

Abstract

In the latter half of the 20th century, large Midwestern cities in America have had to devise creative, effective, and socially just ways of revitalizing their urban cores. This was necessary due to the fact that during the preceding decades of the 20th century, most populous cities in the Midwest underwent a profound decline due to many reasons, including: increased urban sprawl; the rise of the suburbs; white flight from the urban core; industrial decline; the increasing importance of the automobile in American culture, and a failure to adequately predict and plan for these eventualities. This research paper is a comparative study of select revitalization projects in the cities of Cleveland, Ohio and St. Louis, Missouri, beginning with the major decline in American cities during the first part of the 20th century, up to the present. As Alexander Garvin states, “Only when a project also has beneficial impact on the surrounding community can it be considered successful planning”(Garvin, 2002) Thus, the analysis of revitalization in these cities considers not only the downtown area, but also how inner-city neighborhoods have fared alongside downtowns. By analyzing select revitalization projects, comparing how successfully they were implemented and to what extent they have benefited their respective cities, it is possible to shed light on best practices for revitalizing the built environment.