Urban Renewal, Gentrification, Social Inequalities in Metro Manila, Philippines and the Christian Response

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A Renewed Global City?
Research Questions

- How does urban planning documents frame urban renewal and development in Metro Manila?
- How do Christians respond to urban renewal and gentrification?
Significance of the Study

- Globalization and Global Cities (Friedman, 1986; 2002; Sassen 2006)
  - Hegemonic ideologies are perpetuated in urban renewal and development plans

- Research on the relationship of urban renewal and gentrification focus on developed nations

- Theoretical framework for urban planning
Politics of Land and Urban Change
  - Agricultural → Industrial → Information technologies

Some failed urban renewal projects in Metro Manila
  - Slum redevelopment, poverty alleviation

Growth of megacities in developing nations
  - High rates of urban growth in Manila (5.1% over the past four decades)
Main points

- How is urban renewal framed in development documents?

- Christian initiatives in Metro Manila
  - Community development, incarnational ministry in slums/poor communities
  - Emergence of those who cater to “creative class”

- What social inequalities result from urban renewal and gentrification?
Hegemonic urban development

Representations of urban renewal masks cultural domination/imperialism?

Creation of a new social class and elites ("creative class")
Methods

- Qualitative Data Analysis
  - Meaning, representations

- Archival methods
  - Unobtrusive, exploratory

- Discourse Analysis
  - Systematic way of analyzing key discourses in documents
Data Collection

Documents from:
- Cities Alliance: Draft Vision Plan for Metro Manila Greenprint 2030
- World Bank

A Structural Plan linking all Metro Manila stakeholders through a common goal:

To create a Metro Manila that is inclusive and green - resource and time-conserving, recognizing residents’ priorities for livelihood, mobility, and a livable habitat they will nurture, cherish and call truly their own.
Findings

- Economic growth and global competition
- Increasing the standard of living
- Sustainability
- Ecological and Economic Sustainability (Green Zones)
- Urban Displacement
Urban renewal is an attempt to rebuild the nation
- Job creation = higher standard of living

Gentrification:
- “Green Zones” attract investors

The looming danger of exploitation and displacement
- Workplace exploitation and housing displacement
Summary

- Urban renewal = good for the economy
- Danger of perpetuation of social inequalities
The Christian Response

- Advocate for livable and just cities
- Minimize/eliminate the tendency to perpetuate cultural hegemony in urban ministry initiatives ("religious gentrification")