EFFECTS OF URBAN RENEWAL AND GENTRIFICATION
ON SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION

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Abstract

Gentrification is a consequential effect of urban renewal which usually functions towards making a city an economic powerhouse in the process of urban development. Gentrification contains promises of "urban revitalization"; however, this process includes a lot of urban reshuffling, slum clearance, slum relocation, and similar processes which do not benefit low-income citizens. This study examined the current urban development of Sri Lanka, in terms of the architectural strategies used which aid in incomplete gentrification, resulting in social segregation of income classes, religions, and ethnicities.

This paper analyses the pros and cons of gentrification from the viewpoint of social reconstruction and social polarization in accordance with different income groups. It discusses the co-dependent relationship between society and architecture, and investigates alternative strategies for gentrification which take the social structure into consideration, through the analysis of the current urbanization of Slave Island. For this purpose, the urban process of Slave Island has been followed by formal and informal interviews with the citizens, non-participant observations, as well as extracting from prior studies from 2006 to 2021, paying special attention to the recent when major development plans were implemented, and started undergoing drastic changes.

The results indicated that the urban development strategies implemented are currently causing social segregation in the area. This paper examines the architectural aspects accountable for this type of gentrification, as well as its driving forces for low-income people out of Slave Island, leaving them with no homes or jobs. The urban development proposal and its expected outcomes were weighed against the practical results of urbanization to examine how social segregation happens from an architectural standpoint. Further, it proposed potential development strategies that can be applied for all social groups to benefit mutually from urban development.

Keywords: Gentrification, Urban Renewal, Polarization, Community, Revitalization

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Introduction

As the world evolves, urban cities undergo developments and urban renewal. Gentrification is a consequential process which follows renewal that leads to neighborhood and economical change, demographic changes, shifts in settlements etc. Gentrification often follows promises of urban beautification, development and a new modernized environment, what usually goes unnoticed is the social reconstruction that is simultaneous to the renewal process.

Gentrification usually occurs in cities that are relatively close to the epicenter of the city, therefore has potential for growth and development within close proximity. Urban renewal includes development of the area in order to make the city an economic power house, city beautification and revitalization, creating new opportunities, a station that has evolved enough to assist with the global economy. Certain social parties benefit more from these waves of gentrification than the others, and have the necessary means to make economic progress (van Kempen, 1994).

Social reconstruction that follows comes with its advantages and disadvantages, where middle income residents are often the gainers of these new opportunities. However, low-income residents are often given alternative housing or forced to move out due to the inability to keep up with the new developments and to free up land space, therefore driving a class segregation and reconstructing the social aspect of the area.

Residents are forced out through means of "soft displacement" (Urban Displacement, n.d.) where there is a sudden change in their living conditions, so they have no choice but to move out. This study looks into the urban renewal and gentrification and how it leads to social reconstruction, as well as the consequences processes of polarization, loss of communities and drastic changes in the lifestyles of social groups of different classes, with special reference to the Slave Island.

Research Problem

For the future of architecture, as a field involved greatly in the evolvement of the world as well as the livelihood of people it holds, urban renewal is inevitable with evolution, yet one must analyze the impacts it has on society in a skeptical point of view and understand that the process of gentrification through urban renewal tends to have a social polarizing effect depending on the social income groups and though it has a positive impact on the middle class social groups and turns the city into a global city and economic powerhouse, certain social classes cannot keep up with the economical demands and social-cultural changes that follows (van Kempen, 1994). The negative impacts of gentrification are being acknowledged in the international contexts, and are responded accordingly, urbanization that causes mass gentrification and social segregation still occurs in the local context. Sri Lanka is a rapidly developing country, and many plans are being proposed for its revitalization and beautification; however, these plans lack the necessary initiatives needed to develop a neighborhood with minimum segregation and the inclusion of people of all social groups.

Even though there is a wide range of studies on gentrification and urban renewal as an act, it fails to acknowledge the impact it has on every social group, and how the low-income groups are usually impacted negatively. Furthermore, there is a deficiency in the analyses of gentrification reconstructs the society and neighborhood of the area in the local context, as a developing country. The gentrification leading to social polarization in the Sri Lankan neighborhoods are

overlooked in studies. This study analyses how gentrification is a segregating factor of communities in accordance to income levels and social groups by studying Slave Island, an area under going hard developments in the local context.

Primary research question

- How does urban architecture and gentrification play a major driving force in social reconstruction?

Secondary research questions

- Why does gentrification cause a social polarization effect?
- What is the relationship between urban space and society?

Research Objective

- To examine the interactive relationship between gentrification and social polarization, and the impact it has on different classes and income groups, and the adaptations and changes in their life styles that follows.
- To analyses how and why gentrification creates a consequential social polarization effect, the advantages and disadvantages it has on society and how it reconstructs the social groups.
- To breaks down the process of gentrification and how urbanization and certain architecture approaches can lead to major social, cultural, and economical changes over time.

Scope and Limitations

The scope of the study is to identify the interactive relationship between urban renewal, gentrification and society and how it impacts social classes, especially low-level income residents. This study analyses how and why gentrification creates polarization effect and breaks down a few studied examples and analyses how social groups responded and adapted with urban renewal and gentrification. The study follows the researches done in the local context and its effect on slum clearance and relocation that followed major movements of urban renewal and gentrification; and it further follows a secondary data analysis on social reconstruction via gentrification on other major cities around the world to gain an understanding in the international context.

Certain areas of the study were limited to secondary data and research methods due to the inability to gain primary data in a large scale such as urban renewal at an international scale. Furthermore, urbanization and gentrification being a long-term process, certain data were gained through secondary research data due to the fact that observations usually take a large time period and a gradual process of social reconstruction.

Literature Review

Gentrification has been a process that has been in play for a long time period. The goal of the study is to note and analyze, the gentrification process in the local context, and how the initiatives taken in urban designing effects the community. This research follows the urbanization
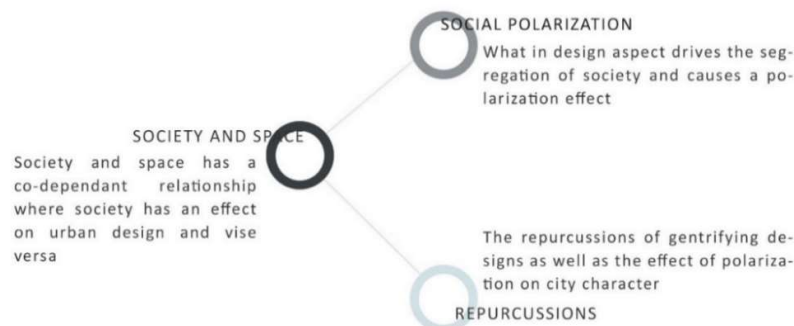
of Slave Island due to its social diversity, and how the effects of gentrification of the division of social groups into their income categories can be directly related to the urban development process. This study mainly follows the local context, as Sri Lanka is a developing country and the urban development of multiple areas undergoing gentrification can be broken down and analyzed in regards to social reconstruction.

Gentrification has a rather significant effect on social reconstruction. It completely shifts an urban area, by emphasizing the economic factors through renewal and development. This includes middle-class white-collar employments, new jobs, traffic congestion and new transits, which has a noticeable pattern in benefiting the middle class. However, the lower income traditional families and settlements in the area and either relocated, forced out or evicted, where they undergo a great loss up to an extent where gentrification was called a "chaotic concept" (van Kempen, 1994), since issues as such can lead to a loss of cultural art and family businesses, reduced sense of belonging, isolation and a shift in lifestyle. This proposed research looks into the dominoes effect caused by gentrification on the social structure of an area, analyses the pros and cons and offers solutions that can benefit every social group and lifestyle.

Urban renewal often comes with expectations of development and economical and financial assists to every social group. However, with the aforementioned problem, future gentrification processes should be addressed in ways that involved the low-income and current residents on the area. Furthermore, in regards to displacements, removal and relocation, often the architectural solution offered is not sufficient due to harsh living conditions of the settlements being relocated to a vertical space.

Local examples of urban renewal will be used to relate gentrification to social polarization, where historical evolution of the process can be identified thereof. This study looks into the history of gentrification in Sri Lanka post and pre-war period and its evolution through time in relation to society. It cones in on how public housing complexes and its architecture also aids in social segregation.

Even though gentrification creates a social reconstruction that negatively impacts certain social groups, Gentrification is inevitable with urban development and the study reviews alternative views and draws examples from case studies in order to form a quantitative and qualitative opinion. This study refers to examples that closely relate to the local context, such as the Singapore shop houses, and can be used as a guideline in the local developments; and breaks down the strategies that have been used in developed countries, such as Shanghai, China, to successfully urbanize highly populated areas with the inclusion of people to minimize segregation of social classes. These case studies provide insight on the sensitivity of social structures, as well as alternative initiatives to be taken during urban development.

SOCIAL POLARIZATION
What in design aspect drives the segregation of society and causes a polarization effect

SOCIETY AND SPACE
Society and space has a co-dependant relationship where society has an effect on urban design and vise versa

The repurcussions of gentrifying designs as well as the effect of polarization on city character
REPURCUSSIONS

Urbanization to Gentrification – A history

By the 1990s, it was established that urbanization has the consequential effect called "gentrification", termed by the British Sociologist Ruth Glass to define the displacement of residents in accordance to their social group (Michalos, 2014). Urbanization spread to Sri Lanka in the 1900s, having significant changes in Colombo social groups since the mid-1900s. The public housing provision by the government has been a major issue since the independence in 1948 (de Silva, n.d.). The Sri Lankan civil war of 1983 - 2009 had a stagnant effect on the Sri Lankan urbanization process. After the end to a 30 year war, Colombo started developing exponentially since the Ministry of Defense was appointed to be in charge of the UDA, and initiated the "Colombo Green Growth" program (Amarasuriya and Spencer, 2015). As the initial program promised the urban poor of better living conditions, the development plan involved turning Colombo into a Singapore inspired sky scraper glass façade urban jungle. What followed were threats of eviction for low class citizens for the promised "beautification" by the MOD, and facilities provided for the middle class and high-class citizens, especially in the suburbs of Colombo, such as the Slave Island, and what seemed to be people's project is now a politically run phenomenon (Amarasuriya and Spencer, 2015). The greater Colombo development plan was introduced in 2011, which proposed "rehabilitating wetlands, new transport systems, new road network, and freeing up space for land development"; however, freeing up space happened to be the relocation and displacement of slum dwellers to allow for middle class and high-income citizens. The proposed plan for the 40-year development was to evolve the rural areas, what occurred was the political influence into socioeconomic powerhouses and urban modernity (Chandrasiri, 2017), which forced low-income residents out, and concentrated poverty in the neglected rural areas. This type of development in a country, with no though about social segregation and the exclusion of low-income citizens lead to disastrous effects of gentrification. Another key moment in Colombo Urban politics is the development of urban housing by President R. Premadasa in the 1970s. R. Premadasa spoke in favor of the poor, and initiated many programs such as the Village Awakening program, One million housing scheme, and Janasaviya Poverty Alleviation program. He targeted both urban and rural poor as well as the middle class with his programs to upgrade the low-income neighborhoods, and his legacy of upgrading low amenity houses and helping the poorer areas of the country develop can still be seen in areas such as Slave Island (Amarasuriya and Spencer, 2015).
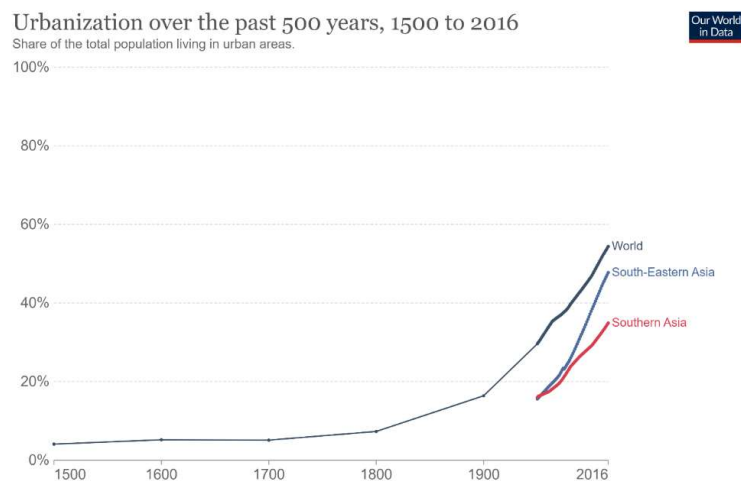

Figure 59 : Urbanization from 1500 to 2016
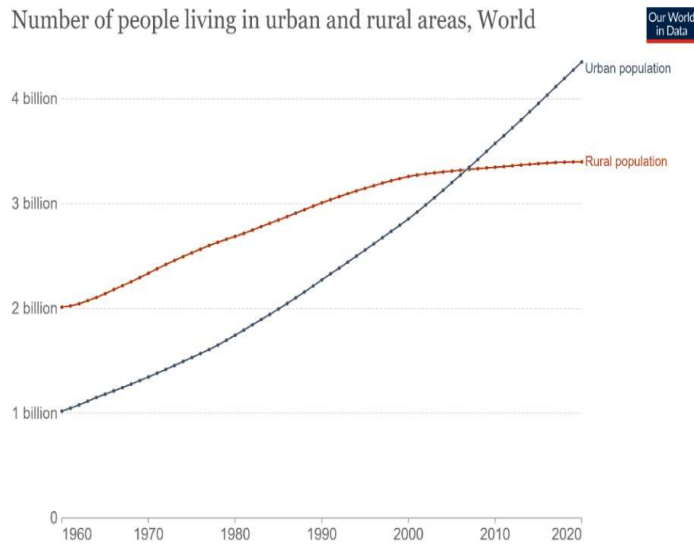Source: (Ritchie and Roser, 2018)

Figure 60 : Sri Lankan urban changes
Source: (Ritchie and Roser, 2018)

Gentrification – the good, bad and necessary

The general conception of gentrification on the effect it has on society is the fact that it often leads to displacement, encroachment, class polarization and other negative effects leading into class division and cultural and neighborhood identity depletion. However, it is impractical for cities to avoid urbanization for the fear of gentrification. Prior literature reviews state that gentrification comes in many forms and can be viewed in many angles about its bias towards middle- and high-income categories.
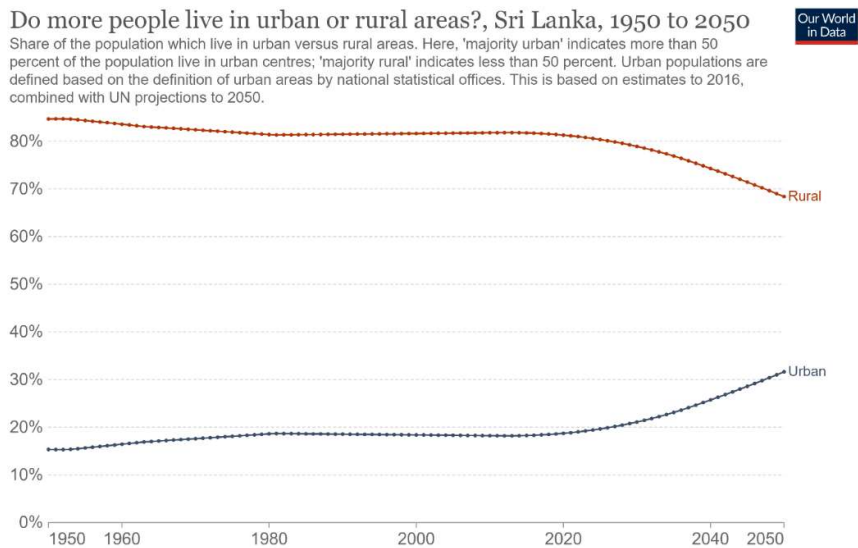

Figure 61 : People living in urban and rural areas
Source: (Ritchie and Roser, 2018)

"I'm faced with a dilemma as the demolition of houses will take away my livelihood and, above all, the neighborhood"

Suppuletchumi Jayananda, 65-year-old retired teacher from
Slave Island dependent on family members (Wijeratne, 2013)

Gentrification occurs in areas that are closer to a central business district, has potential for business and economy, space for expansion and real estate opportunities, but also has enough of a unique space and identity to attract people (FILION, 1991). As a city achieves a future potential for great business opportunities through urbanization and beautification, land prices start to rise, making them real estate targets for businessmen (Davidson, 2007). This process is continuous until the neighborhood is transformed to suit the living conditions of middle- and high-income residents that flood in, displacing the original residents that undergo issues such as displacement, eviction, rent gap and high living costs; and in doing so, transforming the neighborhood culturally as well. There are five main harmful effects of gentrification as identified by critics being: residential displacement, exclusion, transformation of spaces, polarization and homogenization (Kohn, 2013), which will be discussed in detail throughout this study. Social polarization that follows gentrification is catalyzed by economic interests, either individually or in large scale (i.e. political or large companies), where rent prices are intentionally increased, or the land is seized, offering the tenants either a compensation or alternate housing; however, low-income public housing complexes are known to lack the sense of home and the psychological requirements of architecture and a sense of identity (de Silva, n.d.), and it can be noticed how the social groups are segregated, and the low-income group is forcefully moved to an alternative location for the convenience of urbanization and to make space for high and middle income residents moving in, and sky risers and large businesses to bloom.

This effect of gentrification, known as "residential displacement" can be seen in the local context of Colombo; prominently in Slave Island and Maradana areas undergoing urbanization. Sahaspura, located in Wanathamulla, is a prime example of how low-income residents are evicted from their houses, land seized, and displaced to low-income housing scheme, which is unable to keep up with their human needs. Sahaspura is a high rise of stuffy low-income apartments, with no proper ventilation or light. Most residents describe it as quite unsatisfactory, and claimed that they had no choice but to either relocate to Sahaspura, or accept a dissatisfying compensation of cash. This relocation of low-income residents into an excluded section of the city is a common occurrence in the Maradana area, with the low-income social class being cornered into a housing complex with similar facilities. It is worth noting that the lack of thought put into designing the Maradana housing complexes, as opposed to high class residencies, further questions if the structures were made mostly to clear the residents and seize their lands, rather than provide an alternative home. Most residents have already logged multiple complaints, especially after a fire in Sirisara Uyana apartments left most residents rattled and the owners of the burnt apartment facing a great loss of belongings. Occupants stated that the building has no smoke or fire detectors, not many functioning elevators, and lack of support for people with disabilities (Perera, 2018). Some residents in slums and shanties establish their small businesses attached to their house, and through this relocation process, residents have no way of continuing their method of income. Slave Island is undergoing a rapid urbanization process, which has taken a toll on the current residents greatly as well as the unique identity of the neighborhood. Being home to a mostly Malay but very diverse community, Slave Island is known for its variety of religious monuments but mostly for its infamous colonial façade shop houses. This iconic piece of architecture is home to the slave island residents, as well a space for their shops at the ground floor level. Recently, due to development plans and urban

designs proposed for the renovation of the area, these shop houses have been marked for demolition, leaving the residents with nowhere to go, except the low-income housing complex proposed to them, which is still not under construction, or receive a flimsy cash compensation of only LKR 8000 per family per month for a time span of one year.

Long term residents establish local businesses that contributes to the culture of the neighborhood; but city governments and urban designers claiming to reshape and revitalize the neighborhood seize the land, demolishing or buying off these shops. This creates a dent in the neighborhood identity, leaving residents without their generation long family businesses and no income method, creating a dominoes effect where the loss of familiarity of the area is a catalyst for residents that cannot cope, to leave the neighborhood. This is the "commercial displacement" through gentrification. Commercial displacement happens when the shop owners can no longer keep up with the increasing rent, or when the migration of long-term residents create a dent in their usual customer base. The demolition of Slave island's shop houses is a primary example of commercial gentrification. The residents earn their daily wage by running small businesses, depending on their familiar customer base and the colonial facades for their daily income, and through its demolition, even if the residents were given satisfactory alternate housing, they will no longer have an income method or jobs. The current development of Slave Island has already demolished a few shops that the community considered an essential part of their neighborhood; one being the Cue Café which displays the pride and joy of Slave Island as portraits and newspaper clippings on the wall (Minority Rights Group, 2018). This café has now been torn to the ground and with it, the emotion and nostalgia it carried, in order to make space for an upcoming fly over. Developers claim that through urbanization and gentrification, the influx of middle-class people into a working neighborhood increases the diversity of the area, however research shows that this supposed diversity is greater polarization according to the income groups, claiming that 'diversity' is actually 'segregation' in disguise (Kohn, 2013). Slave Island is causing an uproar through the destruction of a possible heritage monument which, even though it completes the requirements, is not even acknowledged Antiquities Ordinance (Vanniarachchy, 2021), and now being torn down, along with its community. Gentrification, and thoughtless development and design causes a great damage to the urban fabric, the people and the culture they represent. The more humane approach, as opposed to segregating classes and disregarding a social group in its entirety, is to explore options of "good gentrification", where waves of gentrification, through well thought-out urban architecture and social spaces can uplift the life of more than one social group, while bringing up the economy of the area.

Views on Gentrification

The main views critics follow in terms of socio-spatial effects are egalitarianism, sufficientarianism and expensive tastes, and these will be discussed in relation to the local and international examples used in this case study in order to analyze how the view point of critics can be applied to the current gentrification process leading to social reconstruction. The sufficientarianism states that every member of a community should be guaranteed a minimum income as well as a decent living standard regardless of what urbanization takes place (Kohn, 2013). This theory is seldom seen in the local context, where community members are required to adapt to the changes and living standards. For an example, a local business might be seized or bought off, in which case, the owner loses their daily income, to which he is only compensated with the cash offered for the said shop. Furthermore, most of the public housing for low-income citizens are often inadequate to their standards. The theory of expensive tastes claims that equal distribution of resources and equal treatment for all social groups is not equivalent to equal standard of living (Kohn, 2013). In a gentrifying neighborhood this is often associated with the

"bad luck price" which can be explained through the example of rising land prices in a gentrifying area, where long term residents are often emotionally attached to the neighborhood, however, with middle income jobs increasing, and in inflow of new residents, more often the preferences of low-income citizens are harder to fill. Luck egalitarianism states that we are simple victims of our bad luck and are not responsible for the choices we didn't make (Kohn, 2013), and for the things that are beyond our control which is the case for most low-income citizens. However, social justice doesn't often take this humane theory into consideration, and low-income citizens are often displaced to make space for businesses and for middle income citizens.

Methodology

Based on the literature review, the research was carried out through the use of previous large-scale research done through data collection, various approaches and experiences from the professionals in the industry in both the international and local context. Statistical analysis done by professionals in the industry through the study of Slave Island over time were formulated into charts that shows the prominent increase of urbanization through time (Ritchie and Roser, 2018). The primary data was collected via informal interviews, qualitative data extraction through local responses and non-participant observations. The local examples discussed in this case study are Slave Island in the macro context as cities that are prominently showcasing change due to urbanization. During the informal interviews, the locals were inquired on how the rapid changes in the neighborhood affected their personal lives and the neighborhood, where most expressed unhappiness of what the neighborhood changes. Further non-participant observations of Slave Island were done by analyzing the maintenance and the attention to the old structures against the new structures. It shows how no priority is given to renovating and beautifying the old neighborhood, but creating a completely new neighborhood instead. Opinions from activists from Slave Island were informally interviewed to gain the combined opinion of the residents of Slave Island, concluding how the residents and the businessmen of Slave Island are left to deal with their lives being uprooted (Rahmen, 2022). Furthermore, the area of Maradana-Wanathamulla were observed similarly for its housing complexes to study the process of gentrification in relation to the low-income group.

Attempts of minimizing gentrification were studied in the international context, where strategies used in the countries of Singapore, China, and USA were analyzed to gain insight on how such strategies can be used in the local context. Long term studies on human interactions with Shanghai Red Planet and Singapore shop houses were analyzed by experts to identify the strategies used in urbanizing the city with minimum effects of negative gentrification (Miao, 2020). Furthermore, human interactions with the Manhattan High Line through the analysis of experts provided insight on strategies to be avoided in urbanization of a city (Howarth, 2017).

Conceptual framework

The study is done for the purpose of studying gentrification and its consequential effects on social reconstruction, as well as the impacts of different social groups
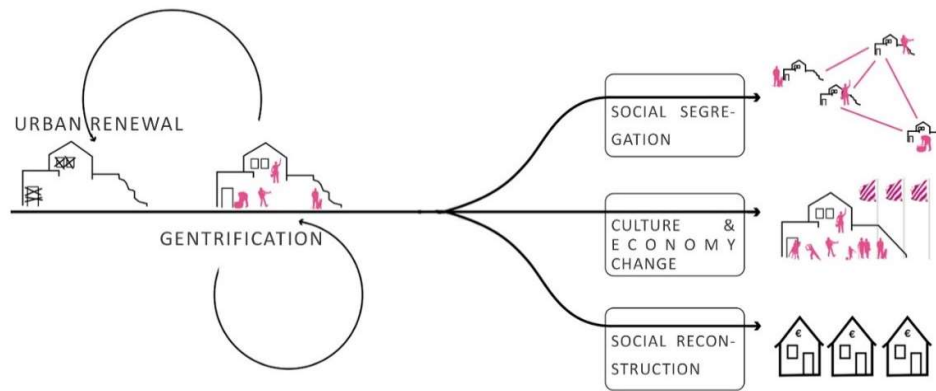
Figure 62 : Conceptual Framework

Implications and Contributions

This paper views gentrification as a global process, and analyses the pros and cons of it through primary and secondary data collection on the interactive relationship between physical design and social change. The author breaks down the various outcomes of gentrification, with special reference to selected local examples throughout, against key theories, views and international examples.

This paper aspires to examine alternative methods of urban architecture and humanize the urbanization process by analyzing the effects of the local community and different income groups and offering alternatives and initiatives that are applicable to the local context, and will create a lesser rift of segregation. This also looks into the effects social segregation in turn has on urbanization and architecture, culture and identity and inspects the relationship between, where urbanization and space need a positive social response to succeed.

Findings and Analysis

Society and Space

> *"Social space is an invisible set of relationships which tend to retranslate itself into physical space"*

> (Ginting, Darjosanjoto and Sulistyarso, 2017)

Society is a major, if not the most important, driving force of urban architecture. Urban design is a collection of architectural elements creating a big picture that effects society as a whole, thereby being a deciding factor in social change. People and space can be seen to have a fluctuating co-dependent relationship, where physical design influences social life, which is a can be seen in most places undergoing urbanization, where drastic social changes can be seen in the area, regardless of it being positive or negative; however, a design can be deemed successful only after it has the desired effect on people, and in this case, a beneficial factor for all social parties. When urbanization leads to gentrification, the built forms leaving no space for former residents that are now unable to keep up with the sky-rocketing living costs, move out of the neighborhood. The movement of people can lead to the disintegration of the neighborhood identity and culture. Cities often try to brand themselves as a luxurious shiny city, a desirable place for high and middle residents, seldom paying attention to the long-term residents that

worked to build a neighborhood. Residential architecture is intimate to a built environment, and these residential structures determine the social and behavior patterns of the area; therefore, during urbanization, the displacement and influx of different social groups plays a major role in the changes of a neighborhood (Doucet, 2016).

The inclusion of middle-class people in a working-class neighborhood allows low-income residents to benefit off the amenities, good facilities and allows low-income residents to network and build social connections that will allow them to improve on their income status. However, in reality, people tend to socialize with their own social class, therefore this leads to further segregation by residents' associations mainly being based on income groups and social class. Long term neighborhoods function on habits and familiarities, where their identity is often reflected on the city, but, once development plans are implemented and urbanization begins, changes are introduced into the neighborhood. The social segregation process that is occurring in Slave Islands has broken down the familiarity of the neighborhood for locals, with the demolition of the local shops and parts of the colonial shop houses, the community, when realizing that the protests and the frequent visits to the authorities didn't make a difference, started to leave their neighborhood, and along with it, its diverse culture. In areas where gentrification benefits the society, the community has come together to form system that is authentic to the area, creating its unique streetscape, attracting tourists and preserving the culture and its architecture. The community has worked out an unspoken system of collectively helping the members of the society, which has contributed to the liveliness and the feel of the space, where everyone from daily wage workers to high class businessmen has a role to play in its economic stability of incoming tourism.
tourism.

Figure 5 : Streets of Galle Fort supporting many local businesses
Source: (incredibleindiatours.com, 2006)

Social Polarization through design

The new changes can either uplift all communities, or further deepen the rift between social groups and change the long-term identity, which, in most observed cases, benefits middle class jobs, income groups, residential facilities, and pushes the lower income citizens into a convenient corner, left with high living costs and a loss of a lifestyle.

Gentrifying a neighborhood which has history, diversity and culture is the destruction or disruption of spaces that the community has an emotional attachment to. The ongoing urbanization process of Slave Island, a place visited for its infamous shop houses, and a look into authentic Malay lifestyles, food, jobs and religion. However, what gentrifies the area is the process of destruction of cafes, shops, local businesses as well as the shop houses marked for

demolition, taking away the living quarters of most citizens of the area at such a rate that most of the originality of slave island architecture and identity will be demolished and replaced in the next 5 years (Rahmen, 2022). Cue café boasts of its close-knit community, framed photos of a few of Sri Lanka's best billiard players, soccer and cricket clubs from Slave Island, as well as the trophies and medals hung on the walls of Cue café for safe keeping and exhibition by the people, which comes to show how this simple café was an integral part of the community (Minority Rights Group, 2018).

There is a clear difference between the public housing given to lower- and middle-class residents. One of the key areas to undergo gentrification was Mew Street in Slave Island. On May 4th 2010 Mew street residents were informed of this relocation to an alternate housing, and upon inspection, it was noted that these alternative housing lacked the bare minimum necessities, was built out of planks and had shared outdoor bathrooms. Even when the residents refused to move, 17 houses were demolished, home to 83 residents and 24 minors (Amarasuriya and Spencer, 2015). Even the current housing options proposed to different social groups have clear segregations, where it is impractical to give identical housing, yet the low-income residents prefer their slums and shanties as opposed to the apartments provided by the government (Arunagirinathan, 2017).

Figure 6 : Cue Café
Source: (Minority Rights Group, 2018)

Figure 7 : The area of the demolished cue cafe

Effects of gentrification and neighborhood changes on city identity

A neighborhood identity consists mainly of its architectural features, landmarks and the society which is capable of creating its atmosphere. With gentrification, these buildings and structures are cleared away, broken down, and society segregated, and when development implies bringing in the urban modernity which consists of the sky scrapers and clones of the same glass structures, the neighborhood loses its authenticity. The demolition of the Castle Hotel, and the deterioration of the Java Lane mosque has left the community, residents, activists, architects and the people of Sri Lanka in a state of shock, which has led to an ongoing battle in trying to list the De Soysa building as a protected monument (De Soya, 2021), but due issues in the legal framework, it is not listed under the Antiquities Ordinance, therefore UDA has no legal obstacle stopping them from demolishing the building (Vanniarachchy, 2021). Researcher Iromi Perera states that this is a form of "development without justice" (De Soya, 2021) where low-income residents are forcefully evicted and cramped into uniform apartment blocks. Powered by Indian and Chinese investors over land clearing started in 2012, clearing 70,000 houses and relocating them in

apartments. After the De Soysa building was marked for demolition after being claimed to be "structurally unstable" by the UDA, Dr. Cooray and engineers did a tested and claimed that the structure is stable. However, after the tenants were evicted from a certain part of the building, and the lack of maintenance and the overgrown trees created the structure to collapse on 16th June 2021 (Vanniarachchy, 2021) Slave Island is an authentic Malay neighborhood, and a diverse community, and the neighborhood itself consists of mosques, temples, churches and kovils. The gentrification of this neighborhood has already torn down some of the landmarks such as Java Mosque and the nostalgic cue café. After the #Wearefromhere project led by activists to draw attention to the demolition of one of the oldest neighborhoods of Colombo, artist Firi Rahmen drew a few abstract portraits of residents that add the authenticity of the neighborhood, which drew in tourists and locals, initiating treasure hunts and maps, as a nod to Slave Island's indigenous and rich culture (iDiscover, 2019). However, the urbanization continues, and will continue to gentrify until modernized beyond repair, and demolishing the landmarks, the diversity, as well as the reputation. The artist which led the activist #Wearefromhere project sadly commented that "…in the next 5 years, I know this urbanization will spread to tear down my art, and my home" (Rahmen, 2022).

Figure 8 : Collapse of the De Soysa Building (Thomas, 2021a)

Alternatives and Initiatives

Certain initiatives and alternatives can be used for urbanization to take place with minimum negative effects on the social groups, reducing the segregation and integrating all communities into the urban fabric. It looks to architecture to solve social problems, and analyses urban architecture that benefits all communities equally. These initiatives can be used to **Revitalize without Gentrification.**

> "…people are realizing that the most critical point in these projects is social equity around their neighborhoods."
>
> -Robert Hammond (Gibson, 2017)

Certain initiatives that are now taken by urban planners and architects who consciously try to minimize segregation effects that can be applied to the local context. One main key aspect is the

analysis of the community in the area of urbanization; and in order to reduce social polarization, the revitalization process should cater equity and a place for all social groups, equal opportunities to improve their lives, and reducing forced displacement of residents.

Cities undergoing urbanization attract people with the new job opportunities and real estate opportunities, which increases the population of a city, hence increasing the density. The issue with a dense city with a growing infrastructure, new upcoming malls, businesses, houses and companies is the lack of space for urban parks and social interactions (Miao, 2020). Spaces that integrate opportunities for social groups to blend, while simultaneously being beneficial in an economic aspect, offer a qualitative aspect that acts against social polarization and class segregation in a neighborhood.

Displacement and eviction are major drawbacks for low-income residents in gentrifying neighborhoods, even if they manage to adapt to the changing community, residents have no say in eviction matters. In many suburbs being urbanized in Sri Lanka, low-income residents are often evicted as soon as possible, sometimes with incomplete options of alternate housing, which caused a major uproar in Slave Island (Amarasuriya and Spencer, 2015). The housing options also lack qualitative aspects and human psychological needs in a home and it was further established that design quality contributes to the segregation of social class; therefore, the objective should be to provide an economically feasible, but quality space, to improve the residents' lifestyle (de Silva, n.d.). Not only will this allow the residents to be satisfied with their alternate housing, it can also improve their sense of home and identity in the neighborhood. The provision of alternate housing should be done before the eviction and demolition process, because the money compensation and the sudden notice makes it difficult for people to find a home, at least temporary. Gentrification further creates a change in a neighborhood identity, and while revitalization generally brings in beautification and a structured urban grid, it is important that the neighborhoods with unique identities are allowed to maintain this aspect, as opposed to the demolition and replacement, especially in potential heritage sites. Once revitalized with a sense of heritage and cultural uniqueness, not only will it attract tourists, but also allow residents to adapt and benefit from the urbanization process. This strategy can be seen in the Singapore shop houses, and can be applied to the urbanization of Slave Island as well.

The most crucial initiative to be taken in urban planning and beautification without social polarization is taking the people's input into the planning process, and through revitalization, create equity and allow every social group to benefit from the urbanization process and make an improvement in their lifestyle, as opposed to what transpires as the common gentrification effects, which is social polarization, displacement, loss of communities and poverty.

Figure 9 : Shop houses renovated in Kuala Lumpur
Source: (www.dreamstime.com, 2013)

Figure 10 : Shop houses marked for demolition in Slave Island
Source: (roar.media, n.d.)

Accomplishments and Lessons

Designers and planners have now begun to take alternative routes to ensure that along with the development of a city, social segregation and gentrification is kept at a minimum. This effort is reflected in a few international examples where the designers (Gibson, 2017). There are certain successes and failures of urban architecture as regards to the social segregation effects it created, however, these projects are broken down as a list of what to do and not to do, and how these can be used in the urbanization of a developing country such as Sri Lanka.

Constructed between the 1840s and the 1960s, the shop-houses of Singapore has been is considered a conservation building, and in order for preservation along with function and neighborhood revitalization the key elements have been preserved while simultaneously allowing long term residents to continue with their lifestyles. However, after the renovation, the shop house prices increased, but due to the Singapore laws that prohibits foreign persons from purchasing the shop houses, as well as its continuance to attract more visitors that Singapore skyscrapers, the gentrification of the area worked in a similar manner to the aforementioned waves of gentrification. Furthermore, this approach focuses on the conservation of Singapore's history with minimum social segregation and effects on low-income social groups, as opposed to the initiatives taken by the UDA of Sri Lanka regarding the shop houses in Slave Island, which are marked for demolition, and in doing so, the destruction of heritage as well as a community that has great potential for tourism and revitalization aspects.

Conclusion

This study was able to analyze and clarify the relationship between urban design and society, and in doing so, concluded the effects of gentrification on social polarization, and how most of the urbanization and revitalization happening in the local context often disregards it effects on long term residents and low-income citizens, and is more focused on the urban modernity to match with the westernized cities of the world. The author was able to break down a few special references, and identify the strategies and initiatives of urban design that should be allowed and what should be avoided. This study allowed the micro analysis on the segregation of the low-income social group and why they are affected negatively by this process as opposed to the other social groups, as well as the consequential effects to their neighborhoods and lifestyles. Even

though cities must constantly urbanize and evolve to function better in the growing economy, one must be careful as to not catalyze social segregation through design, and be conscious on how this design can improve their lives, and in doing so, contribute to the growing community by minimizing segregation and poverty. It is necessary to understand that the urbanization of a city is not the increase of opportunities and freeing space for the influx of middle- and high-income people by completely replacement of the low-income residents, but designing a functional system with the inclusion and socialization for all social groups to co-exist. It is also necessary to understand that clear difference in quality of design provided for different social groups also contribute to this polarization process, and it is the duty of the designer to produce humane structures that allow residents to feel like a part of the community. Furthermore, this study analyzes that the most economically feasible architectural designs for long term neighborhoods with a cultural footprint is not to introduce urban modernity, but to assist in the growth and protection of the culture as well as the community that helps the neighborhood thrive. The strategies that can be used to urbanize without the negative effects of gentrification but the necessary effects of evolving a society through architecture, through the study of international examples of developed countries and successful designs, as well as the lessons learnt through the over gentrification of some. These examples were compared against the local context as to how these strategies can be applicable to the revitalization of this country, to ensure minimum segregation, but still require the desired aesthetic, economic and architectural results of urbanization. This concludes on how design causing gentrification is a driving force in social segregation and how architecture can be used as a tool to fix the current urbanization dilemma that is worsening the social situation of developing countries.

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