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## Gentrification Indicators in the Historic City of Cairo

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### Abstract

Since, 1980s, academics used to deal with gentrification as a haphazard process. While on 2000s, gentrification is no longer perceived as a haphazard process but rather a planned process. As urban neighbourhoods exposed to gentrification, physical, economic, social and cultural changes take place. Gentrification can also process reversely named as "Degentrification". This paper tackles the problem of what Lee (1996) called "Geography of Gentrification", trying to understand the dilemma of how gentrification evolves within neighbourhoods. Moreover, this paper explores the application of the gentrification indicators developed by Kennedy, M., & Leonard, P. (April 2001) on the historic city of Cairo.

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### 1. Introduction

Since, 1980s, academics used to deal with gentrification as a haphazard process. Later on, since the 2000s, gentrification is no longer perceived as a haphazard process but rather a planned, well defined and organized process. It has been recognized that gentrification does not process the same everywhere. While urban neighborhoods exposed to gentrification, physical, economic, social and cultural changes take place. Gentrification can also process reversely that is called as "Degentrification". There is a common agreement between scholars and practitioners that gentrification leads to the improvement of the urban life, facilities urban neighborhoods and reducing the likelihood of future demolition and provides a practical solution for deteriorated neighborhoods. The

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paper tackles the problem of what Lee (1996) called "Geography of Gentrification", which makes a hard need to understand the dilemma of how gentrification evolves and develops within neighborhoods in different cities.

Moreover, this paper explores the application of the gentrification indicators developed by Kennedy, M., & Leonard, P. (April 2001) on the historic city of Cairo in order to understand the process of gentrification. Gentrification started as a local process in New York City while progressing as a global process in Mumbai, Beijing and Mexico City. Neil Smith (2010) points out that:

"Gentrification nowadays is a generalized process, not anymore a random process that could happen in different places haphazardly. It is rather a systematic, planned and considered process; it could be political or economic decision" (Neil S., 2010).

Gentrification has its in reducing the likelihood of future demolition, improving associated streets and infrastructure, nonetheless, it has negative consequences as the destruction of social networks, increasing number of homeless people, increasing crime rate, social and cultural displacements with regards to identity and behavior.

## 2. Prologue

Gentrification is:

"a term used to describe the arrival of wealthier social class in an existing urban district and its consequent increase in rents and property values, and changes in the district's characteristics and its culture. The term is often used negatively, suggesting the displacement of poor communities by rich outsiders" (Benjamin, 2003).

The term "gentrification" firstly appeared in an essay on the urban dynamics in Inner-London by Ruth Glass in 1964. She described gentrification as:

"..... the invasion of the middle class who replaced the working class and the renovation of residential houses" (Ruth Glass, 1964).

She pointed out how rapid the appearance of the whole changes in such neighborhoods and states. Glass noticed how gentrification is spreading to other surrounding neighborhoods. While in terms of demography, economy and politics, the pressure gentrification puts on central London as it was clear that she was revealing her point of view on a small scale, assuring what kind of changes are going on, in-between social classes, and not about a "back to the city center" movement. That kind of gentrification was called "classical gentrification".

While the early stage models of gentrification were introduced by Phillip Clay in 1979 (cited in Lees, Slater and Wyly, 2008: 31-33). Clay studied the private reinvestment in the core of U.S. cities in the 1970s, as four stages (cases) of gentrification were discovered; pioneering gentrification, expanding gentrification, adolescent gentrification and maturing gentrification. Clay's model described the way gentrification evolved in the 1980s and 1990s. So far due to time and different changes (economic, social, political changes), a new stage of (super) gentrification was developed recently.

Neil Smith (1979) argued that gentrification is the reinvestment into rundown neighborhoods rather than moving back to the city center for the middle class people by introducing a theory of investment and reinvestment. Smith was also capable of introducing a model trying to explain why some districts are lucrative to redevelop and others not by the rent gap model. So far, such theory was criticized by David W.S. Wong, 1988, as by testing the rent gap, enormous methodological difficulties come out. Another theory was introduced by Hamnett and Randolph (1986), the value gap theory, as a result of the changing from renting out to ownership, occupied flats became more relevant, followed by a decrease in the number of rented accommodations in the housing market.

By the late 1980s, gentrification transformed as the term was stretched and new forms of the phenomenon popped up. Such new forms encompass rural gentrification, new-build gentrification and super gentrification as

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