New City, New Politics? An Exploration of the Political Effects of the Creative Class and Gentrification in Four “Creative” U.S. Cities
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Faculty Research Grant Final Report

Description of Grant-Related Activities

The primary purpose of the grant was to support research-related travel for a project focused on gentrification and community politics in U.S. cities. In the summer of 2011, I traveled to the four cities included in my study (Albuquerque, Birmingham, Boston, and San Francisco) to interview city councilors and community leaders. I interviewed over thirty people during these trips and visited the neighborhoods I was studying. Additionally, some grant money was used to fund travel to the European Urban Research Association annual meeting in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Project Status/Difficulties Encountered

Data collection for the project is mostly complete. The grant allowed me to travel to cities to interview a large number of city councilors and community leaders in a short amount of time. This was the main purpose of the grant and I completed this aspect of it during the summer of 2011 (I transcribed many of the interviews during this time as well). At this time the “final product” from the data collection period is still in progress. Most of the difficulties/challenges I encountered had to do with the organizational aspect of the project (i.e., identifying interview subjects and scheduling interviews). These challenges were encountered when I would email potential subjects from my office in South Bend; however, individuals were much more receptive to emails and calls once I was in the cities, interestingly, so the travel made possible by the grant actually facilitated solutions to this challenge.

Resulting Products

In March and April of 2012 I presented data collected during the grant period in conference papers at the Indiana Political Science Association (South Bend) and the Urban Affairs Association (Pittsburgh) meetings. I also gave a Dean’s Seminar at IUSB in April 2012 in which I presented preliminary findings from the research project similar to those I presented at the professional conferences. In the following months I anticipate submitting a manuscript to a peer-reviewed journal and I have also been in discussion with two publishing companies regarding the prospects for continuing this research effort as a book project. Finally, my research has enhanced my understanding of gentrification in a way that has enabled me to teach the subject more effectively to my students in urban politics courses—I used examples from my summer 2011 research in my Spring 2012 POLS-B 399 course on urban policy.