CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Gentrification is the process by which a working-class or abandoned central city area is transformed into a neighborhood with middle-class residential and commercial uses. This phenomenon has become a popular subject of study in urban inquiry. When gentrification first appeared in several locations around the US east coast during the 1950s and 1960s, it quickly garnered widespread awareness (Lees, Slater, & Wyly, 2008:xv).

Gentrification is typically viewed as a phenomenon that occurs on a local scale. Others think that it is a worldwide phenomenon. According to these opinions, gentrification spreads beyond Western or global capitals and impacts both large and small cities. Globalization, global market pressures, and the "colonization" of the city by an international workforce are said to impact this process (Glass, 2010: cited by Raman, 2014:2510).

The report from the U.S. Census Bureau says that in 2013-2017, about 1.000 neighborhoods were experiencing gentrification, with the majority located in 20 metropolitan cities. San Francisco-Oakland was the most gentrified metropolitan area, followed by Denver, Boston, Miami-Fort Lauderdale, and New Orleans.

Certain viewpoints contend that gentrification brings benefits as it fosters development, quick economic investment, and the backing of endeavours tied to

consumerism and entertainment. While these outcomes hold potential advantages, gentrification's negative aspect emerges when it compels long-standing residents to depart from their neighborhoods. If displacement is avoided and neighbourhood changes are meticulously orchestrated with community engagement, gentrification might enhance the community through greater socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic diversity. Nonetheless, this scenario is seldom realized (Chong, 2017).

Gentrification frequently has negative consequences, such as forced displacement, discrimination conducted driven by individuals in positions of authority, there is a strong focus on developing areas that exclude both low-income individuals and people of color (Chong, 2017). Studies have also shown decreased racial minorities residing in gentrified neighborhoods (Murdie, 2011: cited by Raman, 2014:2510). In the United States, for instance, gentrification has displaced economically disadvantaged black households from neighborhoods (Lees, 2000: cited by Raman, 2014:2510).

The absence of community-centered policies, equitable zoning rules, and housing solutions causes the majority of gentrification. Without addressing the underlying causes of forced displacement, gentrification will persist, leading to the dismantling and displacement of lower-income communities. To formulate effective policies, it is crucial to acknowledge gentrification's disproportionate and harmful impacts (Chong, 2017).

In the context of this study, the writer aims to investigate gentrification and its effects. *The Last Black Man in San Francisco* movie was chosen because it

effectively explores gentrification in San Francisco through a narrative lens. It offers a valuable perspective on the process and its impacts on neighborhoods and communities.

The beginning of *The Last Black Man in San Francisco* introduces a scene where a person in a hazmat suit is cleaning a polluted dock. Close by, a child with two missing front teeth observes this activity, vulnerable to the same unsafe conditions that the newcomers are protecting themselves against. This scene strongly emphasizes the severity of displacement and the environmental injustices endured by black families as they are pushed away from the city centre to the outskirts, where society's problems seem to be abandoned.

Director Joe Talbot and the movie's lead actor, Jimmie Fails, who co-wrote the movie, craft a narrative that revolves around the fictional character named Jimmie Fails. Jimmie struggles with the weight of his family's legacy, represented by a Victorian-era house in San Francisco's Fillmore neighborhood, a property they lost during the 1990s. Although Talbot is white, Talbot was born and raised in the city and has seen firsthand how gentrification has reshaped its environment. It's important to mention that much of the cast consists of black actors from the city.

As we are introduced to the main characters, Jimmie and his closest friend, Montgomery, skateboard together through the streets of modern-day San Francisco, we witness the city's striking transformation. This transformation encompasses architectural changes and a shift in the city's demographics. Their

visits to the house that used to belong to Jimmie's family in the gentrified Fillmore district involve discreet acts of upkeep. The movie contemplates the challenging decisions confronting characters like Jimmie in gentrified neighborhoods: whether to stay or leave.

1.2 Research Problems

1. What are the intrinsic aspects of the movie *The Last Black Man in San Francisco* (2019)?

2. How is gentrification depicted in the movie *The Last Black Man in San Francisco* (2019)?

3. What are the negative impacts of gentrification in the movie *The Last Black Man in San Francisco* (2019)?

1.3 Scope of the Study

The Last Black Man in San Francisco, a movie collaboration between longtime friends Joe Talbot and Jimmie Fails, functions as both a heartfelt tribute to the city it is titled after. With its complete on-site filming, the movie hinged on the city's recognizable and unique character to craft a narrative that has resonated well beyond the confines of the Bay Area. Joe Talbot directs the movie and the plot was co-written by his fellow San Fransiscan, Jimmie Fails, whose biography is partly on the film. The movie follows Jimmie and Montgomery in the rapidly changing city of San Francisco. This study will delve into the gentrification process depicted in the movie, examining the upper class and working class portrayed and analyzing the negative impacts of gentrification that occur through

the events in the movie. It will also encompass an analysis of narrative and cinematographic elements within the movie.

1.4 Aims of the Study

1. To analyze the intrinsic aspects in *The Last Black Man in San Francisco* (2019) movie.

2. To analyze the gentrification process depicted in *The Last Black Man in San Francisco* (2019) movie.

3. To understand the negative impacts of gentrification in *The Last Black Man in San Francisco* (2019) movie.

1.5 Previous Studies

The first research is "Super-gentrification: The Case of Brooklyn Heights, New York City" by Loretta Lees (2003). The study investigates the phenomenon of super-gentrification in Brooklyn Heights, New York City. Lees provides a definition for super-gentrification as the influx of a new global elite and the creation of a new urban landscape marked by high-end consumption and the displacement of people with lower incomes from gentrified, thriving, and firmly upper-middle-class areas into considerably more upscale and pricey enclaves.

The second research is "Gentrification and the Future of Work in New York City's "Chinatowns"" by Tarry Hum & Samuel Stein (2017). The study goes into further detail on the influence of gentrification on the future of work in New York City's Chinatowns. It highlights how gentrification affects low-wage workers and leads to the loss of affordable housing. Predatory practices, including

illegal conversions, harassment, eviction, and speculative development, will continue to define the residential landscape of New York City's "Chinatown" areas as long as real estate properties are seen as investment vehicles with tremendous untapped value.

The third research is "The hidden costs of Gentrification: Displacement in Central London" by Rowland Atkinson (2000). The paper investigates the gentrification-related displacement process in three central London neighborhoods. The paper makes the case that widespread gentrification in the case study locations undermines the viability of networks within the community and the services they provide on which excluded groups rely, focusing on the new emphasis in policy documents on the necessity for mixed communities.

The fourth research is "Protest of Gentrification and Eviction Technologies in San Francisco" by Manissa McCleave Maharawal (2014). The article focuses on grassroots efforts by activists and community organizers to resist gentrification and eviction technologies. As long as the city supports neoliberal housing policies, encourages gentrification, and privatizes public infrastructure, it will certainly face greater unrest.

The fifth research is "Evidence of Gentrification-induced Displacement among Social Services in London and Los Angeles" by Geoffrey DeVerteuil (2011). The study examines how gentrification influenced social services in gentrifying London boroughs (Islington, Lambeth, Southwark, and Westminster) and neighborhoods of Los Angeles (Downtown, Hollywood, Santa Monica, and

Venice) from 1998 to 2008. According to the findings, considerable entrapment coexists with displacement and is more frequent.

The difference with previous research is that this research uses a movie titled *The Last Black Man in San Francisco* (2019) as the research object. The analysis will employ the gentrification theory from several figures to analyze the movie, such as Emily Chong, Rowland Atkinson & Gary Bridge, Neil Smith, Mark Davidson, Loretta Lees et al., and Ruth Glass.

1.6 Research Method

1.6.1 Data and Source of Data

The primary data source is from a movie entitled *The Last Black Man in San Francisco* (2019). Secondary data, in addition to primary data, is used to supplement primary data. Secondary data sources are books, journals, research articles, and the internet.

1.6.2 Method of Collecting Data

This research utilizes the library research method, which is vital across various disciplines as it allows researchers to assess the existing body of research in the field and the expert assessments of it. In essence, the library research method shares similarities with other types of inquiry, involving examining established facts, exploring unknowns, speculating, applying logical procedures, verifying, evaluating, repeating, and ultimately, drawing conclusions that enhance understanding (George, 2008:22-23).

In this study, the writer utilizes specific steps to gather data. Firstly, the author watches the entire movie, *The Last Black Man in San Francisco* (2019). Then, the author takes notes specially focused on the topic of gentrification. The data is observed by analyzing the movie's characters' dialogue and actions. After collecting the data, the author calculates which information is relevant for the discussion. Lastly, the author begins to write the complete thesis.

1.6.3   Method of Approach

In this study, the sociology of literature approach is applied to examine the social process, which is gentrification. In essence, sociology is a scientific and objective investigation of human behavior within society, including studying social processes and institutions. Its primary aim is to explain how society operates, why it continues to exist, and how it is sustained over time (Laurenson and Swingewood, 1972:11).

According to Wellek and Werren, literature functions as a social institution, using language as its medium, a product of society. Additionally, literature acts as a representation of life, where life is primarily a social construct. At the same time, literary imitation has also included parts of the natural world and an individual's inner subjective domain (1956:82).

According to Laurenson and Swingewood, there are three perspectives in the sociology of literature:

1. Literary work as a mirror to the age

The best-known perspective embraces literature's documentary aspect, contending to be a mirror of the age (1972:13).

2. Literary work deals with the social situation of the author.

The second perspective shifts the focus from the literature to the writer's social context, particularly emphasizing the author's societal circumstances (1972:17).

3. Literary work is as the specific historical moment.

The third perspective, requiring advanced analytical skills, explores how a particular society interprets a specific work of literature during a precise historical moment (1972:21).

The writer uses the first perspective because the primary data of the research, which is *The Last Black Man In San Francisco* (2019) movie, is the portrayal or the mirror of gentrification in this age, particularly in San Francisco, United States.

1.7 Organization of the Writing

This study is structured into four chapters:

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes background of the study, research problems, scope of the study, aims of the study, previous studies, research method, and the organization of the writing.

CHAPTER 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter contains a review of the literature. It comprises theories for analyzing the movie's intrinsic aspect, cinematography elements, and extrinsic aspect.

CHAPTER 3 ANALYSIS

This chapter serves as the study's focal point. This chapter discusses the movie's intrinsic aspect, cinematography aspects, and extrinsic aspect.

CHAPTER 4 CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the results of the study.