

The University of San Francisco

USF Scholarship: a digital repository @ Gleeson Library | Geschke Center

Undergraduate Honors Theses

Theses, Dissertations, Capstones and Projects

Fall 2021

The Impact of Gentrification on Racial Demographics: A Case Study on Fremont, California

Melissa Marie Talbot

University of San Francisco, mmtalbot@dons.usfca.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://repository.usfca.edu/honors>

Recommended Citation

Talbot, Melissa Marie, "The Impact of Gentrification on Racial Demographics: A Case Study on Fremont, California" (2021). *Undergraduate Honors Theses*. 41.

<https://repository.usfca.edu/honors/41>

This Honors Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses, Dissertations, Capstones and Projects at USF Scholarship: a digital repository @ Gleeson Library | Geschke Center. It has been accepted for inclusion in Undergraduate Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of USF Scholarship: a digital repository @ Gleeson Library | Geschke Center. For more information, please contact repository@usfca.edu.

The Impact of Gentrification on Racial Demographics:

A Case Study on Fremont, California

Melissa Talbot

Politics Senior Honors Thesis

December 7, 2021

Introduction

While the subject or broad area of my research is housing, my specific interest within that area is gentrification and affordable housing in the city of Fremont, California. More specifically, my research problem asks the following questions: How have Fremont's racial demographics shifted since the 1990s? Is gentrification the reason for changes in Fremont's racial composition and if so, how? Why or why not is this scenario ideal for residents of Fremont? What can be done to address this?

The significance of my research problem stems directly from the fact that the issue I am studying, gentrification, is so tremendously widespread. The impact of this significant socioeconomic and political phenomenon can be seen occurring in the housing crisis throughout the United States, not just in my case study of Fremont. I am hoping that through my analysis of Fremont, I will be able to uncover practical solutions to gentrification and the lack of affordable housing, solutions that can then be implemented in cities across the country that are experiencing similar issues concerning gentrification, and the displacement that accompanies it. Thus, the answers to my research will teach us how to foster and maintain socioeconomic and racial diversity, as well as encourage others to eliminate or at least work to mitigate the gentrification of cities that is driving up housing costs.

Before delving into my research, there are a few key terms that I will define so that there is no confusion when discussing this topic. For this project, I will be defining gentrification as the process through which an area is changed from an influx of wealthier people moving in, new and improved housing and businesses are created, all the while current residents are displaced. The forced movement of an individual from their home will be referred to as displacement. Diversity will be defined as the quality of involving individuals from a broad range of different backgrounds i.e. social, racial, sexual orientations, genders, etc. Last, residential racial segregation is the spatial separation of two or more racial groups within a specific geographic area.

While gentrification and affordable housing are not considered new topics of discussion to the debate on housing in America, how these two issues are impacting the racial diversity of communities still demands to be studied further. I will be discussing the effect of gentrification on racial demographics in Fremont, California, and how gentrification affects Fremont's residents both currently and in the long term. This first section of my thesis will be an overview of the scholarly debate surrounding gentrification in the United States. I will explore the different methodologies employed in this debate, the impacts gentrification has on particular cities, the intersection of factors that economically and socially diverse neighborhoods possess, and how transit-oriented development plays a role in the gentrification of communities.

Literature Review

I. Debate Regarding the Ways of Measuring Gentrification

Before delving into the situation occurring in Fremont, we must first identify how to measure and classify gentrification. Gentrification is a process that is highly controversial because it has the potential to be extremely beneficial, yet also detrimental to a community's residents. For instance, new business developments can completely revitalize neighborhoods that have historically experienced significant disinvestment, and to provide worthy capital gains over time. However, these advantages come with noteworthy costs— long-term residents and businesses are often forced to move from their local neighborhoods as they become unaffordable. The totality of the extent of gentrification and the displacement that accompanies it is unknown, but the decrease in social capital for a neighborhood's most vulnerable residents is obvious.

There is little consensus regarding the wider scholarly debate around the best methodology used to measure gentrification, i.e. using census data documenting changes in median household income, changes in the composition of types of jobs in a given area, home sales data, and changes in access to amenities and transit. However, I was able to find a study that compared and contrasted the three gentrification classification methodologies about their ability to identify neighborhood gentrification and specifically, across nine San Francisco Bay Area counties. "Gentrification and Displacement in the San Francisco Bay Area: A Comparison of Measurement Approaches" explores the connection between significant population growth, largely fueled by an influx of people of color, and the significant economic growth, as well as a sharp increase in income equality that has occurred over the past several decades. One of the most notable discoveries of their study is the fact that since 1979, the highest-paid workers in the Bay Area have experienced impressive growth in wages, while the wages of the lowest-paid workers have declined since then (Mujahid et al., 2019).

The first approach undertaken by Mujahid et al. was the Freeman Method, which is considered among scholars to be the gold standard of measuring neighborhood gentrification. Census tracts were defined as gentrified if at the beginning of a defined period it met the following criteria: it was at or below the median income for its metropolitan area, the percentage of housing stock within that tract was built in the previous twenty years was at or below the median for all tracts in that metropolitan area, and at least half of the census blocks within a certain tract were defined as urban (Mujahid et al., 2019). However, an important limitation of the Freeman method is that it is unable to capture the stage of gentrification, yet it still serves as the basis for many contemporary measures of gentrification.

The second-most common approach for researchers to utilize is the Landis 3-D Methodology, which is considered as a general measure of neighborhood change based on the median household income

of a census tract. The strength of this method is that it is a clearly defined measure of neighborhood change that relies on minimal information (median household income). However, this can also be viewed as a weakness because the actual process of gentrification is not able to be captured by solely relying on this minimal information. Additionally, the Landis- 3-D Method measures relative change instead of absolute change, which may mask patterns that may be occurring regularly over a greater area of a particular region. Last, this method provides no information regarding areas that are at risk of gentrification soon or neighborhoods that are experiencing advanced stages of gentrification.

The third and final gentrification classification methodology discussed is one implemented by the Urban Displacement Project, a research and action initiative out of the University of California, Berkeley. This methodology uses a mix of Census and home sales data, which then characterizes census tracts into eight separate typologies. The key strength of this method is that it accounts for a variety of factors that have been identified as parts of the gentrification and displacement process, such as the nature of a neighborhood's existing housing supply and its proximity to amenities, jobs, transit, etc. Additionally and unlike the two aforementioned methodologies, the process implemented by the Urban Displacement Project takes into account specific neighborhood changes that may serve as early warning signs of future displacement, i.e. loss of market-rate affordable housing units, home price appreciation, market-rate housing development, etc. The only downside for this methodology is that it relies on a researcher's familiarity with the area that they are studying (since many of these changes that they are analyzing are so deeply rooted within communities and may be blind to the casual researcher.

The three gentrification methodology classifications presented through the report by Mujahid et. al has led me to conclude that the best way for me to tackle my research on gentrification in Fremont is to employ a methodology that incorporates a mix of different data sets. For instance, I will not rely on the Freeman method nor the Landis 3-D method, but rather conduct my research in a way akin to the Urban Displacement Project, which best suits my case study on Fremont. The Urban Displacement Project's method is the best lens for me to study Fremont through because of the diversity of factors that are impacting gentrification in Fremont— the nature of new housing in Fremont and its proximity to other recent developments, as well as certain transit options that have been expanded to particular neighborhoods in Fremont. Let us now look toward a case study that was conducted on another California city experiencing gentrification to see how their form of gentrification is unfolding and affecting residents.

II. A Similar Case Study: Santa Ana

A case study out of Santa Ana, California assessing the relationship between diversity and commercial gentrification is comparable and relevant to the situation occurring in Fremont, California.

This in-depth case study found that in Santa Ana, a majority Mexican immigrant city, commercial gentrification was used as a racialized project to manage diversity (Sarmiento, 2021). The researchers found that as diversity discourse promoted liberal colorblind practices within this majority Latinx city, it simultaneously led to problems regarding the distribution of resources along racial lines. This led to a “diversity discourse” that looked as if it was a liberal and inclusive form of gentrification. However, it was also causing justification for the continuous displacement of immigrant-serving businesses by associating them with being “exclusionary and backward.” The eventual erasure of these immigrant-serving businesses in Santa Ana occurred through strategies supported by the state of California that planned to make new property available in the developing downtown commercial area of Santa Ana. The removal and erasure that was underway was not only physical displacement, but also occurred through forced assimilation, wherein many immigrant-serving businesses had no choice but to “adapt” to survive (Sarmiento, 2021).

This case study teaches us that the planning and development efforts in Santa Ana failed to recognize the value of diversity—the value of cultural and economic community networks. Diverting attention away from and stripping the resources of immigrant-serving businesses and communities was an ongoing theme in this case study and it provides a unique insight into the multiplicity of economic and political interests in immigrant-majority cities facing gentrification. Fremont can learn from this case study of Santa Ana since they are also a majority immigrant city and I suspect that the findings from this case study may be very similar to what I may uncover about Fremont. Although a multitude of factors led to the gentrification of Santa Ana, there are also key factors that have not been explored by Sarimento that further impact the gentrification of neighborhoods and cities.

III. Intersectionality: Residential Segregation, Socioeconomic Heterogeneity, and Neighborhood Mixing

A. Racial Residential Segregation

“The United States continues to be a place of segregation, not integration,” states authors Menendian, Gales, and Gambhir. A 2021 research project from Berkeley scholars at the Othering & Belonging Institute discovered major findings about the intensification of racial residential segregation in recent decades and created a national segregation report from their analysis. The study measured and ranked demographic, housing, and income patterns in nearly 200 U.S. metros with populations greater than 200,000. Researchers primarily relied on census data to track migration patterns, housing costs, income, education, and health metrics for every census tract in the U.S. Exclusionary zoning maps from

the 1930s were also analyzed, which barred people from communities of color from buying housing in many neighborhoods.

One of the key findings to come out of this project is how out of every metropolitan region in the United States with more than 200,000 residents, 81 percent were more segregated as of 2019 than they were in 1990 (Menendian et al., 2021). Additionally, household incomes and home values in white neighborhoods are nearly twice as high as those in segregated communities of color. The Berkeley researchers also found that the most segregated regions are the Midwest and mid-Atlantic, followed by the West Coast. It is also important to note that according to the report, homeownership is 77 percent in highly segregated white neighborhoods, 59 percent in well-integrated neighborhoods, but just 46 percent in highly segregated communities of color (Menendian et al., 2021).

Supporters of the research report hope that the analysis conducted will allow elected leaders and city planners to discuss housing disparities and re-evaluate public policy on economic equity, policing, and systemic biases. The impact of segregation is clear—residents in communities of color have lower future economic gains, educational achievement, and poorer health overall. This segregation-centered research project is relevant to the research being conducted in this thesis because its findings on racial residential segregation can be seen through and applied in the case of Fremont and thus, help determine to what degree Fremont is segregated and how gentrification affects racial demographics in these segregated neighborhoods.

B. Reduced Social and Economic Heterogeneity

A 2019 study investigating the diversification and fragmentation of America addresses the social implications of more ethnoracially diverse metropolitan areas experiencing reduced social and economic heterogeneity. The researchers in this study took a multidimensional view of heterogeneity that considered whether growing ethnoracial diversity within U.S. communities has resulted in the consolidation and or differentiation of demographic, sociocultural, and economic distinctions. The study further investigated the effects of these patterns on intergroup relations, spatial exclusion, and ethnoracial inequality.

They found that as communities have become more ethnoracially diverse, they have become more heterogeneous in language and nativity—two characteristics closely associated with Latino and Asian population growth over time (Tach et al., 2019). However, they discovered that ethnoracial diversity is only weakly correlated with household, age, educational, occupational, and income heterogeneity despite large racial/ethnic differences in these characteristics (Tach et al., 2019). This trend does not apply to all forms of ethnoracial diversity equally, and the study found that Hispanic and especially Asian population growth is more likely to generate community sociodemographic and

economic heterogeneity. Last, researchers found that the broader geographic context is significant, with more ethnoracially diverse metropolitan and micropolitan areas experiencing reduced social and economic heterogeneity within their constituent places.

This study focusing on fragmentation vs. diversification in regards to ethnoracial change and the socioeconomic heterogeneity of cities is invaluable to the underlying understanding of this thesis since it sets the scene for the current academic dialogue around U.S. cities experiencing a lack of socioeconomic heterogeneity. Additionally, the central theme around Asian population growth directly corresponds to this case study on Fremont because Fremont has seen such an influx of Asian population growth over time. However, socioeconomically heterogeneous a city may be considered, how much of this diversity still holds true when broken down to the neighborhood level?

C. Neighborhood Mixing

“Superstar cities with high-paying creative-class jobs, venture capital, and innovation are thought to be more unequal,” claims researchers Kane and Hipp. Their 2019 report on rising inequality in U.S. metropolitan areas analyzes “neighborhood mixing” with regards to income, education, and occupation in order to identify factors associated with economically and socially diverse neighborhoods. Their main findings concluded that poorer, higher poverty metros tend to have neighborhoods that are more mixed by income, while “superstar” regions have neither the most mixed nor most segregated neighborhoods (Kane and Hipp, 2019). Additionally, they found that regions with a higher share of service workers have more homogeneous neighborhoods.

While income growth is a strong predictor of income mixing, it is not as applicable as a factor when employment is too highly concentrated in creative class occupations. However, while “superstar” cities may not be as consistently unequal, similar combinations of factors, i.e. highly educated, younger, mobile, tech-oriented, etc., may likely still lead to neighborhood segregation (Kane and Hipp, 2019). Last, the report found that a region’s share of new housing (considered new if built within the previous ten years) also shows a variety of mitigating factors on neighborhood mixing. More new housing in a region meant lower income mixing as a whole, which is consistent with homogeneous metro areas with similarly aged and priced housing stock.

Undoubtedly, the intersectionality of racial and socioeconomic diversity goes hand in hand with housing and thus, affects the phenomenon of “neighborhood mixing” that is described and documented throughout this study. Akin to the scenarios outlined and studied by these researchers, my individual case study on Fremont, California also looks to tech-hungry, young, mobile workers of Silicon Valley and the new housing stock that appeared after BART’s latest expansion to Fremont is undeniably affecting the

mixing of Fremont neighborhoods. Further analysis of the degree of Fremont's "neighborhood mixing" will be discussed later in the paper, within the research portion analyzing Fremont's racial demographics from 1990 to 2020. Despite how well-aligned the conversation on neighborhood mixing is to my thesis, not all sides of the scholarly debate around gentrification are in agreement.

IV. Key Secondary Sources my Thesis is Challenging

A. Opposing Debate: Racial Composition Affects Gentrification

Does gentrification truly affect the racial demographics of a city or is it the other way around? A 2020 study by Jackelyn Hwang discussed how neighborhood racial composition affects where gentrification unfolds. Although she admits that her research yielded mostly mixed conclusions, she states that her work accurately captured broad national trends and highly segregated cities. For instance, in Seattle, a majority-white city with low segregation levels and increasing ethnoracial diversity, immigrant replenishment was the mechanism shaping patterns of uneven development and residential selection (Hwang, 2020). Meanwhile historically, the share of all minorities is negatively associated with gentrification and unexpected findings included how the African American population predicted gentrification while the Asian population showed the opposite (Hwang, 2020).

These relationships are explained through increased concentrations of new immigrants in neighborhoods and communities with greater Asian populations. Hwang's findings suggest that wherever new, arriving immigrants move limits the residential selection in gentrification and shifts the focus to apply pressure on low-cost neighborhoods. Last, the study highlighted how immigration and points of entry are crucial factors to consider in order to understand uneven development in cities and how these two factors undoubtedly have implications for racial grouping as cities change over time. It will be interesting to see how Hwang's theory applies in light of Fremont, where I suspect that the opposite of Hwang's main findings is occurring. Hwang's distinct and unusual approach to the conversation revolving around gentrification and segregation brings a new perspective to the table— how racial composition affects gentrification.

B. Opposing Debate: Gentrification does not decrease neighborhood-level diversity

The second study that opposes the thesis presented in this paper is a well-known and highly regarded research paper done by Lance Freeman in 2009. This source is a study that utilizes two measures of gentrification to understand how it is related to neighborhood-level diversity and city-level segregation in the United States by race and class respectively. A key finding from Freeman is that gentrification does

not decrease neighborhood-level diversity. However, evidence on whether or not gentrification precedes increased levels of neighborhood-level diversity is more mixed and inconclusive.

Freeman's study depends on the outcome metric of gentrification that is being applied and analyzed, and there are some instances in which gentrification appears to lead to increased diversity. On the contrary, there are also other occasions in which gentrifying neighborhoods and communities that start out more diverse than others in the same localities remain that way over the course of Freeman's study. Last, the evidence of the relationship between metropolitan-level segregation and gentrification requires further analysis, with some findings suggesting that gentrification reduces income segregation and others pointing to gentrification increasing racial segregation. Freeman's overall argument is that gentrification reduces both segregations by income and race, which is very surprising given all of the previous scholarly discussion and findings in the field of gentrification and its effects on racial demographics.

This source presents the strongest opposing viewpoint to the theory presented throughout this thesis and states that the opposite effect to what is expected is occurring in actuality. It may be important to note that due to the fact that this study was conducted in 2009, Freeman's findings may be outdated and thus, no longer stand as strong as they once were considered. Further, more modern research on gentrification and its relationship to racial demographics in light of Fremont, California will be explored in the original research section of this paper. However, the relationship between a city's racial demographics and gentrification cannot be explored without additional consideration to how public transit affects this debate, and how development is often spurred from new transit.

V. Transit-Induced Gentrification or Vice Versa?

Many cities across the United States have been significantly expanding their light rail transit (LRT) systems since the 1990s. Consequently, transit-oriented development (TOD) near these new light rail stations became a very popular and desirable planning goal for local governments and lucrative developers and contractors. A 2021 study done by Jyothi Chava and John L. Renne examined the impact that expanding light rail systems has on a city's racial demographics. Their research included an examination of evidence of gentrification both before and after the opening of new light rail systems, while also seeing how different racial populations grew, shrunk, or remained the same.

Data uncovered from seven of the regions they studied from 1970 to 2010 demonstrated signs of gentrification in proximity to new stations compared with neighboring control areas (Chava and Renne, 2021). Also documented by the researchers was how in 2000, the white population grew near light rail transit systems, whereas the percentage of black residents remained flat or shrank (Chava and Renne, 2021). Chava and Renne's examination of 1990 to 2010 found clear signs of gentrification based on both demographic and economic indicators, including low-income populations. It is important to note however

that this study did not consider data to compare the differences in effectiveness between market-rate versus affordable housing.

This study is comparable and applicable to the gentrification of Fremont, California due to the fact that Fremont's gentrification is heavily affected by expansions in the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system. The later half of this thesis paper will delve more into Fremont's experience with transit-oriented development and how increases in accessibility to transportation affect the racial composition of Fremont and its neighborhoods. Now that the scholarly debate around gentrification and its related subtopics has been explored, I will now explain my approach and methodology for conducting my case study on Fremont, California.

VI. Methodology

I chose to center my research on gentrification around my hometown of Fremont, California and to conduct my analysis I looked through a wide variety of primary sources. I first started my research at the City of Fremont website in order to gain a historical understanding of Fremont before Silicon Valley's big tech boom, and then I analyzed census data from 1990 to 2020 to see how the racial composition of Fremont shifted over time as a possible result of an influx of tech companies moving to Fremont and the surrounding cities. I also incorporated census data regarding median household income, as well as Zillow data documenting how the median home value consistently rose in Fremont over the 1990 to 2020 time period. Additionally, I read through local legal agreements for new building and transit expansions such as BART, and a letter from Fremont's mayor Lily Mei regarding homelessness. Last, I utilized maps of gentrification and displacement rates, as well as those showing racial residential segregation patterns.

Research Findings

As a result of gentrification, Fremont's racial demographics have undergone tremendous change since the 1990s and racial demographics have been noticeably shifting. The proliferation of gentrification is not ideal for the residents of Fremont because individuals are being forced out of their homes and the city is becoming increasingly segregated. In order to address this issue of gentrification, Fremont residents must mobilize and hold those in power accountable for the impact that gentrification has had on Fremont thus far, and strive to create more inclusive housing developments that take socioeconomic and racial diversity into consideration.

I. Understanding Historical Fremont

Although today's Fremont is known as a hub for tech manufacturing, where Apple made its first Mac computers, and where Tesla has its main factory, it was not always known for its contributions to the

tech world. In order to explore the tremendous changes that occurred due to gentrification, it is necessary to establish the historical context of Fremont and its significance to the wider debate on gentrification.

The Fremont area was originally settled when Mission San Jose was founded by Father Fermin de Lasuen in 1797. Then in 1846, John C. Frémont mapped out a pathway through Mission Pass, which provided American settlers with a way to access the southeastern San Francisco Bay Area (City of Fremont Government Website). Throughout the early 1900s, Fremont's Niles district became home to California's developing motion picture industry and Charlie Chaplin filmed several movies in and around the Fremont area. It was not until 1956 when the five individual townships of the area— Mission San Jose, Centerville, Niles, Irvington, and Warm Springs – came together and formed what we know today as the city of Fremont.

Decades later from the 1980s to the late 1990s, Fremont's high-tech employment began to soar, especially in the Warm Springs neighborhood, which linked Fremont to the notorious Silicon Valley. Not only was Apple's first Mac computer manufacturing plant located in Fremont, but the city also attracted an influx of semiconductor and telecommunications firms throughout this same time period. By 1999, approximately 750 high tech companies had opened their doors in Fremont, and out of these firms, 15 of them were of the top 100 fastest-growing public companies in the San Francisco Bay Area (City of Fremont Government Website). The final and most recent development was when Tesla Motors purchased the former NUMMI automobile plant in 2010 and is now Fremont's largest employer and the largest manufacturing employer in all of California, with over 10,000 employees at the Fremont factory and 20,000 statewide. With an understanding of how Fremont entered Silicon Valley's tech industry, it is imperative that we now look at census data to see how the racial composition of Fremont changed before and after tech took off.

II. Analyzing Fremont's Racial Demographics & Median Household Income from 1990 to 2020

In 1990, Fremont's percent distribution by race according to the U.S. Census was 70.7% White and 19.4% Asian or Pacific Islander. The median household income in Fremont from the same 1990 Census was \$50,702. Meanwhile, the 2020 U.S. Census shows us that Fremont is now 23.8% White and 59.4% Asian, with the current median household income recorded as \$133,154. I chose to specifically focus my research on the White and Asian populations from these two time periods due to the fact that they experienced the most severe changes over time, whereas other races stayed relatively the same with little to no variation. Census data regarding race is imperial to my argument and allows me to understand what exactly the demographic change is that is occurring, a crucial step in order for me to determine why this is happening. But what happened from 1990 to 2020 to account for these tremendous demographic shifts? This will be explored for the remainder of this research report.

III. Exploring a Significant period of Change from 2010 to 2015

A. Median Income Shifts from 2010 to 2014 vs. How Rent Fluctuated Within This Same Time Frame

One of the most significant time periods from 1990 to 2020 that contributed to the aforementioned tremendous demographic shifts occurred from 2010 to 2014. The median household income in Fremont rose a stark 7.49% from 2010 to 2014 (Alameda County Eviction Report, 2016). However, the average rent for a housing unit regardless of size increased a massive 43.62% from 2011 to 2014 (Alameda County Eviction Report, 2016). It must first be acknowledged that Fremont is a city without rent control or just cause eviction protections, so these two numbers point to two main findings: (1) Due to the fact that the increases in rent is far surpassing the rate that income is increasing, many households must be spending a larger portion of their incomes on housing over time; (2) It can be observed that the median household income rose faster than inflation and since Fremont did not experience anywhere near a significant increase in the number of housing units available, the stark change in median household income can be correlated to the displacement of lower-income households in Fremont by new, higher-income ones.

Last, it is important to note the number of foreclosures in Fremont that have also occurred over this period of significant change. When compared to Oakland and Alameda, Fremont has the smallest percentage of residents who rent (35.87%), which explains why the number of foreclosures in Fremont is higher than both Oakland and Alameda. The displacement of Fremont's homeowners is disruptive to neighborhoods in the same manner as the displacement of renters. In sum, the minute rise in income compared to the massive increase in rent from 2010 to 2014 further points to the gentrification of Fremont. However, these disparities do not simply come about on their own, but rather come hand-in-hand with other factors such as new buildings and public transportation plans.

B. New Building and Transit Expansion Plans in 2015

In 2015, a Community Benefits legal agreement was signed between Congregations Organizing for Renewal (COR) and Lennar Homes of California. The agreement was a major milestone for transit-oriented development in Fremont and declared that the housing project around the new BART station at Warm Springs would eventually include 4,000 new homes. The project, however, was not only for housing but was mixed-use in nature, and of the approximate 2,214 residential units and commercial developments, 958 were for-sale units and 1,256 multi-family rental units (Fremont Community Benefits Agreement, 2015).

Additional community benefit commitments included that the marketing for the affordable housing component of the legal agreement must include a program targeting their marketing to residents of Fremont and especially, those of the Warm Springs community (in order to maximize their opportunity to live in and take advantage of the affordable housing units). The agreement also insisted that measures should be undertaken toward greater workforce development and that these services should be provided at no additional cost to the residents residing in the affordable housing units. Last, the developer of the project was required to deposit \$350,000 into a trust account designated and managed by Fremont’s Community Organization (Fremont Community Benefits Agreement, 2015). This trust was intended to be used only for the purposes of job training for residents of the city of Fremont, with at least 50% of this trust put toward construction job training.

The effort that Fremont made to ensure that the new building and transit expansion plans did not overwhelm the Warm Springs neighborhood was good in practice, but further examination reveals that these goals did not play out as ideal as they appeared. Seeing first-hand how transit affects housing and consequently, how gentrification and race are intertwined in this narrative are both concepts that are extensively expressed through Fremont’s 2015 Community Benefits legal agreement. Furthermore, the expansion of transit then led to some Fremont neighborhoods becoming more desirable than others, which contributed to the rise in the median value of homes in Fremont over time.

IV. Housing vs. Homelessness

According to a map of data showing the median value of homes in Fremont over time, Fremont’s current median home value is at \$1,402,752 as of October 2021 (Zillow). The values calculated on Zillow are seasonally adjusted and include the middle price tier of homes. Recently, Fremont home values have gone up 22.4% over the past year alone and this is in spite of the fact that the Covid-19 pandemic has been ongoing (one would assume that median housing prices and or home values would drop during a global pandemic). The present high median home value for Fremont is not out of the ordinary and Zillow’s data proves that the price of houses in Fremont has risen steadily since 2012, which is as far back as their data stretches. For reference, I have compiled Zillow’s data into the table below:

Year	Fremont Median Home Value (data accessed from Zillow)
2012	\$504K
2013	\$563K

2014	\$733K
2015	\$783K
2016	\$880K
2017	\$923K
2018	\$1.03M
2019	\$1.16M
2020	\$1.09M
2021	\$1.40M

It can be observed from the table that for the past ten years, Fremont median home values have been consistently increasing year after year. The only exception of this finding is from the period of time between 2019-2020, which may be assumed that the Covid-19 played a role in the unusual decrease in Fremont median home values that year because the values once again shot up in 2021, where we see the current home value at the highest it has ever been in Fremont. However, as home values have been rising in Fremont, homelessness has also grown to become a top concern for both Fremont residents and elected city officials.

On August 9th, 2019 City of Fremont Mayor Lily Mei released an open letter to the Fremont community addressing the importance of a continued dialogue around homelessness in Fremont. At the time, the homelessness situation in Fremont was steadily rising over multiple years and Fremont had over 178 encampment sites according to the city (Mei, 2019). Additionally, this letter was likely the result of a recent city hall meeting that produced fierce push-back from residents when it came to the discussion of a new “Navigation Center” or a facility to transition those experiencing homelessness into permanent housing, stabilization, and self-sufficiency, through coordinated services. The Center planned to accomplish this through resources such as hygiene facilities, meal services, placement programs for permanent and supportive housing, one-on-one intensive housing case management, 24/7 staffing and security, etc.

Concerns raised by residents of Fremont against the new Navigation Center involved beliefs that those without permanent homes were likely sexual predators, criminals, and drug addicts. When in reality, many of the homeless in Fremont have grown up there, attended schools there, worked there, or have

family members in the area and likely identify as residents of the City of Fremont themselves. For example, for women especially, domestic violence is the leading cause of homelessness with 89% of homeless women having experienced severe physical or sexual abuse at some point in their lives (Mei, 2019).

Mayor Lily Mei's letter to the public sought compassion for the homeless and it was clear that she was one of the only city officials leading the fight for the new Navigation Center and claimed that the city had "A responsibility to look into all of the factors to address this crisis realistically and effectively" (Mei, 2019). Lily Mei also acknowledged residents' concerns that they do not want such a center near their homes, businesses or neighborhood schools. Despite pushback from local residents, Mayor Lily Mei was successful in her fight for the state-of-the-art Homeless Navigation Center and it now provides mobile hygiene service to the most vulnerable residents of Fremont along with compassionate transitional housing, food, job placement, and mental health services.

This is an overall victory for Fremont, but the outcome does not change the fact that many Fremont residents were steadfast in declaring their compassion for homeless residents, yet nevertheless vehemently opposed to having a planned Homeless/Housing Navigation Center placed anywhere near where they lived. Good leadership was the primary reason this Center was established, but it takes more than compassion through deeds to show that not only Fremont officials, but also residents are fighting to help the most vulnerable find affordable and sustainable housing. Not every neighborhood in Fremont experiences homelessness to the same degree and this can be correlated to the fact that gentrification and displacement rates vary across Fremont depending on which neighborhoods one is analyzing and how their eviction rates compare to others.

V. Present-day Gentrification and Displacement Rates: Which Fremont Neighborhoods See the Most Evictions

A 2021 map from the Urban Displacement Project stationed in Berkeley, California, shows data on gentrification and displacement rates across the San Francisco Bay Area and allows individuals to analyze their data at both the municipal and neighborhood levels. I have used the data from this map to identify which specific neighborhoods in Fremont are experiencing the most advanced forms of gentrification and have discovered how some areas that were once redlined and low-income neighborhoods are now the same places that have the highest rates of gentrification.

Data from the map shows how several neighborhoods in central Fremont have reached the point of advanced gentrification, meanwhile, a majority of south Fremont neighborhoods are now classified as "Stable/Advanced Exclusive" in regards to its displacement typology. The advanced gentrification that is

occurring in central Fremont can be characterized by moderate, mixed moderate, mixed high, or high-income tract in 2018; housing affordable to middle, high, mixed moderate, and mixed high-income households in 2018; marginal change, increase, or rapid increase in housing costs; and gentrified in 1990-2000 or 2000-2018 (Chapple and Thomas, 2021). Stable or advanced exclusion neighborhoods such as those in south Fremont are characterized by a high-income tract in both 2000 and 2018, affordable to high or mixed high-income households in 2018, and marginal change, increase, or rapid increase in housing costs (Chapple and Thomas, 2021).

It just so happens that central Fremont and south Fremont are both neighborhoods that Bay Area Rapid Transit trains (BART) have expanded service to and it is these same neighborhoods that are experiencing the highest rates of gentrification and displacement. Both of these areas of Fremont have surpassed the stages of susceptible to displacement, ongoing displacement, at risk of gentrification, as well as early/ongoing gentrification, and have now met the characteristics for advanced gentrification and are on track to achieve/maintain stable/advanced exclusivity for years to come. In sum, the neighborhoods that are experiencing the highest rates of gentrification and displacement are also the same neighborhoods that are the most stable and exclusive. There is no coincidence that out of all of the neighborhoods in Fremont that are experiencing some form of gentrification, these advanced rates of gentrification are only appearing in neighborhoods that surround the new expansions of BART in Fremont.

VI. Modern-day Segregation in Fremont

In 2020, UC Berkeley researchers compiled data into their *Belonging Berkeley* map that shows the level and change in racial residential segregation across the United States. Gentrification cannot be adequately discussed without considering the role that housing, homelessness, evictions, and segregation play. Therefore, research on racial residential segregation in Fremont is imperial to my argument because it establishes the intersectionality of multiple social issues that go hand-in-hand with gentrification.

The Bay Area has been racially segregated since 1990 with a trend toward more cities and neighborhoods dividing starkly along ethnic lines. According to Berkeley's researchers at the Othering & Belonging Institute, Fremont is in line with Oakland, San Francisco, and San Jose for being among the most highly segregated. Despite the fact that the Bay Area is known historically for having the nation's most diverse population, Berkeley's findings show that ethnic groups often settle into neighborhoods that are homogeneous in nature. Furthermore, the data shows that the Bay Area was more integrated than previous generations, and in 1980, Fremont was considered fully integrated (Belonging Berkeley Map, 2021). However, 2020 data from Fremont then showed that neighborhoods became more homogeneous and considered lightly segregated before it has now trended towards highly segregated patterns. Fremont ended up ranking 34th in the nation for most segregated cities in 2020 (Belonging Berkeley Map, 2021).

One of the most telling indicators of racial residential segregation is that roughly 80% of Fremont's residential property is zoned for single-family homes. These neighborhoods that are solely restricted for single-family homes are far more likely to be exclusionary compared to communities with a mix of apartments or homes.

The data from Berkeley's research shows that modern-day segregation exists in Fremont, although it is not always obvious to the untrained eye. When one examines the intricacies of what contributes to racial residential segregation, it is evident that the data proves how this situation is occurring seemingly under the radar. Segregation undoubtedly plays a role in the gentrification of Fremont and factors such as influxes of single-family homes contribute heavily to the racial residential segregation of Fremont over time.

Conclusion

Despite opposing arguments expressed in the scholarly conversation, my research findings show that gentrification does affect the racial composition of a city and not the other way around. The data analyzed proves that racial demographics are shifting in Fremont and residents are being unfairly affected by gentrification and the growing lack of affordable housing. Specifically, transit-induced gentrification is occurring and populations surrounding BART stations in Fremont are being targeted, displaced, and pushed to the perimeters of cities, while those who can afford to live in these new exclusive neighborhoods are migrating to the cores of these same areas where public transit is easily accessible. Low-income members are disproportionately affected and see the majority of their paychecks go directly toward rent, but as rent rises, paychecks become entirely consumed by excessively increased rents and these individuals are forced out of their lifelong homes and into neighboring communities and cities.

Some limitations and challenges to my research include the fact that case studies are not broadly applicable, and what holds true for Fremont may not ring true in all cities experiencing gentrification in the U.S. or even within the Bay Area. Additionally, tech will continue to dominate Fremont and dictate the housing market for residents both current and future, and it is increasingly harder to combat the demands of gentrification when entire communities are being transformed so quickly.

One of the future policy recommendations that I believe is imperative to addressing the gentrification of Fremont is understanding the patterns of gentrification before and after opening new transit stations. City planners in Fremont should be concerned with the very possible negative effects on local residents well before these new transit stations open, and expanding housing and job opportunities in a mixed-use environment is also a critical strategy to reduce gentrification near transit stations and in the case of transit-induced development or transit-oriented housing.

Similarly, inclusionary zoning policies should be implemented as a necessary step in the right direction towards creating and maintaining affordable housing in cities. Inclusionary zoning policies force new building developers to construct a certain number of affordable housing units based on how many market-rate units they construct, and the affordable units are defined as typically costing 30% or less of the area's median income.

In addition to inclusionary zoning policies, registered community organizations can be formed in cities akin to Fremont wherein a group made up of local residents have a say in all new construction projects and they could express the voices of their community members on building developments that pose a risk of commercial gentrification. Not only Fremont, but other cities across the Bay Area should also consider forming RCOs in order to incorporate the opinions of the public on new developments that potentially threaten the history, culture, and diversity of their communities. Registered community organizations make way for positive and inclusive developments that members of a community agree on, which prevent the creation of buildings or businesses that would only exclusively cater to higher-income members of a community.

Last, Housing Rights Committees such as something similar to the Housing Rights Committee of San Francisco, could be formed in Fremont to provide free tenant counseling sessions, advocate for rent control, and raise awareness for more affordable housing. These organizations give people the tools and knowledge they need to fight back against unjust evictions.

All in all, the gentrification of Fremont is well underway and its impact on both racial and socioeconomic demographics is undeniable. However, it does not have to remain this way and greater racial diversity can still be fostered through implementing these aforementioned policy recommendations. The case of Fremont cannot go unnoticed and the gentrification, displacement, and lack of affordable housing must be addressed by residents, city officials, and local government.

Bibliography

- Alameda County Eviction Report. 2016. "Fremont Median Income Shifts."
<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=53bb2678ff2d41ff8f287cb7e84a6f4d>.
- Belonging Berkeley Map. 2021. "Observing Level and Change in Racial Residential Segregation."
https://belonging.gis-cdn.net/us_segregation_map/?bounds=75.87%2C-43.05%2C-18.70%2C-179.98&year=2020&geoid=41860.
- Chapple, K. and Thomas, T. (2021). Berkeley, CA: Urban Displacement Project.
<https://www.urbandisplacement.org/san-francisco/sf-bay-area-gentrification-and-displacement>.
- Chava, J. and J. L. Renne. 2021. "Transit-Induced Gentrification Or Vice Versa?: A Study of Neighborhoods Around Light Rail Stations from 1970–2010." *Journal of the American Planning Association*. doi:10.1080/01944363.2021.1920453. www.scopus.com.
- City of Fremont, "History." <https://fremont.gov/149/History>.
- Freeman, L. 2009. "Neighbourhood Diversity, Metropolitan Segregation and Gentrification: What are the Links in the US?" *Urban Studies* 46 (10): 2079-2101. doi:10.1177/0042098009339426. www.scopus.com.
- Fremont Community Benefits Agreement (2015), "Warm Springs/South Fremont Project— Lennar Homes of California." <https://juliangross.net/docs/CBA/Warm-Springs-CBA.pdf>.
- Hwang, J. 2020. "Gentrification without Segregation? Race, Immigration, and Renewal in a Diversifying City." *City and Community* 19 (3): 538-572. doi:10.1111/cico.12419. www.scopus.com.
- Kane, K. and J. R. Hipp. 2019. "Rising Inequality and Neighbourhood Mixing in US Metro Areas." *Regional Studies* 53 (12): 1680-1695. doi:10.1080/00343404.2019.1603366. www.scopus.com.
- Mei, L. 2019. "An Open Letter to the Fremont Community." *Office of the Fremont City Manager*.
<https://www.fremont.gov/Archive/ViewFile/Item/2192>.
- Menendian, S., Gales, A. and S. Gambhir, *The Roots of Structural Racism: Twenty-First Century Racial Residential Segregation in the United States* (Berkeley, CA: Othering & Belonging Institute, 2021). <https://belonging.berkeley.edu/roots-structural-racism>.
- Mujahid, M. S., E. K. Sohn, J. Izenberg, X. Gao, M. E. Tulier, M. M. Lee, and I. H. Yen. 2019. "Gentrification and Displacement in the San Francisco Bay Area: A Comparison of Measurement Approaches." *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 16 (12). doi:10.3390/ijerph16122246. www.scopus.com.
- Sarmiento, C. 2021. "Not Diverse enough? Displacement, Diversity Discourse, and Commercial Gentrification in Santa Ana, California, a Majority-Mexican City." *Urban Studies*. doi:10.1177/00420980211020912. www.scopus.com.

Tach, L., B. Lee, M. Martin, and L. Hannsott. 2019. "Fragmentation or Diversification? Ethnoracial Change and the Social and Economic Heterogeneity of Places." *Demography* 56 (6): 2193-2227. doi:10.1007/s13524-019-00835-w. www.scopus.com.

United States Census Bureau, "Median Household Income (V1990) -- Fremont, CA." <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1990/cp-2/cp-2-6-1.pdf>.

United States Census Bureau, "Racial Demographics (V1990) -- Fremont, CA." <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1990/cp-2/cp-2-6-1.pdf>.

United States Census Bureau, "Quick Facts (V2020) -- Fremont, CA." *Quick Facts*, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fremontcitycalifornia>.

Zillow, "Fremont Home Values (2021) -- Fremont, CA." *Zillow*, <https://www.zillow.com/fremont-ca/home-values/>.