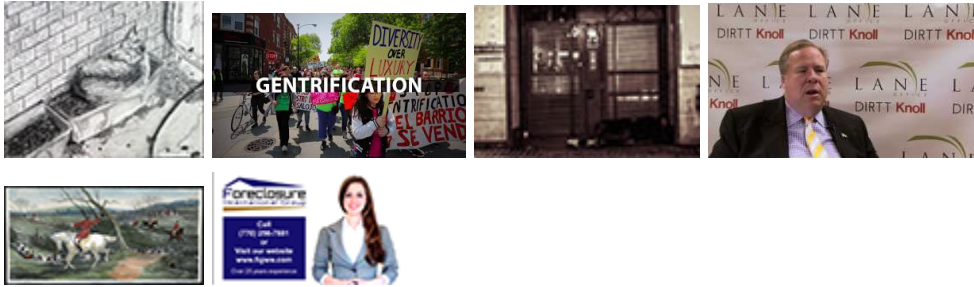


Synthesis 3

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Gentrification



- (1) The entire commercial line. Examine the real estate industry and how it affects homelessness. How does the legal system, homeless advocacy organizations help? 1) Explore the relationship between gentrification and homelessness 2) everyone via 3) imagery and text

This project investigates the effect of gentrification on homelessness. This photographic exhibit includes an immersive experience by creating a homeless house out of cardboard and an interactive quiz where, for example, people guess the average income of New Yorkers vs. the average income in neighborhoods that are being gentrified. Other questions may involve where homeless people go to the bathroom and shower, why crime and addiction increases when there is a large homeless population.

Gentrification occurs when wealthier people move into less expensive neighborhoods, causing the rent to increase. Landlords, seeking to capitalize on their real estate, may raise the rent by as little as \$150, an increase that working families can barely afford. Often, in New York, gentrifiers themselves have been forced out of neighborhoods into poorer neighborhoods. In much of Manhattan, for example, there used to be many middle-income, rent-controlled, and rent-stabilized apartments and section 8 was widely available. Many of the buildings in places like the West Village have been destroyed and replaced by high rises or are rented for very high prices. Along the Hudson River, where apartments close to the meat market were undesirable, rents skyrocketed as the meat market and fish market were displaced and became unreachable when the Highline was created. As a result, many were displaced into the boroughs, often viewed as gentrifiers.



The change was triggered while Ronald Reagan was in office.

The most dramatic cut in domestic spending during the Reagan years was for low-income housing subsidies. Reagan appointed a housing task force dominated by politically connected developers, landlords, and bankers. In 1982 the task force released a report that called for "free and deregulated" markets as an alternative to government assistance – advice Reagan followed. In his first year in office Reagan halved the budget for public housing and Section 8 to about \$17.5 billion. And for the next few years, he sought to eliminate federal housing assistance to the poor altogether. (Dreier, 2004)

Currently, a percentage of low-income housing is created in new buildings. The qualification for these apartments is based on the medium income of the whole city, not the neighborhood. The median income in New York City region is \$107,400. For a single person, it is \$83,600. (*Area median income*. 2021)

Measured by median income, Manhattan and (especially) Brooklyn are much poorer than you think. Manhattan's median annual household income is \$66,739, while Brooklyn's is a

mere \$44,850. Its less fashionable neighbor, Queens, outearns Brooklyn at \$54,373 per year. New York City's most suburban borough, Staten Island, is also its richest, with a median household income of \$70,295, while the suburban counties surrounding New York are all richer than any of the boroughs. (Dreier, 2004)

For cities, Gentrification can seem to be a solution to the problem of a declining tax base.

But if the city or municipality loses enough residents or there is an imbalance in property values (which determines how much taxes are collected), the balance becomes off-kilter, leading to a decline in revenues.

It's the reason cities like Detroit -- which lost more than one million residents over several decades following the decline in the automobile industry -- went bankrupt. And it's the reason countless other cities, such as Chicago, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh, are looking to gentrification as a solution to their problems. (Brumer, 2021)

There are benefits to gentrification for the neighborhood being gentrified (in other words, for the gentrifiers). In gentrified neighborhoods, resources go towards the gentrified neighborhood rather than be evenly distributed throughout the city.

As this activity draws attention, city governance devotes more resources to the area and real estate developers purchase land before their values greatly increase, both of which rapidly spur development. As property values increase, so do taxes, which are allocated towards street repairs, utilities, schools, community parks, and other neighborhood improvements. Increased police activity starts to drive crime out, too. The area is safer, filled with new retail and service jobs, and younger-skewing residents. (*How does gentrification affect property management?*)

In a neighborhood like Bedford Stuyvesant, gentrification brings about an increased and highly visible police presence that was not present before wealthier people arrived.

One officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity, argued that "gentrifiers" have higher expectations for the neighborhood and engage police differently than most native residents: (Harvey,)

The negative side of gentrification and higher rents comes about via evictions and displacement. Often, individuals are evicted because they can not afford to pay rent. If they can not afford to pay rent, they can not afford to pay an eviction lawyer although there are services available in many cities. Evicted individuals often end up homeless, whether living in the streets, homeless shelters or couch surfing.

A 2018 report from the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty cites research that found 12 percent of unsheltered homeless New Yorkers blame eviction for their homelessness, 14 percent of homeless residents in Santa Cruz, California, blame

eviction, and 12 percent of homeless residents in San Francisco say eviction is the primary cause.

Even if just 12 percent of the 23 million people at risk of eviction end up experiencing unsheltered homelessness, it would mean 2.76 million living on the street. That of course doesn't capture the millions more who would live with family or friends, in motels, or in other unstable housing. That's more than 10 times the 211,292 unsheltered homeless people the Department of Housing and Urban Development found in the entire U.S. in its **2019 Point in Time count**. In total, HUD counted more than 567,000 homeless U.S. residents in 2019, including those living in shelters and other nonpermanent housing. (Cohen, 2020)



References

Area median income. (2021). NYC Gov.

<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/hpd/services-and-information/area-median-income.page>

The New York City Housing Preservation & Development department uses the cities median income to calculate affordable monthly rates.

Cohen, J. (2020). *What happens if 23 million renters are evicted?* Shelter Force.

<https://shelterforce.org/2020/07/24/what-happens-if-23-million-renters-are-evicted/>

12% of unsheltered homeless New Yorkers who were surveyed, blamed eviction for their homelessness. Uncounted in this estimate are those who are living with family or are sheltered.

Dreier, P. (2004). *Reagan's legacy: Homelessness in America.* Shelter Force.

<https://shelterforce.org/2004/05/01/reagans-legacy-homelessness-in-america/>

Ronald Reagan's policies and cuts to social services and housing in the '70s caused an increase in poverty and homelessness.

Harvey, S. A. *Demographic shifts, police presence increases.*

<https://www.mssah.com/bed-stuy-sees-greater-police-presence-as-demographic-shifts/>

Policing in Bed Stuy is more visible and proactive than it was prior to gentrification.

This is ascribed by some to gentrifiers demanding more attention to crime than the prior residents.