



Race and Space Gentrification and Eviction Tacoma, Washington: Hilltop Neighborhood

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Introduction

- **Gentrification** can be defined as “the process by which working class residential neighborhoods are rehabilitated by middle class homebuyers, landlords and professional developers (Smith 1982: 139). This process differs from redevelopment, which is “not rehabilitation of old structures but the construction of new buildings on previously developed land: (Smith 1982: 139). The point of this research is to demonstrate how gentrification has occurred and continues to occur in the Hilltop Neighborhood of Tacoma, Washington.

Gentrification Disproportionately Affects People of Color

- The Hilltop neighborhood has been an historically African-American Neighborhood that due to the racially motivated practices used by the government and the real estate industry was disinvested in causing the neighborhood to become poverty stricken. Disinvestment diminished the property values allowing for gentrification to take place.
- The city of Tacoma devised a plan called the Hilltop Subarea Plan to “revitalize” the neighborhood and promote economic development. According to the City of Tacoma Subarea Plan and EIS packet “developers are encouraged by catalytic project examples to jointly develop mixed-income and income-assisted population projects to avoid creating income-assisted population “ghetto” or “project” concentrations and stigmas within Hilltop” (City of Tacoma Hilltop Subarea Plan and EIS: 20).

Before



After

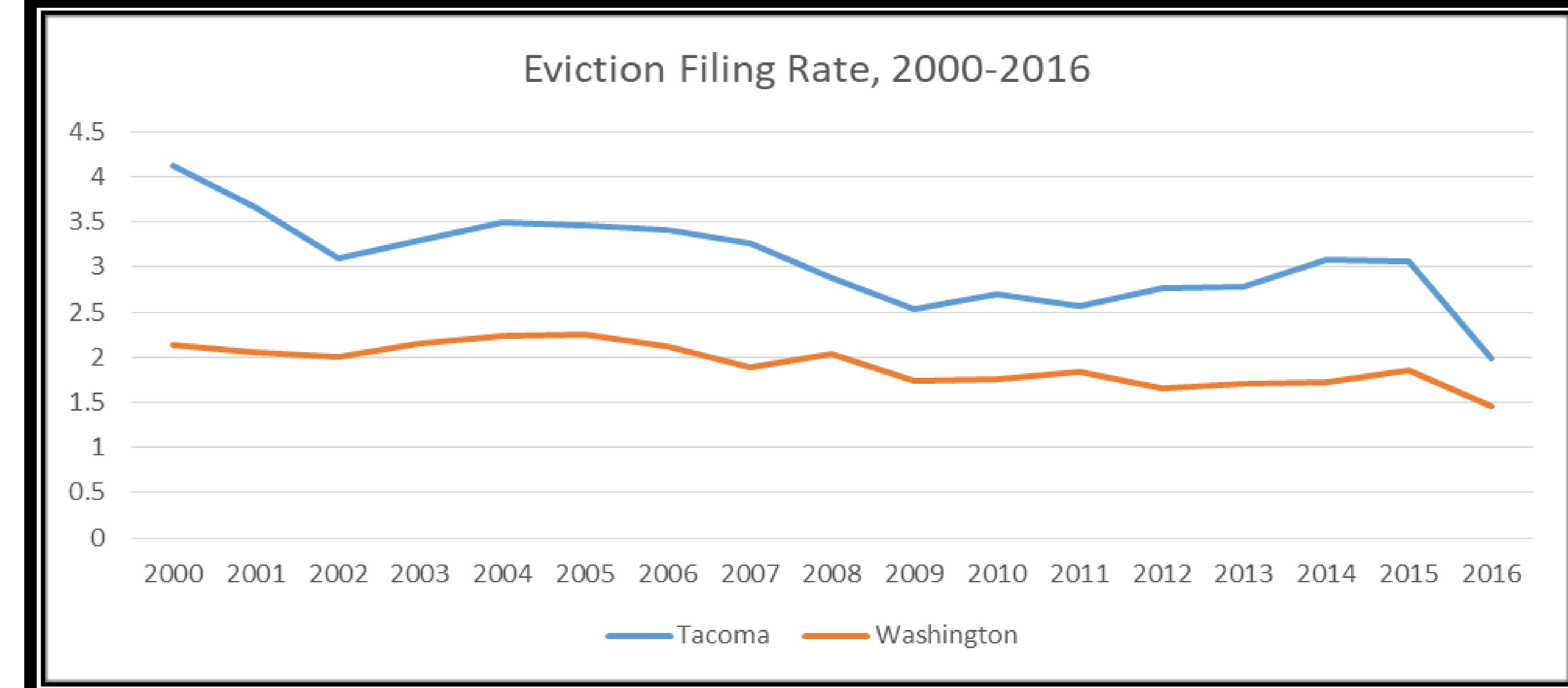
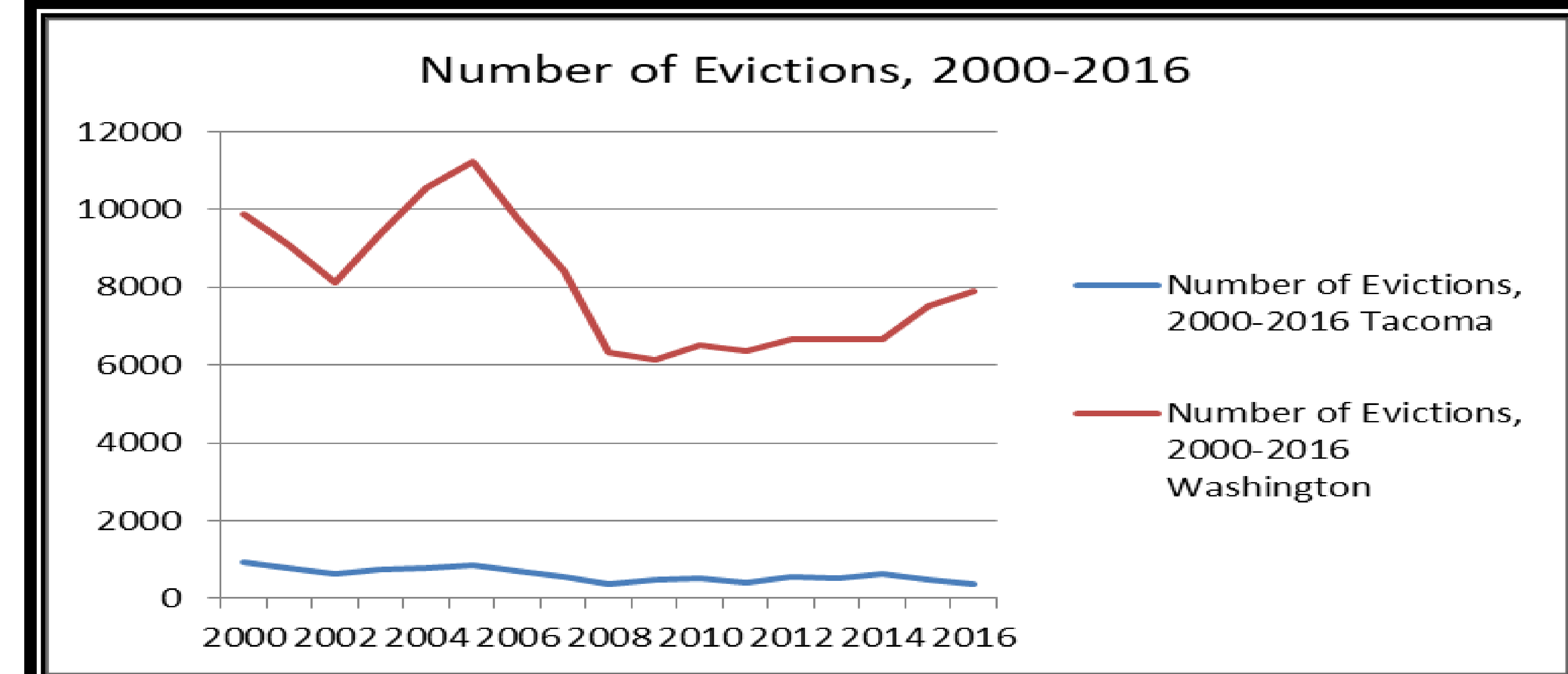
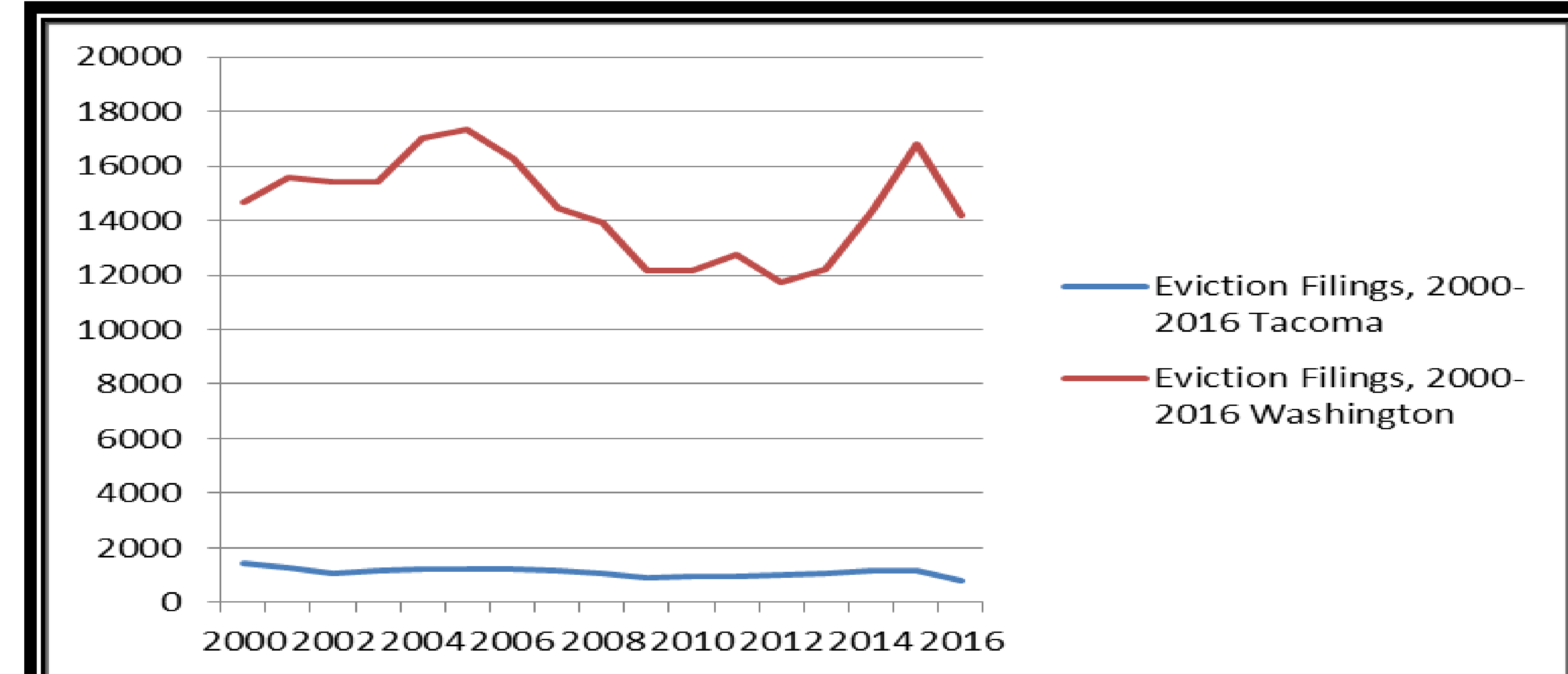


“35 percent of African-Americans moved out of Hilltop neighborhood from 2010-2015” (The Seattle Times as Tacoma’s Hilltop Changes Residents are Priced Out: Seattletimes.com)

Eviction: African-American and Hispanic populations make up a majority of the urban poor

- The dependency on rental properties has contributed to the rent increase that has in turn caused the rate of evictions to rise because cost burdened residents are unable to pay the rising cost of rent (Raymond et al 2018).
- According to a study done on Tacoma’s rental market in March of 2018, there has been a “steady increase in median rent from 1990-2016 (the last year for which data is available). Tacoma’s median rent increased 39 percent (\$980 in 2016), while median household income only increased by 20 percent” (the City of Tacoma Affordable Housing Action Strategy: Pg. 13).

Eviction Trends in Tacoma 2000-2016



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