Is Gentrification Occurring in Greenville?
An Analysis of Home Values and Neighborhood Race Composition
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Abstract
The purpose of this project was to analyze values from sold homes and population demographics of neighborhoods as indicators of gentrification in the City of Greenville and surrounding areas within Greenville County. The home value analysis included data from 2009 to 2014 and resulted in seven maps: one map shows the density of sold homes, indicating where the highest amount of selling is occurring. The remaining six maps analyze the distribution of values and the clustering of significant values for median income by block, average list price for sold home by block, and average seller monetary contribution (renovations to home) for sold home by block. A population map shows the number of individuals in each census block using data from the 2009-2013 5 year American Community Survey by census block. This map is not normalized for block area because the population density of all of the blocks is considerably low (less than 5 percent). The racial composition analysis shows current population within the central portion within the current city limits.

The research question was: Is gentrification occurring in Greenville? The research objective was to observe possible correlations between sold home value and racial composition of neighborhoods.

Introduction
Gentrification can be defined as displacement of longtime residents due to revitalization driving up the cost of living and therefore making it financially untenable for longtime renters to stay in their homes. Although many factors contribute to gentrification, race and changes in racial composition of neighborhoods have been well documented as co-revitalizing elements in American cities such as New Orleans and Oakland. In these cases, the cost of living goes up when young white professionals move in to traditionally minority neighborhoods because of cheaper housing prices, renovate, and increase individual home value. Gentrification can occur with broader revitalization projects, such as those implemented by local governments.

Greenville, South Carolina is a good case study for gentrification because it is a rapidly expanding city undergoing many revitalization projects in its downtown area. Additionally, anecdotal evidence of gentrification in West Greenville appears as early as 2010 in the form of articles from The Greenville News and the news agency’s extended project "UnseenGreenville" as well as in city planning documents indicating homeowner associations’ concerns.

Methods
The research question was: Is gentrification occurring in Greenville? The research objective was to observe possible correlations between sold home value and racial composition of neighborhoods.

Conclusion
In conclusion, there is a correlation between median income, list price, and race in Greenville, although it does not necessarily demonstrate gentrification. Areas that could potentially undergo gentrification include areas to the west of the city limits as Greenville expands and neighborhoods in the central portion within the current city limits.

References and Data Sources
- The Greenville News, "UnseenGreenville" investigative series
- Connections for Sustainability, Greenville West Side Comprehensive Plan
- Home Value Data: MLS Data from 2009 to 2014, Dr. Peterson in Furman Economics Department
- Racial Composition Data: NHGIS census ACS and decennial long form