Gentrification & Economic Benefits

Basant Eid, Devin Worthy, Karmoko Sillah, Kym Lois

**Research Question:** *How did urban developers balance social justice concerns while gentrifying MetroTech?*

**Thesis Statement:**  *The development of MetroTech caused displacement and separation of communities through gentrification. Developers attempted to maintain social justice by granting affordable housing and jobs to displaced individuals, while simultaneously revitalizing the development area to grow the economy.*

***Intro***

<https://soundcloud.com/basant-eid-212652573/lib-2205id-basant-kym-karmoko-devin/s-o2x8M>

<https://jeopardylabs.com/play/metro-tech>

*Opening musical jingle: First 15 seconds of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

**Karmoko:** Hi ! Welcome to ***Our Brooklyn Jeopardy Podcast.*** I am Karmoko Sillah, and with me today is Devin Worthy, Kym Lois and Basant Eid. We have a great game for you today. Today we are going to talk about the economic benefits in Downtown Brooklyn and how urban developers balanced social justice concerns while gentrifying MetroTech. Just a little background on the area if you don't already know:

Downtown Brooklyn is considered to be New York City’s third largest business district which follows Lower Manhattan and Midtown. Downtown Brooklyn's boundaries consists of Tillary Street , Atlantic Ave, Court Street and Ashland Place. The area consists of large office buildings, government offices, retail stores, academic institutions and some residential buildings.

With all this development and revitalization of Downtown Brooklyn , local residence have brought up their concerns of displacement in their neighborhood along with many other concerns .

Hey Kym, Devin, Basant how are you guys doing today?

**Kym Devin Basant:** We’re doing great.

**Karmoko:** Great, so you guys ready to play Jeopardy?

**Kym Devin Basant:**  Yes we’re ready.

First question:

Karmoko: okay let's start off with you Kim

Kim: I'll take gentrification for 400

**Karmoko:**

The process of displacing a community and replacing local residents and businesses with more middle class appealing businesses and developments.

**Kym:** What is gentrification ?

**Karmoko:** Correct.

**Devin:** Gentrification is actually a sign of economic growth. As money begins to flow into a neighborhood, many aspects of everyday life are changed for the better. Buildings and parks are renovated and beautified. Jobs arrive with the increased construction activity and with new retail and service businesses

**Kym-** I understand but Gentrification mainly disrupts the local communities and almost always leads to displacement of people and business.

**Basant-** Well we can definitely say that gentrification has both a positive and negative side to it. Jillian Steinhauer lived in Downtown Brooklyn in 2013 and she claims she’s started to see her neighborhood differently. She noticed the vacant storefronts, the newly arrived chain stores, the towering, high-rise condos a few blocks away, and the fancy supermarket, which just recently opened in her neighborhood.

Secondquestion**:**

**Karmoko: okay this one is for you Basant**

**Basant : okay I'll take displacement for 200**

**Karmoko -**Moving onto the next answer.. An approximate estimateof the amount 754 were displaced.

**Basant-** Approximately how many residents living in dwelling units and government agency based employers were displaced in MetroTech?

Karmoko: CORRECT

**Devin-** Yes there were many people displaced but we also offered financial assistance and residential programs to the displaced community which we stated in the Draft of the Environmental Impact Statement.

**Karmoko -** Yes a commitment was actually made by the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development which was giving priority focus to low income households with the efforts of leasing renovated apartments.

Third Question:

Karmoko: Devin pick your topic

Devin: I'll stick with displacement for 4k00

**Karmoko:**As stated by the New York Housing Committee, over $6 Million was the amount given to various affordable housing development groups.

**Devin:** Did the developers give any financial support to individuals displaced by the metrotech plan.

**Karmoko:** That is correct

**Kym:** Well as also detailed by the New York housing committee , this financial support took over a year to actually be implemented, and during this time there's no way to know whether it benefitted those displaced or not.

**Question:**

**Karmoko:**

Fourth Question:

Karmoko: Devin let's keep it going

Devin: I'll take urban development for 400

**Karmoko:** The coming of Metrotech brought about a means of hope. It has improved an area of desolation into an area of great economic standing for all individuals.

**Devin:** What has been the response to the revitalization of metrotech?

**Karmoko:** That is correct sir

**Basant:** But this was not the overall response to the coming of metrotech center, as detailed by the environmental impact statement, owners of 100 johnson street,and various small business owners explicitly stated that they opposed the coming of metrotech because they felt it was wrong to change an area without considering the individuals who were already there , and also because their homes would be demolished with the coming of metrotech so it hasn’t been positive for all individuals.

Fifth Question:

Karmoko: well go back to you Kim

Kim: Imma pick activists for 100

**Karmoko:** Furee, Survive, and many other groups were big voices during the development of Metrotech center.

**Kym:** What were some activist groups that opposed Metrotech?

**Karmoko:** Correct

**Basant:** FUREE actually stands for Families United for Racial and Economic Equality. They are a Brooklyn based multi-racial organization that helps low and middle income families. FUREE helps promote equality and improve economic conditions. Surprisingly FUREE is led by women of color with a strong sense of community and family.

Sixth Question:

Karmoko: Devin your turn

Devin:I like urban development I'll stick with it for 500

**Karmoko:** With the coming of Metrotech has come JP Morgan Chase, wide range of office space, retail space, and many other businesses.

**Devin:** What are the different economic developments that have come as a result of Metrotech?

**Karmoko: Correct!**

**Devin:** These developments of Metrotech would mirror a change in the overall appearance of metrotech shifting it from a place of deterioration to a place of great economic standing, and this would be done through improving telecommunications, with the presence of fiber optics and digital networks as detailed in The New Urban Infrastructure book.

**Kym:** It is true that this area of Brooklyn needs improvements in its telecommunications, but in improving this that would mean that infrastructure would have to be changed, and this could only be done by tearing down a neighborhood forcing individuals to move without freedom of choice.

**Karmoko:** Kym does have a point here, in order to revitalize an area,there must be some form of destroying an area with that.

**Seventh Question:**

Karmoko: Basant this one is for you

Basant : I'll take gentrification for 500

**Karmoko:** The L line, Myrtle Ave and Albee Square Mall

**Basant**: What were some infrastructure or buildings that were demolished during the development of Metrotech?

**Karmoko**: Correct

**Eighth Question:**

**Karmoko: now for our last one, Devin**

**Devin : I'll end this off with economic benefits for 300**

Karmoko: As detailed in the NY times and Metrotech’s about us statement, the movement of over 1500 employees from NJ to downtown brooklyn, 50,000-100,000 square foot tenants, The Center for Advanced Technology in Telecommunications and Dibner Library of Technology and Science, JPMorgan chase, The MS. foundation for women, Slate Media , National grid, etc.

Devin: What are some of the effects and economics benefits of Metrotech center today?

Karmoko: Correct sir

Devin: Just to add, Metrotech center has made home to all of the above listed organizations are the epitome of development in Downtown Brooklyn. Downtown brooklyn has been overlooked for years, and had never before been projected to become the economy that it is today. Not only has Metrotech been able to renew an area of low-economic standing into one of high-economic standing, but it has also served the residents living in the area before through the millions that were given as an aid to these tenants. Affordable housing is a part of the Metrotech plan, and with this affordable housing comes jobs that cater to all individuals in Downtown Brooklyn.

**Kym:** I must agree with the coming of Metrotech Center, has come various economic developments. Metrotech definitely needed this push in economic benefits. Despite the owners and tenants of various buildings which were demolished had become displaced, it’s a good thing to know that there were some form of initiative made by developers to provide compensation to them. Although these initiatives haven’t been documented to have any positive impacts, it seems as though developers did try to help those displaced.

Karmoko: okay this is our bonus question who ever hits the buzzer first gets it !

Karmoko: With the coming of Metrotech , developers aided $6 million to tenants, and the development that was established as a result of this was the firehouse at 365 jay street.

Devin: What was the establishment that served as a residency for those displaced ?

Karmoko : that is correct

Devin: So you see Basant and Kym, instead of demolishing the old fire house, we revitalized it for the community

**Karmoko:** So, is it safe to say that there has been a balance of social justice while Metrotech has been shifted into an area of expanded economic development? Ok

**Basant:** I definitely do think that there was a lot more that urban developers could have done and considered when the development of Metrech was happening , needless to say there were positive outcomes to Metrotech that can be seen today

**Devin:** Indeed, we could have done more in the initial phases of planning Metrotech, but I believe that the project inspired future developments as well as addressing the needs of social justice.

**Kym:** Being the optimistic person I am, I strongly agree that for the future this change within metrotech will bring positive outcomes to new generations.

Though the changes have displaced our old neighborhood, there are new communities being formed daily as this era has created more avenues of networking. The next generation will indeed have a strong foundation for their success.

Karmoko: This is the end of our jeopardy game. In conclusion, as detailed in this discussion the developers of metrotech have been able to balance social justice while

simultaneously creating a strong and stable economy within an area .

Outline

***How did urban developers balance social justice concerns while gentrifying MetroTech?***

***Basant Eid, Kym Lois, Devin Worthy, Karmoko Sillah***

***https://jeopardylabs.com/build/***

# Intro: Overview of Downtown Brooklyn & Metrotech

Including:

When did the develop Metrotech, land use, and borders

Introducing “Our Brooklyn Jeopardy Podcast”

Introduce the idea of gentrification and community displacement (Karmoko)

# Gentrification

1. Definition of gentrification from the POV of social justice activist groups (Kym)
2. Definition of gentrification from the POV of urban developers (Devin)
3. Discussion between activist group and developers on their ideas of gentrification and its effects on the neighborhood. (ALL)

# II. Local Displacement

1. Brief description of the land use (displacement of local businesses & residence) (Basant)
2. Describe land use 2019 of MetroTech (Devin)
3. Explain how the changes of the land use affected the community (ALL)

# III. Developers’ Promises

1. Promises of compensation made by developers to the displaced community (Devin)
2. Arguments against proving that residence never were compensated (Kym)
3. The compensation made to specific groups and affordable housing (ALL)

# IV. Local Responses

1. Explaining how the new plan would be beneficial for the locals (Devin)
2. Local residences reaction to the idea of the new MetroTech development (Basant)
3. Present local residences letters (ALL)

# V. Activist Group

1. Bring up how the community got their voices heard
2. FUREE & Urban Justice Group (Kym)
3. How did developers and activists communicate (events & conferences) (All)

# VI. Demolition

1. The demolition of the El Line, Myrtle Ave and Albee Square Mall (Basant)
2. Explain why those infrustructures / buildings were demolished (Devin)
3. Discussion of how the demolition affected not only the community but also parts of Brooklyn (ALL)

# VII. New Developments

1. Present new developments in the area (polytechnic NYU, JP Morgan, Marriott) (Devin)
2. Explain how those developments did not help the existing community (Basant)
3. Discussion on how the developments attracted more people (ALL)

# VIII. Overall Benefits

1. How did Metrotech economically affect Brooklyn (Devin)
2. Present statistics and then and now affects (Kym)

# Conclusion:

Briefly present all the points mentioned in body (Karmoko)