

HSC003-P02

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## GIS analysis on changing urban cultural environments: towards assisting participatory neighborhood planning

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This study presents the results of quantitative analyses conducted on the socioeconomic environmental changes identified in one of San Francisco's ethnic-culture neighborhoods, with the community facing shifts in globalization and neoliberalization of the economy. Not only does globalization have an impact on economic transitions and the creation of disparities on national and international scales, it also places, due to its hybridizing natures, significant impacts on the neighborhoods' socioeconomic dynamics at the local community level. A decaying urban ethnic enclave is one good example for observing the transitions and the reactions of those concerned when trying to tackle market-led gentrification of the neighborhood in the context of globalization. The concerned citizens group became actively involved in planning to preserve and revitalize changing ethnic communities such as the Japantowns located in several California cities.

San Francisco's Japantown is a historical Japanese-American neighborhood. While dozens of Japantowns dotted America's West Coast prior to World War II, most of these communities disappeared following the wartime internment of Japanese-Americans. A common sentiment among Japanese-Americans is that this ethnic neighborhood is a shadow of its former self. Some of these sentiments were engendered through a series of sales of major Japanese properties to non-Japanese investors at the beginning of the 21st century. The neighborhoods' transformation, particularly the development of what some people in the community call market-led gentrification, has resulted in a community narrative that advocated the need for preservation, revitalization, and public participation in the planning of San Francisco's Japantown. This sense of transition and orientation toward gentrification has brought about the Save Japantown campaigns, and eventually led to formal zoning and public planning schemes.

This research aims to quantify such local knowledge, anecdotes, and a sense of the neighborhoods' transition by using statistical data and a Geographic Information System (GIS) with housing and population characteristics, the state of Japan-related businesses, and a historic preservation policy. Some comparisons to Chinatown are also made to highlight neighborhood characteristics. Additionally, newly-released *Census 2010* statistics were used for some of the spatial analyses in order to present the most recent socioeconomic dynamics surrounding the neighborhood.

A detailed understanding of the status quo of the neighborhood and its surroundings will contribute to discussions on socioeconomic, political, and urban renewal influences on globalization and neoliberalization within the community at large. At the same time, such geography study helps the community practitioners have at least a clear and shared understanding of the state of the neighborhood in question in order to build consensus in the real-world planning.

Keywords: public planning, gentrification, ethnicity, U.S. Census, GIS, San Francisco