

Class: FIQWS 10115

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The influence of The Gentrification of Harlem

When I think of Harlem, I think of the famous Apollo Theater, the music, and the delicious food. In order to give you a better understanding of the gentrification of Harlem, I will give you some background on Harlem. Harlem is located in the Manhattan borough of New York. It is famous for its music, food, and intangible American heritage. Every year, tourists come from all over the world. Harlem covers most of northern Manhattan. Harlem was originally occupied by nomadic tribes of Native Americans and later became an agricultural settlement when the Dutch occupied Manhattan in the 1600s. Over the next 400 years, Harlem would undergo many transformations and evolutions before it became what it is today. When you visit Harlem, don't miss the Apollo Theater, because it is the most famous attraction in Harlem. Which was built in 1914 and named the new farce theatre of heating and Simon. Renamed Apollo in 1934, it has hosted thousands of artists, musicians, and Comedians for more than 75 years, who have raised the cultural and artistic standards of African Americans worldwide. The 1920s is known as the Harlem Renaissance. Harlem Renaissance figures, such as Langston Hughes, Alan Douglas, and Alan Locke, all believe that they will use their artistic creativity to show the wisdom, artistry, and humanity of black people to the United States and the world, and should be treated accordingly. New York City's Harlem has always been a black community, an incubator of black culture, the birthplace of jazz, and a breeding ground for great literary talent.

In recent years, gentrification has become a hot topic. You know what gentrification is? Gentrification is a phenomenon in the development of society; it refers to an old district

that was originally populated by low-income people. After the redevelopment, the land price and rent increased, which attracted higher-income people to move in and replace the original low-income people. Gentrification will renew the community. With the changes gentrification has brought to the community, the community will gain unprecedented prosperity, more entertainment venues, more residential buildings, and more convenient transportation facilities. At the same time, Gentrification brings inevitable damage to the original residents of the community. The excessively high housing price makes them unable to pay, and the demolition of the historic buildings in the community makes their history and culture disappear. Some people think that gentrification is a social disaster, a disaster for the original residents of the community. Gentrification is created for those middle-class people and exists for those rich people to have a better living environment, while for the original residents of the community and those low-income groups, only high housing prices and displacement await them. Others believe that gentrification is a good thing. It represents the renewal of old communities, the rapid development of the community economy, and the diversity of residents. The gentrification of Harlem added some new life to the old neighborhood. In recent years, Harlem has grown rapidly. The reason I wanted to write about this topic is that I think gentrification can have a very big impact on a community. With the development of The Times, there will probably be more and more places gentrified in the future. Through the gentrification of Harlem, I hope to better understand what gentrification is and what benefits and disadvantages it will bring, which will harm or increase people's interests.

First of all, we know that Harlem has a lot of traditional food. Many people come to taste it every year. But as Harlem became gentrified, the local restaurant scene seemed to change. In the article, Williams, Timothy. "In changing Harlem, Soul Food struggles." *New York Times*, May 8, 2008 <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/06/nyregion/06soulfood.html>

pagewanted=1&sq=soul%20food%20harlem&st=cse scp=1 Accessed 7 November 2020.

Timothy Williams describes the restaurant in Harlem. By showing its classic restaurants and its traditional food, people will learn more about Harlem. In this article, Timothy focuses on the Harlem rezoned, which has led to a decline in the popularity of many of the region's classic restaurants.

We know that gentrification in Harlem has caused food prices in some local restaurants to rise, and changes in food prices can ruin some traditional foods. This is illustrated in the article "Calvin Copeland, 83, who closed his landmark soul food restaurant Copeland's last summer after 50 years because of declining business, said gentrification and accelerating prices for basics like cooking oil and collard greens may doom many of the rest." (Timothy, In changing Harlem, Soul Food struggles.) Gentrification in Harlem means local restaurants lose customers. The restaurant's owners and guests were clearly reluctant to accept the change. Rising rents and ingredients have forced businesses to raise food prices. Restaurants have also become less popular because customers can't afford to buy food. That's why so many traditional restaurants have gone out of business. I think gentrification in Harlem has reduced the variety of food and destroyed the traditional restaurant industry.

Secondly, most of the people living in Harlem were low-income blacks. Harlem's population changed as never before after gentrification. Similar content is discussed in this popular source, Versey, H. "A Tale of Two Harlems: Gentrification, Social Capital, and Implications for Aging in Place." *Social Science & Medicine* (1982), vol. 214, Elsevier BV, Oct. 2018, pp. 1–11, doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2018.07.024. Accessed 10 November 2020. This source is useful because Versey describes the diversity of Harlem after Gentrification, and the influence made by these diversities. Versey explains the influence of gentrified Harlem by showing some sources, such as high rents and crime rates. It led to a change in Harlem's population. According to Versey wrote that "I'm going to fight to...And why people

want to change it to SoHa, I don't know. Harlem represents the people."(3.4. Aging in place)

This quote illustrated that many of the original residents of Harlem who didn't like the gentrification of Harlem feared that gentrification would destroy their culture.

Versey focuses on the influence after Harlem had gentrification. My argument is that gentrification in Harlem attracted a large number of middle-class arrivals that made initially a single community become diverse. That is what Business Owners and Real Estate Investors want to see because it benefits them. At the same time, the rapid rise in rents caused by gentrification became Harlem's most serious problem. This is unacceptable to Harlem residents, most of whom are low-income. High housing prices forced them out of Harlem, where they had lived for so long. With the arrival of new residents and the departure of old ones, Harlem changed completely. Gentrification in Harlem is good for the economy, but it inevitably hurts low-income people.

Furthermore, the biggest change in the gentrification of Harlem was the reconstruction of many buildings. This is discussed in the following source: Adams, Michael. "The End of Black Harlem." *The New York Times*, The New York Times Company, 29 May 2016, p. 1–.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/29/opinion/sunday/the-end-of-black-harlem.html>

Accessed 8 November 2020. In the article, Michael shows how gentrification had an important effect on Harlem's original residents, mainly by the high housing prices. By comparing different classes, it is found that black people are not rich economically in Harlem, however, has the largest black population, and gentrification has brought new apartment buildings and other amenities that are expensive for most people, forcing them out of their long-lived community. The article shows that "in theory, but because the median income in Harlem is less than \$37,000 a year, many of these new apartments would be too expensive for those of us who already live here." And "To us, our Harlem is being remade, upgraded and

transformed, just for them, for wealthier white people."(Adams, The End of Black Harlem)
That means that the gentrification of Harlem brought about a series of changes that were beneficial only to the middle class, who were conveniently accommodated by a variety of apartment buildings, while the original residents of Harlem were unable to pay their high rents and thus were displaced.

Michael Henry Adams focuses on the effect of gentrified Harlem housing prices on residents. In my opinion, the high rents brought by gentrification are a disaster for the low-income people in Harlem. It hurts their interests and makes them homeless. But with the gentrification of Harlem came new buildings and apartments that kept the neighborhood alive and even more prosperous. The benefits for real estate investors and the tourism industry.

Finally, Harlem has famous theaters and hospitable residents, but it also has one of the highest crime rates in Manhattan. The situation has greatly improved since gentrification. This was mentioned in the last source Zukin, Sharon. "Harlem Between Ghetto and Renaissance." *The New Blackwell Companion to the City, Wiley-Blackwell*, 2011, pp. 561–70, doi:10.1002/9781444395105.ch49. This source has a strong connection with the topic. Gentrification brings to Harlem. In the article, Sharon explains that Harlem will present itself in a new light, far lower than the crime rates of the past and with a wide variety of boutiques and restaurants that have enriched Harlem's commerce and made it an upscale community. In the article, Sharon points out that gentrification brings such prosperity effects to Harlem, but it also weakens the original cultural authenticity of Harlem, and gentrification leads to the loss of the original culture of Harlem. The article from Zukin says that "many new buildings that are already in place strengthen the image of new...impose a new image and a different sort of authenticity." (568-569). This quote shows that The gentrification of Harlem gave it the image of an upscale community but at the same time destroyed the original culture of Harlem.

Sharon focused on the gentrified image of Harlem. My argument is that the reduction in crime in Harlem is something everyone in Harlem would like to change. Because the community is safer. The rich dining and luxury malls are considered profitable by real estate investors, tourism merchants, and business owners. But at the same time as gentrification, Harlem's original traditional buildings were destroyed. No doubt artists and local residents feel regretful and difficult to accept. They did not want to see Harlem lose his cultural authenticity for profit.

To conclude, the gentrification of Harlem transformed the district. Run-down buildings have been turned into high streets, high-crime areas have become safer, but buildings with traditional culture have been demolished and classic restaurants have gone out of business. Thus, the gentrification of Harlem had a great influence on people. Business owners and real estate investors are willing to accept the change because Harlem's economy will continue to improve and they will be able to make a lot of money. But there is one group of people who are not willing to accept the change: Harlem residents and traditional restaurant businessmen, who have been forced to leave Harlem because the gentrification of the city has caused housing prices and rents to soar.

Work Cited

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