

Definition of Gentrification:

Gentrification is a political, economic, and cultural situation in which a deteriorated neighborhood in big inner cities sees an increase in property value, usually from development facilitated by the city and developers which attracts wealthier individuals to take interest into the area. Other contributors include the location, contrasting from the previously sought out secluded suburban neighborhoods, and the culture and community of the area. With wealthier residents choosing to live in these areas, the low income population that densely populated the area are displaced because they can not afford the new increased property value of the neighborhood.

What is the theory of gentrification? Why is gentrification occurring in cities, neighborhoods, and small rural towns?

In the article, “*The Blind Man and the Elephant*”, Chris Hamnett discusses the theories involved in why gentrification has occurred and where it is occurring. Hamnett examines theories such as the common previous theories by real estate, Marxist approach and Ley’s thoughts on why gentrification occurs. However specifically, Hamnett has taken a liking to Ley’s thoughts of gentrification on how the shift from the need of blue collared workers in the city to white collared workers, has brought upon a new cultural want from the new population of the city. This cultural want is why these people want to move into specific neighborhoods. As Hamnett puts it himself, “ the importance accords to culture and consumption in the post-industrial city are clearly rooted in the deeper changes in the structure of production, the changing division of labour, and the rise of a locationally concentrated service class.” Some, such as Smith, disagree with this thinking by believing its not a cultural reason why gentrification is occurring, but rather the developments that take place and the profits that come with it. But Hamnett believes that is not the main cause of gentrification, because this does not answer the overall question on why people would move into these neighborhoods rather than the suburbs.

I agree with Smith that it is more of a production based reason why gentrification occurs, but some of Hamnett’s thoughts have to be considered for the whole scope. The shift in labor

need is a reason why many would want to move into the city. Moving into the city makes people look for the option with the best value to live in, thus when they see a redeveloped place for relatively low cost it is the best option. It is true that there is a cultural factor, but it is hard to make this a concrete idea on why people would gentrify an area. Overall, I believe gentrification is caused more so by economic reasons rather than cultural reasons.

The effects of gentrification:

One of the positive effects of gentrification is that it gives attention to areas that were neglected before. Such attention comes in the form of safer streets, cleaner neighborhoods, and introduces new retail businesses. It is oftentimes thought of the progression of a neighborhood and throughout history, neighborhoods are constantly changing. However, this progression comes at the expense of lower income individuals as they are displaced. Also, it is degrading to say an area is being revitalized because that ignores the past history of the people that once lived there and the community they have built. Additionally, this reveals a deeper issue on how things only receive attention when rich people are involved. Areas have the right to become safer without the need of gentrification.