

A new new york city

Business



As natives move out and a different, more wealthy group of people move in, the crime rate, cost of living, and general “vibe” of a neighborhood drastically changes, as bodegas that sell \$2 malt liquor are replaced by expensive, trendy cupcake shops. This is gentrification. Controversy about this process that hits Brooklyn neighborhoods hard still continues between long-time Brooklyn natives and new residents. Spike Lee, a famous movie actor and producer, and well-known native of the Fort Greene, Brooklyn neighborhood added to this controversy. “You can’t just come in when people have a culture that’s been laid down for generations and you come in and now s*** gotta change because you’re here? Get the f*** outta here,” he said to the crowd at a gentrification debate, reported by the Huffington Post. More native, long-time residents of well-known Brooklyn neighborhoods such as Bedford-Stuyvesant and Fort Greene are leaving as rent prices and cost of living of these recently trending neighborhoods has gone up.

It is not a surprise that such a huge city is constantly changing and adapting. The city has been changing even more rapidly in various boroughs and neighborhoods for the past few years due to gentrification. Gentrification occurs in what is originally a low income area/neighborhood. These low income neighborhoods, especially in New York, tend to be primarily one minority race, like in the Brooklyn neighborhood Bedford Stuyvesant, where the median income was approximately \$36,000 per year, according to a census on city-data.com, which is below the national average income. 89% of Bed-Stuy residents are African American, making it the most concentrated black neighborhood in New York City, according to data from the New York Times.

Rent prices in surrounding neighborhoods were also fairly low, but have increased by a high percentage; for example neighboring 'hood Fort Greene has increased by 51% according to propertyshark.com. Due to limited and overpriced housing in the city, when young people want to move in, they search for affordable areas such as Bed-Stuy. These new residents, young, wealthy/upper class families or art students become a more attractive type of people to be living there realty wise, making the neighborhood seem "interesting" as they could do so culturally and artistically. This potential for a soon very popular neighborhood causes the rent to go up, driving many of the poorer residents out.

Brooklyn neighborhood Fort Greene is said to be one of "gentrification's gems," as stated in a recent New York Times feature article, "Dasani's Child." Gentrification can drastically change the aspects of a neighborhood; new restaurants can pop up, prices of food and the types of supermarkets can change drastically; abandoned lots can be turned into luxury apartment buildings. The variety of eateries in Fort Greene has changed drastically in the past couple decades or so. "In around 1990 through 1995, the only two places where you could go get food besides the supermarket was the bodega and the pizza place. Today, there's all kinds of places now," said Gregory Todd, a Fort Greene-based realtor who has lived in Brooklyn since 1976. As more expensive eateries have popped up in the neighborhood over the past several years, the cost of an apartment in the Fort Greene neighborhood has increased also, increasing by over 200% over a little less than a decade, going from a neighborhood median of around \$400,000 in 2005, to a neighborhood median of nearly \$1.

2 Million in 2014, according to statistics gathered from Trulia, a real estate company. But how could the price of the same home in the same neighborhood increase so dramatically? As gentrifying went through, the quality of brownstones changed from the inside; “ As more people were moving into this neighborhood which was considered desirable, people were doing complete renovations of the insides of these brownstones, making them worth a lot more.” Gregory Todd adds, the reason for so many people moving in being “ this whole new process of ‘ discovering hoods’ considered a lot of more gritty, bad neighborhoods in Brooklyn.” He also adds how neighboring ‘ hood Crown Heights was filled with “ lots of vacant buildings and lots” in the 70’s, but is is now also undergoing gentrification and being filled with new apartment buildings and “ hip” attractions. Over the years, as the cost of renting a place to live in Fort Greene and the general cost of living there has gone up, crime has gone down a lot over the past several years. “ At that time in the 80’s and 90’s, if you were around that area in Brooklyn you wouldn’t want to stay out past sunset for the fear of most likely getting mugged,” Gregory recalled.

As controversy continues, so does the issue itself. With rent prices and cost of living going up all over Brooklyn and other New York boroughs, where it is especially severe in Brooklyn neighborhood of Williamsburg, the rent prices going up by 174% according to the same census on Property Shark. The image of Brooklyn and New York City in general is drastically changing.