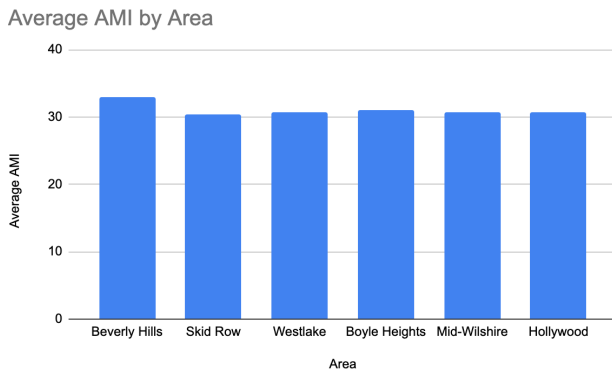


Figure 8

Average AMI by Area



Additional Housing Injustices and Demographic Information

The data from *Neighborhood Data for Social Change* from the Neighborhood Data for Social Change Platform includes data regarding the percentage of owners and renters, median household income, percentages of overcrowding, housing stability percentages, and rent burden percentages (USC Lusk Center for Real Estate, 2024). All zip codes had a higher percentage of renters than owners of homes. As demonstrated in Figure 9, Beverly Hills included about 43%

owners and 57% renters, while the other zip codes had a much larger difference. Skid Row includes 91% renters, Westlake includes 95% renters, Boyle Heights includes 76% renters, Mid-Wilshire includes 81% renters, and Hollywood includes 91% renters.

Figure 10 shows median household income in each of the areas. Westlake had the lowest median household income of \$49,100, which follows Boyle Heights (\$52,918), Hollywood (\$62,421), Skid Row (\$64,814), Mid-Wilshire (\$89,859), and Beverly Hills (\$120,641) (USC Lusk Center for Real Estate, 2024).

The Neighborhood Data for Social Change Platform defines overcrowding as the percentage of housing units with over one person per room in the unit (USC Lusk Center for Real Estate, 2024). Westlake had the highest percentage of overcrowding, followed by Boyle Heights, Skid Row, Hollywood, Mid-Wilshire, and Beverly Hills. Figure 11 shows 32.73% overcrowding in Westlake, 28.32% in Boyle Heights, 12.26% in Skid Row, 10.4% in Hollywood, 3.71% in Mid-Wilshire, and 3.18% in Beverly Hills.

Housing stability is defined by the Neighborhood Data for Social Change Platform as the percentage of the population that lives in the same home as they did the year prior (USC Lusk Center for Real Estate, 2024). Out of the selected zip codes, Boyle Heights had the highest percentage of housing stability (92.07%), followed by Beverly Hills (89.84%), Westlake (88.83%), Hollywood (84.15%), Mid-Wilshire (81.33%), and Skid Row (67.06%), as shown in Figure 12.

According to the Neighborhood Data for Social Change Platform, rent burden includes the percentage of tenants who pay over 30% of their monthly income on their utilities and rent (USC Lusk Center for Real Estate, 2024). Figure 13 reveals Westlake included 57.06% of

rent-burdened tenants, Boyle Heights included 55.87%, Beverly Hills included 55.25%, Mid-Wilshire included 55.14%, Hollywood included 54.99%, and Skid Row included 48.76%.

Figure 9

Percentage of Owners and Percentage of Renters

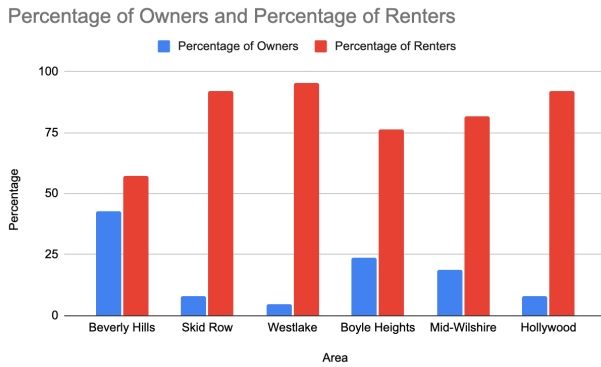


Figure 10

Median Household Income by Area

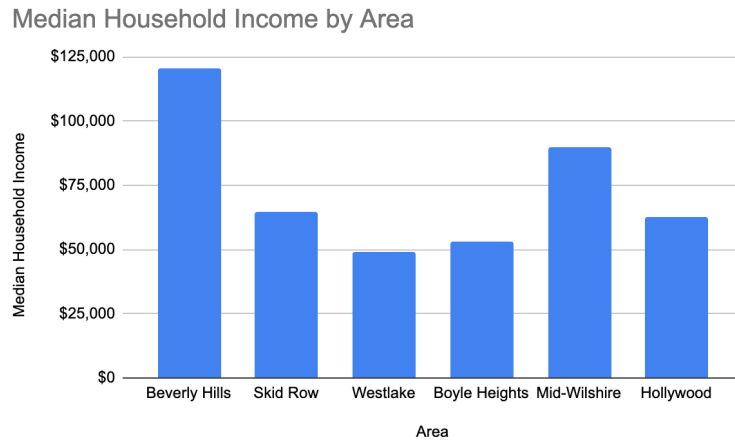


Figure 11

Percentage of Overcrowding by Area

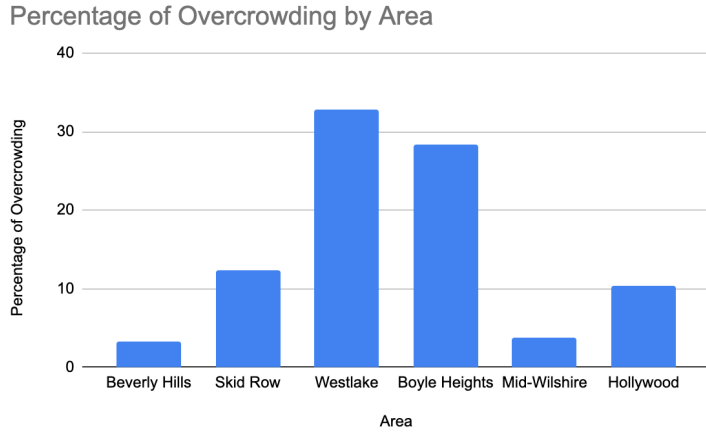


Figure 12

Percentage of Housing Stability by Area

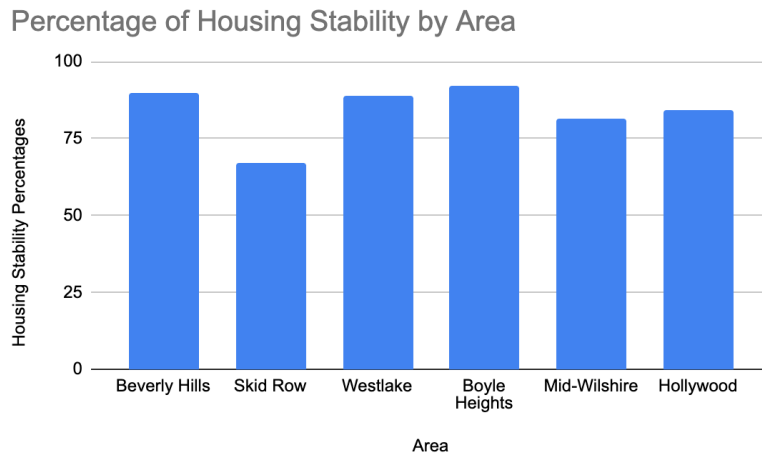
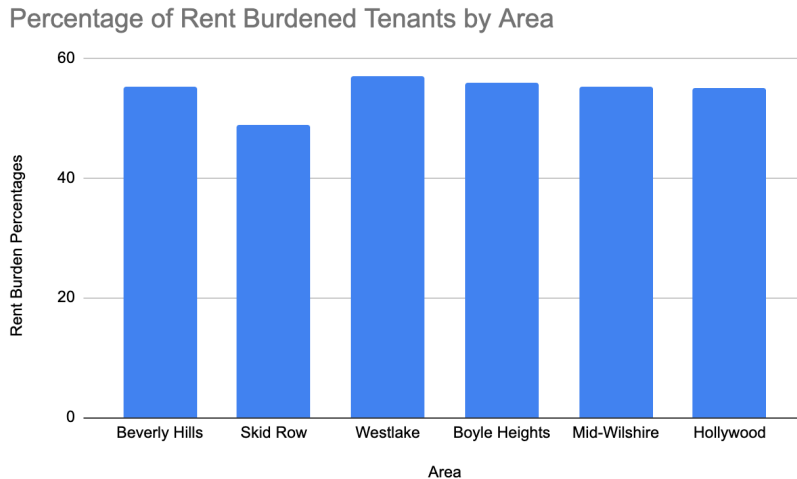


Figure 13*Percentage of Rent Burdened Tenants by Area***Summary of Quantitative Results**

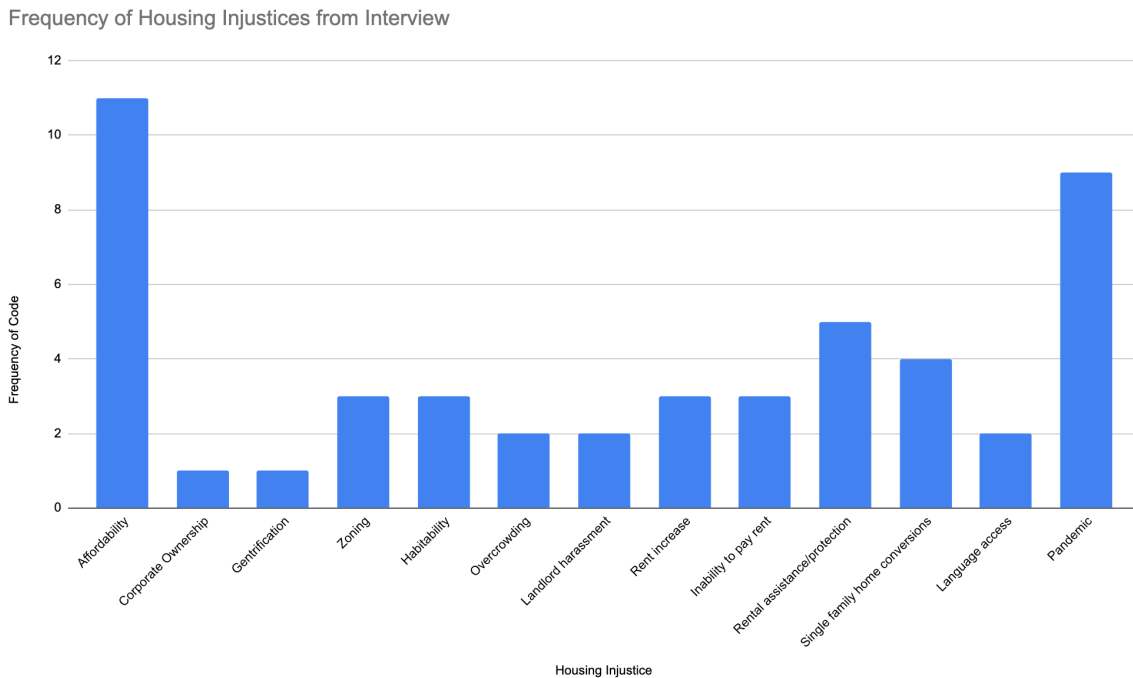
In relation to evictions, Hollywood had the highest number of evictions and number of 3-day notices, while Skid Row had the highest number of 10-day notices; Westlake had the highest number of 30-day notices; and Beverly Hills had the highest number of 60-day notices. Skid Row had the highest amount of rent owed at time of eviction (LA City Controller, 2023). Hollywood had the highest number of rental assistance applicants (ULA ERAP, 2024). Beverly Hills had the highest average monthly rent, average back rent, and average AMI (ULA ERAP, 2024). Beverly Hills had the highest percentage of owners and lowest percentage of renters, while Westlake had the highest percentage of renters (USC Lusk Center for Real Estate, 2024). Westlake had the highest percentage of overcrowding, the highest percentage of rent burden, and the lowest percentage of median household income (USC Lusk Center for Real Estate, 2024). Beverly Hills had the highest median household income, and Boyle Heights had the highest percentage of housing stability (USC Lusk Center for Real Estate, 2024).

Interview

Nicole Rivera-Vazquez, the Managing Attorney for Client Intake at LAFLA, was interviewed to gain insight from someone who sees the effects of housing inequality each day and seeks to provide assistance to those impacted. She discussed various housing inequalities in Los Angeles as well as LAFLA's role in helping those who are vulnerable to the injustices. As illustrated in Figure 14, the housing injustices that she mentioned were coded for frequency of mention (see Appendix).

Figure 14

Frequency of Housing Injustices from Interview



The housing injustice that Rivera-Vazquez mentioned the most frequently was housing affordability, which had a frequency of 11 times throughout the course of the interview, as shown in Figure 14. She emphasized housing affordability as it affects many in Los Angeles as housing has always been expensive, but it has increased drastically in the last five years, and low-income

communities are impacted the most, according to Rivera-Vazquez. The impact of the pandemic was the injustice with the second highest frequency of mentions, while rental assistance/protections had the next highest frequency. Many of the rent ordinances, which were created as a result of the pandemic and paused evictions for non-payment of rent, have ended, so those who were protected no longer are, leading to many evictions in the county. Single family home conversions, where single family homes are treated as apartments, had a frequency of four mentions, and they sometimes take place illegally when they are not properly zoned, according to Rivera-Vazquez. Zoning, habitability, rent increase and inability to pay rent each had a frequency of three from the interview. Zoning was mentioned in relation to single family homes, and habitability issues relate to inequalities that tenants face such as mold. Rent increases have surged after the pauses on increasing rent were lifted after the pandemic, causing many to be unable to pay their rent. Overcrowding, landlord harassment, and language accessibility each had a frequency of two. The lack of affordable housing causes tenants to live in overcrowded apartments, and landlords in certain areas may be more lenient than in other areas in regard to when tenants may be evicted. The lack of language accessible resources is another inequality that tenants face, including eviction notices not written in the tenant's preferred or native language, such as in Koreatown, Long Beach, and East Los Angeles, according to Rivera-Vazquez. Lastly, gentrification and corporate ownership of buildings each had a frequency of one. Gentrification manifests in South Los Angeles, according to Rivera-Vazquez, and corporate ownership of buildings is another housing injustice.

Rivera-Vazquez also discussed LAFLA's impact in aiding those affected by housing inequality. During the pandemic, LAFLA received increased funding to hire attorneys and also started working with other organizations to take a more systematic approach to outreach. LAFLA

not only educates clients on their rights but also provides council and representation for those facing evictions and other housing issues. She also described the importance of accessibility to legal services as finding resources is difficult for many residents. According to Rivera-Vazquez, housing affordability and inequality impacts everyone, directly or indirectly: “Housing affects us all on a fundamental level...housing insecurity can cause a loss of employment and health and mental health issues and substance abuse problems. Overall, people who have housing insecurity or experiencing houselessness have a higher mortality rate.” LAFLA also works with the Los Angeles Housing Department, and they each refer clients to each other when their needs can be met by the other. Rivera-Vazquez also described that they can work with Los Angeles County to pass provisions and ordinances to help tenants become aware of their right to an attorney. She opined that increased funding for affordable housing and resources for those who are houseless is vital to create housing equality.

Discussion

The research aimed to find which manifestations of housing injustice exist in specific areas of Los Angeles. The findings reveal that there are more manifestations and impacts of housing injustices in the lower-income areas studied than in higher-income areas, while there were also differences between each area. For much of the data, there was a distinct gap between Beverly Hills and the other zip codes, showing the influence of persisting and current inequalities on the lower-income areas.

Evictions

Regarding evictions and the dataset titled *Eviction Data from 2.2023 to 12.2023* from LA City Controller’s Eviction Data, Beverly Hills had the smallest number of evictions while Hollywood had the most (LA City Controller, 2023). Figure 2, which shows at-fault and no-fault

eviction in each zip code, demonstrates that all of the evictions were at-fault in each area, except for three out of the five total evictions in Beverly Hills, which were no-fault evictions. Beverly Hills, a high-income city, did have evictions, but the majority were not considered the fault of the tenants, as different injustices may lead the landlord to place responsibility on the tenants more quickly in the lower-income areas. Housing injustice can manifest through eviction and being served eviction notices, showing that the areas with a higher number of at-fault evictions may have more housing injustices. Similarly, as shown in Figure 3, the reasons the evictions were given in Beverly Hills include three for withdrawing units, one due to disorderly behavior, and only one due to non-payment of rent, while in in Skid Row, Westlake, Mid-Wilshire, and Hollywood, the majority of evictions were given for non-payment of rent, followed by a smaller number of lease violations and disorderly behavior (LA City Controller, 2023). These results can show that landlords in higher income areas, such as Beverly Hills, may be more lenient before evicting their tenants for not paying rent or that those in higher income areas do not suffer from as many inequalities that would cause them to be unable to pay their rent. For example, those who live on Skid Row may be racialized and criminalized, and those who are marginalized are more vulnerable to the impacts and dangers of gentrification and housing injustices as they are less equipped with resources and are often displaced from their environments (Camp, 2012, p. 655; Hoover, 2023). Skid Row had 81 at-fault evictions, 80 for non-payment of rent and one for a violation of the lease, showing that these inequalities of racialization, marginalization, and criminalization may connect to the higher number of evictions (LA City Controller, 2023). In Boyle Heights, there are injustices of gentrification, which may contribute to the evictions, and displacement of long-standing residents, where the majority were served with eviction notices due to violation of the lease or non-payment of rent, which are all at-fault (Lin, 2019, p. 169).

Additionally, in Skid Row, Westlake, Boyle Heights, Mid-Wilshire, and Hollywood, the average rent owed at the time of the eviction ranged from around \$2,600 to around \$4,600, whereas in Beverly Hills, the average rent owed at the time of eviction was \$675 (LA City Controller, 2023). This is a result of only one of the five evictions in Beverly Hills being given for nonpayment of rent so only that tenant had rent owed, whereas in all of the other areas, almost all of the tenants owed rent at the time of eviction. These results convey that landlords in lower-income areas may be more willing to evict tenants sooner due to nonpayment of rent and that there are more housing injustices in these areas that contribute to the landlord's perception of the tenants or willingness to evict. The data also show that in certain areas of Los Angeles, tenants are struggling to pay their landlords, and in the same areas, landlords are more willing to evict their tenants.

Rental Assistance Applicants

Adding further evidence to the variance in paying rent on time across neighborhoods in Los Angeles, the *ULA ERAP Workbook* from the Los Angeles Housing Department showed Hollywood, Westlake, Mid-Wilshire, Skid Row, and Boyle Heights each had between about 280 to almost 700 rental assistance applicants, while Beverly Hills had 17 (ULA ERAP, 2024). This reveals that the population in higher-income areas are less likely to need or apply for rental assistance. Additionally, the order of the zip codes from highest to lowest average monthly rent is the same as the order from highest to lowest average back rent: Beverly Hills, Mid-Wilshire, Hollywood, Westlake, Skid Row, and Boyle Heights (ULA ERAP, 2024). This conveys that the populations who apply for rental assistance who live in areas with the highest rent also have the highest back rent and that the areas with the lowest rent contain tenants with the lowest backrent. The highest back rent owed was in Beverly Hills and was over \$100,000, which is a very large

amount of debt to accumulate; in other areas, tenants would most likely not be able to amass that much debt as they would be evicted sooner, revealing injustices (ULA ERAP, 2024). The back rent accumulated by tenants can be due to different inequalities, such as the pandemic and its impacts, gentrification, environmental injustice, and racial injustice. If the tenant is unable to pay the rent in the manner that the landlord requires, the tenant can be evicted for non-payment of rent, showing how these injustices can lead to eviction, which can cause displacement or homelessness.

The *ULA ERAP Workbook* regarding data on rental assistance applicants also includes demographic information. Skid Row, Westlake, Boyle Heights, Mid-Wilshire, and Hollywood each consisted of a majority of people who identified as Black, Hispanic, Asian, or Other, while Beverly Hills consisted of 47% of people who identified as white (ULA ERAP, 2024). These findings may be a result of historic policies and practices that segregated races such as redlining or current gentrification practices. Additionally, the average AMI of the applicants in each of the areas was around 30, showing that the average median income of the applicants was around 30% the average median income for the area, demonstrating that the applicants do need the rental assistance as they are making less than the median income of the respective area (ULA ERAP, 2024). 30% of AMI can be categorized as “extremely low income,” and 50% of AMI can be categorized as “very low income” (Metropolitan Council, 2018). As each area’s average AMI for the applicants was around 30, the applicants can be considered “extremely” or “very” low income.

Additional Housing Injustices and Demographic Information

Neighborhood Data for Social Change from the Neighborhood Data for Social Change Platform showed that Beverly Hills had the highest median household income, which was more

than double the median household income of Westlake, the area with the lowest median household income (USC Lusk Center for Real Estate, 2024). This gap in income can also relate to percentages of overcrowding, as areas with lower median incomes may not be able to support low ratios of people per room in the home due to overcrowding, while households with higher incomes can support less people per room. For example, Westlake had the highest percentage of overcrowding, the percentage of housing units with more than one person per room, and the lowest median household income (USC Lusk Center for Real Estate, 2024). Beverly Hills had the highest median household income and the lowest percentage of overcrowding (USC Lusk Center for Real Estate, 2024). This data reveals housing injustice as areas with higher percentages of overcrowding may not have as many resources in order to provide less crowded housing, while areas with much higher incomes are able to support and provide less crowded housing.

The Neighborhood Data for Social Change Website also revealed that all of the zip codes studied had a higher percentage of renters than owners of homes; however, in Beverly Hills, there were about 43% owners and 57% renters, while the other zip codes ranged from 76-95% renters (USC Lusk Center for Real Estate, 2024). This shows that lower-income areas have lower rates of home ownership, which can be due to inequalities such as impacts of redlining and gentrification, which makes it difficult for many in lower-income neighborhoods to purchase homes.

Regarding housing stability, Boyle Heights had the highest percentage of housing stability, meaning that it was the area with the most amount of the population that lived in the same home as the year before, which is followed by Beverly Hills, Westlake, Hollywood, Mid-Wilshire, and Skid Row (USC Lusk Center for Real Estate, 2024). This result was less

expected as Beverly Hills, a high-income neighborhood, has been in contrast with the other areas in many aspects of having less housing inequalities or less impacts from housing injustices. It was also not expected for Boyle Heights to have the highest percentage of housing stability as it is an area where gentrification and displacement is occurring and has occurred. Other factors that can impact housing stability include being evicted or losing one's housing due to impacts from the pandemic.

Additionally, the percentages of tenants that are rent-burdened are within a close range, from around 48-57% percent, with Westlake having the highest percentage and Skid Row having the lowest percentage (USC Lusk Center for Real Estate, 2024). This result was also less expected as Skid Row had the lowest percentage of tenants that are rent-burdened when Beverly Hills is the area with the highest median income, which would lead to the expectation that the area with the highest income would have the least amount of tenants that are rent burdened. However, Beverly Hills was also the area with the highest average rent, which shows that it may also have housing injustices that make it difficult for tenants to pay rent or that cause tenants to be rent-burdened (USC Lusk Center for Real Estate, 2024). This result can also be due to the fact that Beverly Hills also includes about half renters and half owners of housing, so there may be less renters than in the other areas that have a much higher percentage of renters.

Interview

The data from the interview with Rivera-Vazquez showed that housing affordability was the housing injustice with the highest frequency. As of 2022, Los Angeles County lacked 499,430 affordable homes (County of Los Angeles, 2022). Rivera-Vazquez's emphasis on and the prevalence of housing affordability reveals how the lack of affordable housing impacts and connects to many of the other injustices that exist, such as impacts from the pandemic and

overcrowding. She described that low-income communities are impacted the most from the lack of affordable housing, which conveys how the zip codes described with lower median household incomes, which suffered from more housing injustices, also lack affordable housing and resources for tenants. The pandemic also contributed to housing inequality as many people lost their jobs, suffered from health impacts, and became unable to pay their rent. The rental assistance programs and protections that were created to ameliorate these hardships ended after the pandemic, causing many to be evicted and unable to pay rent after being protected. This also increased tenants' inability to pay rent and the number of evictions for non-payment of rent.

Another housing injustice that manifests in Los Angeles is habitability issues, such as mold, which can harm tenants' physical and mental health, especially children; areas with less habitability issues are more likely to be higher-income as many in lower-income areas cannot afford to move to apartments with better conditions. For many tenants, rent was increased after the protections on rent ended, which caused many tenants to be unable to pay their rent and caused evictions for non-payment of rent; in lower-income areas, tenants may have been more impacted by the lifting of the protections as they were more vulnerable before the pandemic. The lack of affordable housing as well as the lack of rent protections for tenants who are vulnerable to the lasting impacts of COVID-19 have allowed for overcrowding to occur in many areas, which is defined as when many people live in a home that is designed for less people to live in (USC Lusk Center for Real Estate, 2024). When tenants are not able to pay their rent, landlords in higher-income areas may be more willing to allow their tenants to accumulate back rent or stay in their apartments, whereas in lower-income areas landlords may not be as lenient in allowing tenants to stay when they have not paid their rent, causing more evictions. Rivera-Vazquez also discussed the lack of accessible resources written in languages other than

English; this shows inequalities to tenants that speak other languages as they are at a disadvantage when they receive notices that they are unable to understand, which can lead to unjust evictions. She also discussed gentrification as another injustice as many tenants are forcibly displaced due to increased rent or the demolition of buildings.

Additionally, Rivera-Vazquez described the significance of the lack of accessibility to legal services. For many tenants who live in low-income areas, finding resources may be difficult, due to language barriers, lack of internet access, or lack of transportation, showing how injustices manifest as those who live in higher-income areas may have more accessibility to resources. LAFLA is working to help those impacted by housing injustices and homelessness through the Housing Advice Line, paralegals, and attorneys, and increased funding and partnerships with organizations has also allowed LAFLA to continue providing legal advice and services. She also discussed that increased funding for affordable housing is necessary for housing equality, further emphasizing the problem of a lack of affordable housing in Los Angeles, which impacts all other housing injustices. Lastly, she described the ways in which people can participate in activism for housing inequality: “it’s really important to get involved in local politics because that’s what really has the ability to change your community”. Being involved in the community can effect meaningful change, such as activism or volunteering for a non-profit organization. LAFLA is able to create a significant impact on tenants in Los Angeles’ communities through the various services, such as the Housing Justice Hotline.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Study

A limitation includes the sample size as the data that was collected and studied was from six zip codes in Los Angeles; there are 88 cities in Los Angeles County and over 400 zip codes (State of California Department of Justice, n.d.). Another limitation is that the categories that

were chosen to study regarding housing injustice may also not be representative of all of the components that can characterize housing injustice. For future studies, including more or all of the cities and zip codes in Los Angeles and studying additional characteristics, such as Ellis Act Evictions or age of housing, would allow a further exploration of the different housing injustices in Los Angeles, which can create a more complete perspective of the situation.

Recommendations for LAFLA

This research is significant as housing is a basic human right, and it provides the community partner, LAFLA, with a better understanding and resource to use while helping those experiencing housing inequality. This is valuable information as it shows the injustices that are more or less prevalent in the various areas studied, allowing volunteers to gain a more holistic understanding of the particular inequalities, and their root-causes, that callers are experiencing in the distinct areas. For example, Boyle Heights, Westlake, Skid Row, Mid-Wilshire, and Hollywood had a much higher number of eviction notices given, amount of rent owed at time of the eviction, and overcrowding and a much lower percentage of owners, median household income, average monthly rent, and average back rent than Beverly Hills did. This can show LAFLA that lower-income areas may be more susceptible to housing injustices and may need more legal help, depending on the unique needs and demographics of each area. Each zip code also differs from each other in many aspects. Stay Housed LA, an organization that LAFLA works closely with, has named certain zip codes to be priority zip codes, so people from those areas are prioritized for legal help. Recommendations can include that areas with more housing injustices, such as Boyle Heights, Westlake, Mid-Wilshire, Hollywood, and Skid Row, may need quicker and more legal assistance with housing matters than other areas.

Discovering the types of housing injustices that are more prevalent in certain areas and providing LAFLA with this data addresses the structural power imbalance between tenants, landlords, corporate owners, and local governments. The descriptive statistics and analyses can give volunteers at LAFLA a deeper understanding of the injustices that occur in specific areas, assisting them when taking calls. For example, if someone who calls LAFLA's Housing Justice Hotline is from Hollywood and receives a 3-day notice, the Intake Volunteers, attorneys, and paralegals can have the background knowledge that in Hollywood in 2023, 351 of 371 people who were evicted received 3-day notices and all 371 were for non-payment of rent, showing that 3-day notices are prevalent in Hollywood and that time is of the essence as they must respond within three days (LA City Controller, 2023). They can also be aware that landlords in Hollywood may be less willing or lenient to allow the tenants to stay when they are unable to pay rent. This study further addresses the imbalance of structural power that has existed through past housing policies and laws as LAFLA advocates for those who are impacted by these housing injustices through representation in court and by providing resources and advice.

Recommendations can also include educating volunteers about this data. While only reflective of six zip codes in Los Angeles, it provides an overview of housing injustices and experiences that tenants experience, and volunteers for LAFLA's Housing Justice Hotline can use it as background when answering phone calls regarding tenants' housing problems. Volunteers can also become aware of the systemic issues involved in housing injustice, such as gentrification, which can be addressed through education, political activism and non-profit organizations.

Conclusion

Housing is a fundamental human right that all humans deserve, yet housing injustice is prevalent throughout many different zip codes of Los Angeles. As of 2022, Los Angeles County lacked almost 500,000 affordable homes, which are necessary to help the homelessness crisis and reverse the impacts of inequalities, so housing inequality impacts hundreds of thousands throughout the county (County of Los Angeles, 2022).

Housing injustices differ in the distinct areas of Los Angeles that were studied. Each of the areas studied revealed some inequalities, but the lower-income areas, such as Hollywood, Mid-Wilshire, Westlake, Skid Row, and Boyle Heights, had more injustices than the higher-income area, Beverly Hills, and differed from each other. In many of the topics studied, there was a gap between Beverly Hills and the other areas, illustrating how inequalities impact the areas differently and lower-income areas disproportionately. The injustices studied ranged from evictions, reason for eviction, eviction notice type, and rent owed at the time of eviction to rental assistance applicants' median income, monthly rent, and back rent, as well as overcrowding, owning or renting homes, rent burden, and housing stability. As an example of the manifestations of injustices in different areas, Hollywood, Mid-Wilshire, Westlake, Skid Row, and Boyle Heights had higher numbers of eviction notices, amount of rent owed at the time of the eviction, and overcrowding, while they had lower percentages of owners, median household income, average monthly rent, and average back rent than Beverly Hills. This can convey that Hollywood, Mid-Wilshire, Westlake, Skid Row, and Boyle Heights may be more susceptible to housing injustices and may need more legal advice or help from LAFLA. Each of these areas are also distinct from each other in the frequency of each injustice.

These housing injustices stem from structural power imbalances, such as the past policies and histories of redlining or current discrimination from landlords or displacement from gentrification. This study addresses these imbalances of particular injustices that exist in certain zip codes or areas as the results allow volunteers at LAFLA to employ this knowledge as a further resource and a deeper understanding. Employing this data illuminates how those who have backgrounds or identities that have historically been oppressed, such as through previously redlined neighborhoods, the structuring of freeways, and gentrification, are still disproportionately disadvantaged through the housing system.

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f-an-eviction-crisis-for-many-renters-the-crisis-is-already-here-los-angeles-county-eviction-covid-pandemic-protections-moratorium-landlord-renter-housing-homelessness

Appendix

Codebook for Interview

Each code encapsulates a theme that is a type of housing injustice or that pertains to the various inequalities. The codes were employed to analyze the qualitative data from the interview with Nicole Rivera-Vazquez, the Managing Attorney in Client Intake at LAFLA.

Affordability: the topic of affordability of housing or unaffordable or expensive housing

Corporate Ownership: corporations owning or taking over the ownership of housing, such as large apartment complexes

Gentrification: the topic of gentrification, including displacement due to gentrification

Zoning: zoning of housing that makes housing difficult to attain or stay in as a tenant

Habitability: issues regarding habitability and a quality living space that negatively impact tenants

Overcrowding: many people living in one housing unit with less rooms in proportion to number of people

Landlord harassment: landlords verbally or physically harassing tenants

Rent increase: landlords increasing tenant's rent

Inability to pay rent: tenants that become unable to pay their rent due to various conditions and inequalities

Rental assistance/protection: COVID-19 rental assistance programs that tenants applied for and received due to economic impacts of the pandemic

Single family home conversions: single family homes treated as apartments, and this conversion sometimes takes place illegally

Language access: the lack of access to eviction notices or resources in languages other than English

Pandemic: COVID-19's impacts on tenants