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Abstract

Globally, most major cities are experiencing some facet of urban renewal. There is a revitalization of decaying urban spaces, with run-down neighborhoods becoming the latest hip spot to socialize and live. During the post-WWII decades, there was a migration of white majorities to the suburbs and an influx of minorities moving to the vacated city. With that majority exodus came the removing of funds from the CBD to suburbs and edge cities, causing the urban center infrastructure to decay. Gentrification has a connotation of being a bad word, oft-linked to the 'whitening' of a city. This study asks, as more cities are redeveloping and trying to become smarter, are they giving up their minority populations and becoming white again?

Traditional mapping techniques tend to show static populations and do not capture the ebb and flow of migratory patterns. This project will examine to what extent gentrification plays in the 'whitening' of reclaimed urban spaces, where the white populations are migrating in from, and where the displaced populations are moving to. Over the last two decades, technology has transformed how the city is used spatially. The use of space within the city does not follow a strict cartesian grid, so data and the use of city space must be looked at outside of the typical Euclidean representation of city blocks. The expected results are that as a city gentrifies, the white populace increases in historically minority neighborhoods, pushing minority populations to surrounding cities and suburbs. Looking at this data is important in understanding how redevelopment impacts certain demographics and how that information can be used to 'smarten' our cities renewal. Cities must develop for mixed-use, mixed-income, and mixed-density, which they cannot do if they only cater to one population.