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THE IMPACT OF GENTRIFICATION  
ON FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS  
BY ORVIC PADA

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### Abstract

Urban renewal and gentrification are current catchphrases in many urban initiatives, mostly centering on housing development, new urbanism, and community building. By focusing on re-envisioning community building, development, and social services in urban contexts, religious institutions and organizations adapt to urban changes and adjust accordingly with various initiatives to address social needs, put their spirituality and faith into practice, and attract adherents. This paper is the theoretical piece of a larger work in progress that provides the context for understanding the changes brought about by gentrification in “inner cities” and how religious organizations operate within the changing sociological landscape brought about by urbanization, urban decay, and gentrification. The focus of this article is specifically on faith-based organizations, drawing out the implications of gentrification on evangelical and faith-based organizations to highlight the fiscal, structural, and demographic changes associated with the gentrification process.

*Keywords:* gentrification, urban, inner cities, reformation, transformation, theory

## Introduction

Cities are centers of commerce, trade, and the exchange of ideas. In the twentieth century, cities were characterized by industrial centers of production (Sullivan & Shaw, 2011). Manufacturing industries mushroomed and the demand for laborers attracted people from rural and suburban areas to seek jobs in urban areas (Sullivan & Shaw, 2011). With the socio-economic diversification and stratification of cities and density, social ills such as alcoholism, illegal drug use, crime, violence, and prostitution escalated (Jayne, Holloway & Valentine, 2006). Due to this, urban centers are often portrayed in the media as the underbelly of society. The media representations show the contrast between the more affluent suburban neighborhoods with the horrid living conditions in the seedy and oftentimes unsanitary urban neighborhoods.

The diversification of urban areas created a new social landscape and the propagation of inequalities. Segregationist attitudes prevailed and the polarization between blue collar workers and white collar bosses shaped the social fabric of urban society (Curran, 2007). Low income housing had a pervasive presence in tandem with urban manufacturing centers where affordable living arrangements cater to low-income and working class families (Barnes, Waitt, Gill, & Gibson, 2006).

A number of religious institutions in urban areas accommodate the religious affiliations of adherents who practice religiosity. These institutions also offer services ranging from youth programs, education, clothing distribution, food distribution, feeding programs, vocational training, and rehabilitative programs that address alcoholism and addiction (Unruh, 2004). In effect, these institutions practice ethical and religious traditional “value-rational” (Weber, 1968) social action. They carve out religious institutional identity motivated by a sacred spiritual dimension of their calling and religious expression (Unruh, 2004).

Gentrification of an urban space converts the urban landscape from a manufacturing center to a cultural center (Curran, 2007; Sullivan & Shaw, 2011). It introduces a new form of diversity. Urban renewal transforms urban space, “cleans up” the neighborhood and retrofits it with new features distinctive from a manufacturing urban center. It becomes a cultural center where information and ideas reign rather than manufactured products (Florida, 2005). A bohemian feel replaces the drab and gray of an industrial place. A new cultural class is created, and it challenges the existing social structure of urban places (Florida, 2005). This change creates new forms of social inequalities (Hackworth & Rekers, 2005; Karner & Aldridge, 2004) as the economic structure shifts from being mechanically industrial to an information-based, culturally centered economy (Atkinson & Hope, 2009; York, Smith, Stanley, Stark, Novic, Harlan, Cowgill, & Boone, 2011).

Religious organizations are faced with an identity crisis as gentrification transforms the urban landscape. They face economic challenges as the cost of real estate rises (Mian, 2008). In addition, old religious dogmas are challenged by the influx of new dwellers that predominantly emphasize rationalization and diminish the emphasis on traditional belief systems (Weber, 1968). Identities and organizational structures undergo significant change due to the shift from a machine-driven industrial urban character to a culturally centered paradigm (Landry, 2008). Religious institutions face the danger of extinction (Mian, 2008) and are challenged to adapt to the changes by forming a hybrid identity.

Studies on the hybridization of religious organizational identity in urban contexts are gaining traction, opening up the avenues for discussion regarding organizational reformation or transformation (Caldwell, 2005; Karner & Aldridge, 2004; Mian, 2008; Tavory, 2010; Taylor, 2007, Turner, 2005, Unruh, 2004). Thus, this paper is a theoretical analysis of urban centers classified in the category of “inner cities” associated with urban decay, crime, poor or low educational outcomes, and urban poverty. This provides the context for understanding the changes brought about by gentrification in “inner cities” and how faith-based organizations operate within the changing sociological landscape brought about by urbanization, urban decay and gentrification.

### **Changes in Urban Spaces**

There is a resurgence of interest in recent years regarding the process of gentrification, economic renewal, development and growth in urban areas. Pre-gentrified and underdeveloped urban places are generally associated with crime, drunkenness, drugs, prostitution, homelessness and poverty (Jayne, Holloway & Valentine, 2006; Barnes et al., 2006; Sullivan & Shaw, 2011). Many urban centers formerly housed multiple manufacturing industries that provided jobs for blue collar workers (Sullivan & Shaw, 2011). Gentrification of an urban area converts the space from a manufacturing center to a cultural center (Curran, 2007; Sullivan & Shaw, 2011). Therefore, displacement of manufacturing industries and blue-collar workers is a key discussion point in the literature on gentrification (Curran, 2007).

This shift from a manufacturing center to a cultural center creates industries in urban places that cater to the preferences of new urban residents (Barnes et al., 2006). This leads to the marginalization of pre-gentrified residents because of the rise in housing costs (Sullivan & Shaw, 2011). Curran (2007) emphasized that residential factors influence the displacement of manufacturing industries because these spaces are being converted from industrial buildings to residential units. Gentrification makes urban places more palatable and attractive for a wide range of middle class, bohemians, and yuppies (Zukin, 1998; Sullivan & Shaw, 2011).

## **Demographic Changes in Urban Areas**

The gentrification of urban places brings about the influx of new urban dwellers that are attracted by the allure of the new urban spaces and cultural ethos. The architectural aesthetics of gentrified urban places and cultural production centers such as movie theaters, art galleries, information technology hubs and office spaces, ubiquitous coffee shops, and fine dining restaurants create the new urban character (Zukin, 1998). Gentrifiers come in many forms ranging from varying family structures, religious affiliations or non-affiliation, gender orientations, and cultural backgrounds (Zukin, 1998). Gentrifiers bring about significant urban renewal and economic change and transform the physical and social landscape of an urban space.

Florida (2005) coined the phrase *the creative class* to categorize the gentrifiers. The creative class embodies a different ethos. They prefer creative, open-minded, and diverse places to live, work, and play (Florida, 2005). This is why they flock to urban places where suburban homogeneity is absent. Urban places are culturally diverse, edgy, and artsy (Florida, 2005). Landry (2008) and Florida asserted that the centrality of the inseparable connection of creativity and culture is the driving force of cities. Art, media, and information become the new commodities in gentrified areas (Zukin, 1998). Manufacturing companies are now seen in the background while cultural industries take front stage (Landry, 2008).

Cities have a way of fostering creativity, which tends to push back the iron curtain of traditions to create a hybridization of ideas, new expressions, identities, and institutional structures (Landry, 2008). Landry (2008) also developed a conceptualization of the city as a “living organism, not a machine” (p. 8). Florida (2005) provided a different lens, observing that the focus was on people rather than corporations or institutional structures. He developed this discourse by focusing on the definition, identity, and the rise of the creative class and the geographical trends of their relocation patterns (Florida, 2005).

## **Gentrification and Social Stratification**

Atkinson and Easthope (2009) criticized Florida (2005) and Landry (2008) regarding urban policies and economic renewal, stating that while the creative class indeed catalyzes significant urban renewal and dramatic economic change, this change propagates inequalities under the guise of diversity. As an urban place is gentrified, new identities are shaped as the growing presence of diversity pushes the wall of homogeneity (Hackworth & Rekers, 2005). What is interesting to observe is that despite the exterior façade of this new diversity, inequalities are perpetuated in gentrified urban places by the homogenization of the economy (Barnes et al., 2006). Social inequalities, gender, economic, and racial inequalities persist despite the hope of a diverse utopian urban world (Karner & Aldridge, 2004).

The phenomenon of social and ethnic clustering which is commonly observed in urban places where segregationist attitudes prevail (York et al., 2011) tends to fade away in newly gentrified areas. This is taken to a different level in gentrified urban places. Instead of segregating and clustering, marginalized groups are eventually pushed out. The working class, urban poor, ethnic minorities, and the elderly are seen as undesired residents and are eventually displaced (Barnes et al., 2006). This exodus is preceded by urban redevelopment into a bohemian and elitist consumer space. The salience of consumerism is pervasively seen in the mushrooming of retail stores, restaurants, and specialty shops that cater to an upscale clientele (Sullivan & Shaw, 2001; Zukin, 1998).

### **Faith-based Organizational Presence in Urban Areas**

Faith-based organizations in urban areas have a far reaching historical presence and impact, addressing social issues ranging from poverty, homelessness, education, substance addiction, women's shelters, welfare, and charitable programs. According to Ley (2008):

Churches in particular have a long history of charitable and service work, and before the emergence of the welfare state were key organizations in the development of education, healthcare (notably through hospital foundations) and rudimentary welfare and charitable relief (p. 2058).

Thus the church and faith-based organizations provide a social function for society by addressing various social needs. Furthermore, Ley posited that faith-based organizations and churches also provide social support for the immigrant community, specifically those who practice religiosity or affiliate with churches or faith-based organizations. The presence of faith-based organizations and programs in urban areas addresses different needs that are either inadequate or not provided for by local government agencies.

With the changes brought about by gentrification, the general thread in the literature reflects that the rise of a new demographic also reflects a form of secularization that dissociates from religious symbols, institutions, and practice (Berger, 1967; Ley & Martin, 1993; Cimino, 2011). Religious organizations are forced to move out of the area, cease to operate due to rising property values, or reconfigure their identity, methods, and approach to cater to a different demographic group (Sullivan & Shaw, 2011; Mian, 2008). The changing face of the neighborhood eliminates the need for the existence of religious organizational programs (Unruh, 2004) that address hunger, homelessness, drug addiction, alcoholism, gang activity and a variety of social services catering to underserved populations. Despite this, some religious organizations are pushing back to maintain a pre-gentrified dynamic by seeking to maintain diversity (Mian, 2008). This does not address the diminishing need for a physical presence in urban areas if their main services and programs catered to people and groups of lower socio-economic status who are being pushed out due to gentrification. Caldwell's (2005)

ethnographic study in Moscow presents that “to be religious in Russia today means to be a consumer” (p. 31). The shift from an atheistic state to a free-market breeds a new form of religious utilitarianism “according to which church or religious movement provides the most attractive set of goods” (Caldwell, 2005, p. 26). An understanding of the theoretical concepts of religion is essential to understand how the “sacred” in religious institutions is impacted by gentrification.

Online religion is an emergent platform for exploring, engaging, and practicing religiosity and spirituality, and this technology is a useful tool for faith-based organizations who have the resources and who are technologically skilled and equipped to engage a secular demographic. Technology, especially the Internet, is an influential tool for the marketing and propagation of religious ideas and the hybridization of religiosity (Turner, 2005). The Internet is a hub for disseminating information and knowledge in contemporary society. It is through this avenue that some religious groups and faith-based organizations create sacred spaces and broadcast their beliefs and ideologies to consumers of information and technology (Turner, 2005). Youth and pop culture are rabid consumers of this technology and freely embrace the supermarket consumer approach to religious beliefs (Turner, 2005; Karner & Aldridge, 2004).

### **Modernity and Secularization**

Berger (1967) contended that modernization catalyzes secularization where “sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols” (p. 106). Western religious tradition is classically viewed as a polar opposite to modernization and secularization, but Berger suggested, “there may be an inherent connection between Christianity and the character of the modern Western world” (p. 110). This is a noteworthy statement to guide the analysis of the relationship between gentrification and the hybridization of religious institutions.

Taylor (2007) provided an exhaustive treatise on modernity and the meaning of secularization, describing modernity and secularity as being the “fruit of new inventions, newly constructed self-understandings and related practices, and can’t be explained in terms of perennial features of human life” (p. 22). Karner and Aldridge (2004) expanded on the concept of secularization and propose a new framework of theorizing religion in a globalizing world.

Karner and Aldridge (2004) posited, “the millenarianism of the disenfranchised and the postmodern religiosity of affluent consumers represent different responses to the crises brought about by the forces of globalization” (p. 23). Postmodern religiosity brings about a shift from traditional Western religious beliefs and practices to a hybrid type. This can be attributed to the influx of people who are creative, innovative, open-minded, pluralist, and consumerist (Karner & Aldridge, 2004). Eastern religious institutions are cropping up in urban gentrified areas because the creative class is attracted to its ideologies and practices (Karner &

Aldridge, 2004). In light of this, urban gentrification becomes one of the vehicles for the transmission of the ideas and ethos of a globalizing world.

From theological debates on religious dogmas and public policy to the development of programs and services addressing social needs, faith-based organizations, religion, and religious institutions play a prominent role in the warp and woof of society. Despite changes in gentrified urban places and accusations of being secularized or syncretized, religious institutions maintain their utility and importance by adapting to their new consumers (Mian, 2008).

### **Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Education**

In the urban context of faith-based organizations, organizational innovation and entrepreneurship are gaining traction especially in urban gentrified places. With the change in the demographic makeup brought about by the urban gentry, religious institutions that remain in the neighborhood reconfigure their services to adapt to the changes (Mian, 2008). Religious institutions are left with the option of extinction if they fail to re-engineer their identities to adapt to urban gentrification. Because of the ethos of freedom and individuality brought about by gentrification, some religious organizations are marginalized (Mian, 2008). For example, Mian's study uncovered the entrepreneurial strategy used by some churches in New York to stay fiscally alive by "turning to real estate development" (p. 2155). This keeps them financially viable to continue addressing the needs of their congregants and remain in the area rather than being pushed out by the gentrification process.

Tavory (2010) stated that gentrification "specifies and refines arguments regarding the role of 'urban pioneers' and 'place entrepreneurship' in the development of ethnic neighborhoods" (p. 90). Tavory questioned the "models of community construction posited by sociologists of religion who have adopted a Rational Choice approach" (p. 90), focusing instead on the human interactions rather than economic structures to explain the importance and "role of networks and ethnic geographies in which leaders and congregants are embedded" (p. 90).

Studies of urban areas present significant facts on gentrification, economic renewal, inequalities, and the rise of the creative class. The literature on the theoretical concepts of religion, religious institutions and organizations, class, inequalities and creation of new identities provide a relational link between gentrification and religion. It also highlights a need for a new framework of theorizing religion. The literature suggests that the hybridization of institutions is rooted in secularization and Western privatization and individualism that are elements of gentrification.

Previous research mainly focused on Judeo-Christian religious institutional identity in urban areas. The goal of this paper is to extrapolate the influence of the creative class, if any, on the formation of hybrid forms of faith-based organizations and present a theoretical foundation for



understanding the changes brought about by gentrification in reforming or transforming urban centers. This paper explains the distinctions between reformation and transformation lays a theoretical foundation, providing a working theory of the effect of the gentrification process on faith-based organizations.

### Theoretical Framework

Institutional change and secularization are key features in the literature on gentrification and urban renewal. Religious institutional hybridization is at the fore of this change. Émile Durkheim (1964) and Max Weber (1968) are heavily cited in the sociological body of literature that deals with religion. For the purposes of this study the theoretical foundation will be tethered on Durkheim's concepts of the sacred and the profane, as well as mechanical and organic solidarity. Weber's theories focusing on typology of actions and rationalization will be expanded by Giddens' (1984) structuration theory.

Religious institutions are in flux as diversity increases. They move along the continuum from mechanical to organic societies. As individualization begins to emerge, attachment to tradition is weakened, and the collective conscience needs no intermediaries (Durkheim, 1964). Collective ideas and behaviors are replaced by individual ideas and the focus shifts toward the superiority of individual beliefs and actions (Durkheim, 1964). Rather than being bonded by common beliefs and sentiments, utilitarianism is emphasized by the division of labor (Durkheim, 1964)

Durkheim (1964) observed the following:

This is not to say, however that the common conscience is threatened with total disappearance. Only, it more and more comes to consist of very general and very indeterminate ways of thinking and feeling, which leave an open place for a growing multitude of individual differences. There is even a place where it is strengthened and made precise: that is the way in which it regards the individual. As all the other beliefs and all the other practices take on a character less and less religious, the individual becomes the object of a sort of religion. (p. 172)

Rationalization promotes secularization, privatization, and individualism (Weber, 1968). Weber suggested that rationalization is the use of the most efficient means of achieving a most reasoned goal and leads to bureaucratic organization. When gentrification introduces a new form of diversity into the neighborhood of a religious institution, there is a shift within the institution from value-oriented and traditional action to goal-oriented action (Durkheim, 1964; Weber, 1968). Weber presented instrumentally rational action, "that is, determined by expectations as to the behavior of objects in the environment and of other human beings; these expectations are used as 'conditions' or 'means' for the attainment of the actors own rationally pursued and calculated ends" (p. 24). For Durkheim (1964), diversity can be

problematic. The challenge of working together and communicating rises as diversity increases. Thus, in religious institutions, cultural integration and social solidarity are weakened, and cultural values change by the diversity brought about by gentrification. In Durkheim's (1964) view, this can lead to normlessness, which he defined as animalistic human tendencies that weaken mechanical solidarity and division of labor, replacing the moralistic common beliefs and sentiments of the group (Durkheim, 1964). Therefore, gentrification can be dangerous for religious institutional identity because it introduces diversity, promotes secularization, and exalts individuality.

The hybridization of religious institutional identity may be a way to avert Durkheim's concern of anomie (Durkheim, 1964). This deconstruction and reconstruction of religion may be formed by aggregates that seek to experience a new sense of a common, moral culture with a set of ideas, values, norms and practices that guide them to act collectively rather than individually. Giddens (1984) provided an explanation for how aggregates and agents may transform structures despite the constraining power often attributed to structures.

Agency is equated with action (Giddens, 1984). Power and authority is not merely in the hands of an invisible structural force or hegemony. According to Giddens (1984), "Structure is not 'external' to individuals: as memory traces, and as insatiated in social practices, it is in a certain sense more 'internal' than exterior to their activities in a Durkheimian sense" (p. 25).

For Giddens (1984), agency is involved in structuration. People are engaging in practice. It is through that practice that both consciousness and structure are produced. Giddens (1984) posited that human agents rationalize their world and often act despite having minimal knowledge of the consequences of their actions. Giddens (1984) purported, "the moment of the production of actions is also one of reproduction in the context of the day-to-day enactment of social life" (p. 26).

According to Giddens (1984), structuration theory explained structure and agency as "always both constraining and enabling" (p. 24). For example, the hybridization of religious institutions in urban places offers structures from which those who practice religiosity create a new sense of themselves and become self-actualizing agents. This is a microcosm of how agency influences structure and conversely how structure affects agency. Gentrification influences the transformation of some religious institutions into a fiduciary entity (Mian, 2008, p. 2151). Applying Giddens's structuration theory to the process of gentrification, the change in social structure affects the ontological outlook of people. Practice or self-actualization determines the gentrification process, and conversely the gentrification process affects agency.

To survive extinction, religious institutional traditional and value-oriented actions are overcome by goal-oriented and affective action (Weber, 1968). In traditional and value-oriented actions, conformity is hinged on the legitimacy from an objective order or a

charismatic prophetic leader (Weber, 1968). The shift to instrumentally rational, goal-oriented and affective action validates utilitarianism (Weber, 1968). Social action in this sense is anchored on rationality. The goal, process and secondary results are considered in a rational manner compared to traditional action that emphasize ethical or religious considerations or value-rational action that emphasize habitual customs and practices (Weber, 1968).

As an example, Mian's (2008) study uncovered the entrepreneurial strategy used by some churches in New York to stay fiscally alive by "turning to real estate development" (p. 2155). This keeps them financially viable to continue addressing the needs of their congregants. The core of hybridization is the duality of structure. Giddens (1984) stated that agency draws "upon the modalities of the structuration in the reproduction of systems of interaction, by the same token reconstituting their structural properties" (p. 28). Thus, in the example of the churches utilizing an entrepreneurial strategy for fiscal survival, the core of their belief system and faith remains intact, as the structures and modes of societal interaction adjust to the altered surroundings.

### **Discussion: The Impact of Gentrification**

As people struggle to share or make their claim on space in gentrified or gentrifying urban centers, religious groups and institutions from different religious affiliations and socio-economic status across the board either take on the form of cultural enclaves, adapt and assimilate, move out of the area, or close down. What are the implications of gentrification on faith-based organizations and churches?

A cursory drive through most urban centers in the United States reflects the different territories occupied by cultural groups and religious institutions. The zoning of land is an important piece of the discussion as certain sections are zoned off for business and commercial districts, while other sections include residential, industrial, and religious assembly zones. Gentrification presents challenges to religious assembly zones since one of the consequences of gentrification is the change of land use. The process of gentrification retrofits buildings and sections of the city for housing, the arts, coffee shops, boutiques, restaurants, parks, and recreation (Zukin, 1998). Former cathedrals or church buildings have been retrofitted for varying purposes, ranging from pizza shops, coffee shops, boutiques, or demolished to make space for condominiums, apartments, shopping malls, or industrial information and office centers. As an example, the Gospel Tabernacle, located in Times Square in New York City, was formerly the center for the ministry and world-reaching transformative work and spiritual revival led by Albert Benjamin Simpson of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (Niklaus, Sawin, & Swoesz, 1986; Nienkirchen, 1987). Historically, Simpson reached out to marginalized peoples in the surrounding areas of the tabernacle, and urged his congregants to do the same. Simpson also emphasized the urgency of addressing social and spiritual needs, both locally and overseas

(Niklaus et al., 1986). Currently, Simpson's legacy is not tethered to the urban site of the Gospel Tabernacle, but has spread both nationally and globally, addressing both social and spiritual needs (Niklaus et al., 1986). The site of his initial work is currently an upscale Italian restaurant specializing in gourmet pizzas (<http://www.johnspizzerianyc.com/More-Info/Our-History>). This is an example of how a faith-based organization moves out of an urban area and loses its immediate impact on a specific urban site.

Another example of how churches adapt to the changing urban landscape is Mosaic in Los Angeles, California. (The First Southern Baptist Church of East Los Angeles, previously located on Brady Avenue, or popularly known as The Church on Brady, is currently known as Mosaic.) This example highlights how the various decisions church leadership has made through the years to adapt to the times remain rooted in their orthodoxy and mission, and remain viable in the urban context amidst demographic shifts and the changes brought about by secularization and pluralization.

Mosaic sold its building in 2003 and adopted a model of multi-site churches, meeting in places ranging from nightclubs, schools, and sites where people who would not step foot in a cathedral or church would go (Marti, 2005). The importance of this example is in regards to adaptation of the modalities of church models, and yet also the importance of the type of crowd it attracts. The Mosaic crowd is a group predominantly comprised of hipsters and bohemians. This is the general definition of the stereotypical gentrifier, yet the faith-based organization does not operate out of a single cathedral or church building, but rather utilizes different urban spaces to meet with adherents and congregants, while inviting others to explore the message and the mission of the church in a non-traditional format and atmosphere. Thus, rather than maintaining an urban presence by being rooted in a building, Mosaic moves with the crowd and utilizes various urban spaces as meeting places.

Another example of the impact of gentrification is that of the storefront model. Faith-based organizations are using the storefront model to remain financially viable in the changing tide of real estate, while still meeting the social and spiritual needs of their congregants and the community. The storefront model can be seen in the coffee shop model, where the operational function of the building is primarily a coffee shop, yet it is also a space devoted for the community of believers, or community of faith to gather. Gatherings are often held when the coffee shop is closed, or a service or meeting is conducted in one section of the shop even during operating hours, and people are invited to join if they are interested.

Another hybrid of the storefront model is the establishment of pre-schools and daycare centers by faith-based organizations. This is an important piece of meeting a social need, as well as addressing the educational needs of a community. Many churches are used as sites for Head Start, a governmental organization that “promotes school readiness of children under five

from low-income families through education, health, social and other services” (<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ohs>). The implications of the gentrification process on this form of educational services are that it can push out both low-income families and the educational service provider or faith-based organization. This leads to displacement and the structural dismantling of an educational institution and service that is an important aspect of human and social development.

One of the challenges for faith-based organizations is the increase in real estate prices which becomes a financial burden especially for those who are renting or leasing their space. Another result of gentrification is the change in the demographic and socio-economic make-up of the city. The influx of more affluent groups, generally younger, single professionals, or dual-income couples without children pose a new challenge for faith-based organizations because their services are often geared towards a different demographic. Unless faith-based organizations adapt or modify their services to cater to a new gentrified demographic, they could face extinction or eviction as the space they occupy becomes gentrified. Thus, many faith-based organizations that included a spiritual and biblical element to their services, specifically Christian evangelical churches, are criticized for being seeker sensitive or for watering down orthodoxy. Yet a closer look at this phenomenon necessitates careful analysis in light of Durkheim's (1964) theory of the sacred and profane, and organic and mechanical solidarity. The issue might not necessarily be orthodoxy, but rather the grey area of praxis and modalities that often lead to organizational divisions and rifts in solidarity.

Another effect of social structural changes in urban contexts is the growing trend of new forms of faith-based social entrepreneurial initiatives in cities that are gentrified or gentrifying. This is not a new phenomenon; cities have historically been the site of many religious institutional social justice ministries and social services. Some examples are the establishment of the YMCA, YWCA, soup kitchens, feeding programs, clothing distribution programs, after school programs, literacy programs, and recovery programs for substance abuse, sexual abuse and/or domestic violence.

The difference between the old and new forms of social entrepreneurial initiatives is the people and groups they serve. Previous social justice ministries and initiatives mainly focused on social needs that often cater to those in a lower socio-economic status, but because gentrification often pushes out low-income residents and attracts the creative class (Florida, 2005), newer forms of social entrepreneurship targets a new crowd, who are generally more affluent and have different interests and needs. For example, some faith-based organizations are establishing cafes, restaurants, and other forms of business as a strategy to stay financially viable and to reach the needs and wants of a new demographic.

The model of being an urban nomad is also an interesting concept because it removes the centrality of a building by utilizing various urban spaces to meet as congregants. Thus, older programs that have no relevance to the needs of the new demographic dissipate along with the buildings and structures that formerly housed different services catering to people and groups from lower socio-economic status. As a consequence, the people who organized and ran the previous social service initiatives are also pushed out.

### **Conclusion**

Gentrification changes the physical and sociological landscape of urban areas. These changes have an effect on demographic groups, economic, social, and religious institutions. Gentrification also reforms and transforms physical buildings, social relationships, solidarities, and faith-based practice. Some faith-based organizations are using creative ways of connecting people in gentrified urban places to the sacred. The focus of religious organizational social justice programs have shifted from a cathedral centered, monolithic modality toward a social entrepreneurial model with greater emphasis on human interaction and phenomenological discourses. Thus, the impact of gentrification both reforms and transforms religious organizational life by altering the modalities of the expression of faith and the architectural-structural representation of sacredness.

What are the implications of the theoretical analysis of gentrification in light of a Christian worldview for justice and spirituality? What is the purpose of a faith-based organization, movement, or community? Gentrification is a social force that challenges religious organizations and faith communities to dig deep to re-evaluate orthodoxy and praxis. Some groups are entrenched in modalities that will not be compromised. They emphasize mechanical solidarity, ensuring group cohesion, social integration, shared values, and beliefs. These are the groups that are most likely to become religious enclaves, or those who will be pushed out due to their inability or unwillingness to adapt to the changes brought about by financial constraints, loss of parishioners, or land zoning. Other groups adapt and walk a fine line of compromising orthodoxy with new modalities, but the challenge is to adhere to the essentials and leave room for contextualization.

Due to the debates on what constitutes religious organizational or denominational essential orthodoxy and doctrine, it is noteworthy that both these groups strive to live out their convictions and become self-actualizing agents. The first group takes a vanguard stance as gatekeepers of mechanical solidarity, orthodoxy, and the historical value of sacred spaces such as cathedrals and houses of worship. The second group promotes diversity, innovation, and organic solidarity, erasing the lines of sacred and profane space, creating a welcoming atmosphere that openly encourages people to come as they are regardless of gender, race, age, cultural differences, political views, or socio-economic status. An example of this is seen in

faith-based initiatives that use a storefront approach or a business model that is unabashedly represented as a faith community where the house of worship is both a place of commerce and a sacred space.

The semantic and semiotic web of reformation and transformation is complex. In the sociological literature of gentrification, it is evident that there is both a reformation and transformation of urban space. The issue with reformation is that linguistically and semantically, it overemphasizes structural change and change in form, neglecting a deeper need for intrinsic change of values and ethos. In contrast, transformation connotes a radical change and metamorphosis, a revolutionary change that has the power to transform structure intrinsically rather than just retrofitting or painting over the previous layer.

Cities and societies remain in a state of flux. Social injustice, poverty, and all forms of social inequalities will continue in one form or another. There will always be room for faith-based organizations to address social justice and spiritual needs. The difference is in the organizational response to demographic change, urban change, and policy change. How can one advocate for and seek justice? One way is through empirical sociological research, building a theoretical foundation that informs praxis and methodologies. Other ways to affect change is through participatory action, education, and social entrepreneurship. There is a need to expand and apply the semiotic understanding of reformation and transformation in the theoretical framework for addressing urban change, specifically in light of gentrification. An expansion of this theoretical framework is needed to flesh out the intrinsic details of the difference between urban reformation and urban transformation.

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