

Lecture 9

Gentrification

Why gentrification?

Five reasons (Hamnett 1991):

1. Gentrification has provided a novel and interesting urban phenomenon for geographers and sociologists to investigate.
2. Gentrification poses a major challenge to the traditional theories of residential location and social structure.
3. Gentrification is a political and policy-relevant issue as it is concerned with regeneration at the cost of displacement.
4. Gentrification has been seen as constituting a major 'leading edge' of contemporary metropolitan restructuring.
5. Gentrification represents one of the key theoretical and ideological battlegrounds in urban geography.

Why gentrification?

Gentrification 'would be short-lived', 'was not long for this world'
but...

(Lees, Slater & Wyly 2008)

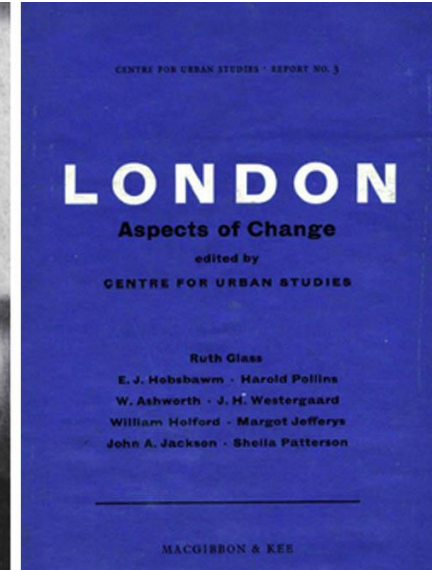
6. Gentrification is the leading edge of neoliberal urbanism.
7. Gentrification has gone global and is intertwined with processes of globalization.
8. Gentrification is no longer confined to the inner city or to First World metropolises.

[A] gentrification "blue-print" is being mass-produced, mass-marketed, and mass-consumed around the world... even some Third World cities and First World suburban and rural areas are experiencing gentrification (Davidson and Lees 2005)

Classical gentrification

“One by one, many of the working class quarters of London have been invaded by the middle classes-upper and lower. Shabby, modest mews and cottages – two rooms up and two down – have been taken over, when their leases have expired, and have become elegant, expensive residences. Larger Victorian houses, downgraded in an earlier or recent period, which were used as lodging houses or were otherwise in multiple occupation, have been upgraded once again ... Once this process of ‘gentrification’ starts in a district it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working class occupiers are displaced and the social character of the district is changed” (Glass 1964)

“the term ‘gentrification’ was coined with respect to the process in London (a particular place, at a particular time) and all literature since has been forced to conceive of gentrification comparatively with the process that the British sociologist Ruth Glass (1964) identified in inner London in the 1950s/1960s” (Lees 2012)



Classical gentrification

Gentrification is the transformation of a working-class area of the inner city into middle-class residential use

- disinvested inner-city neighbourhoods are upgraded by pioneer gentrifies
- the indigenous residents are displaced
- working-class housing becomes middle-class housing

“the emergence of gentrification proper, we argue, began in postwar advanced capitalist cities... In both the United States and in Britain, postwar urban renewal meant the bulldozing of old neighbourhoods to be replaced by modern housing and highways...” (Lees, Slater & Wyly 2008)

Classical gentrification

Recession, a massive spike in gasoline prices in 1973

→ Back to the City: from suburbanization to gentrification
from sporadic to mass gentrification

From the mid-late 1980s onwards:

- working-class areas + vacant areas of the inner city
- residential use + commercial use
- young, middle-class families + developers as dominated gentrifier

Third-wave gentrification

Hackworth & Smith (2001) date the emergence of third-wave (or postrecession) gentrification from approximately 1993-94

“gentrification now occurs in a variety of sites and takes a myriad of forms” (Davidson & Lees 2005); *“gentrification is not a singular project! It is polycentric, different in different countries, embedded in the soil and institutions of those countries”* (Lees 2012)

- Gentrification is a global process, it can be found everywhere

“gentrification is a 'global urban strategy', it is no longer restricted to western cities” (Neil Smith 2002); *“gentrification has gone global”* (Atkinson & Bridge 2005); *“it can be found in different sites all over the world”* (Davidson & Lees 2005)

- Gentrification has gone outside the global cities – ‘provincial gentrification’
- Expansion of gentrification beyond its traditional inner city confines; colonization of entire cities, even rural areas, diffuse into more remote neighbourhoods

“Gentrification also appears to have moved outside of the central city” (Davidson & Lees 2005)

- More linked to large-scale capital than ever, as large developers rework entire neighbourhoods: the state is a key actor

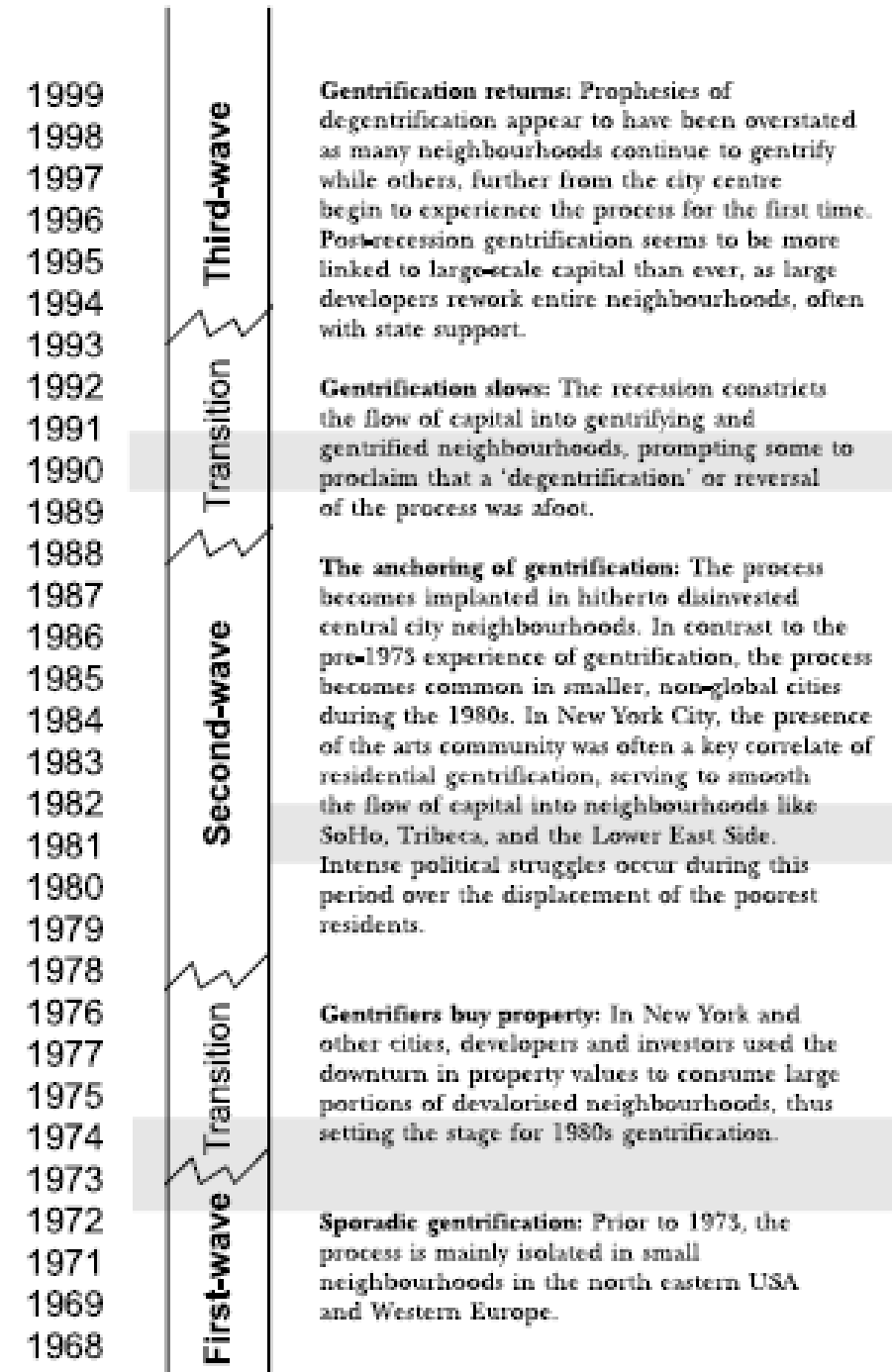
Stages of gentrification

Evolutionary process (linearity) or simultaneously unites different types of processes which have different intensities depending on context?

“The stage models of gentrification that emerged in the 1970s are ill suited with respect to contemporary gentrification (see Lees, 2003a, for a critique) and the revised stage models (like Hackworth and Smith 2001) are very US-centric” (Lees 2012)

Gentrification does not always simply cascade down the urban hierarchy from metropolitan to provincial cities – sometimes it happens in both places at the same time (Lees 2006, 2012)

“For example, in 2011 inner London is experiencing the typical first wave/pioneer sweat equity type of gentrification, alongside third wave, state-led new-build gentrification and stalled gentrification” (Lees 2012)



The mutation of gentrification

Most of the terms that have been coined are derivatives of the term 'gentrification':

- 'rural gentrification', or 'greentrification'
- 'new-build gentrification'
- 'super-gentrification', or 'financification', or 'mature gentrification'
- 'studentification'
- 'commercial gentrification', or 'boutiqueification', or 'retail gentrification', or 'shopsteading'
- 'tourism gentrification'...

New-build gentrification (NBG)

NBG outside of the major cities

NBG mainly targets vacant land or brownfields

Cases of gated communities

New-build gentrification

New-build development as gentrification

“Most gentrification authors would now agree that certain new-build developments should be characterized as gentrification, but there are still a minority who believe they should not”
(Lees, Slater & Wyly 2008)

Cases for and against new-build gentrification: more evidence for 'the case for'

The Case against: preexisting populations are not displaced; the process does not involve the restoration of old housing by individuals; it is a different version of urban living

The Case for: it causes displacement, albeit indirect and/or sociocultural; in-movers are the urbane new middle classes; a gentrified landscape/aesthetic is produced; capital is reinvested in disinvested urban areas (Davidson & Lees 2005)

The core elements of gentrification: (1) the reinvestment of capital, (2) the social upgrading of locale by incoming high-income groups, (3) landscape change, and (4) direct or indirect displacement of low-income groups (Davidson & Lees 2010)

Displacement and *displacement*

Impacts of gentrification on local communities and neighbourhood cohesion: displacement as the main force lying behind community disintegration

“measuring displacement is ‘measuring the invisible’” (Atkinson 2000); “sum up the quantification problem as follows: In short, it is difficult to find people who have been displaced, particularly if those people are poor...” (Newman & Wyly 2006); “There is no statistical data available that quantifies displacement in a convincing way” (Slater, 2009); “displacement is extremely difficult to quantify” (Lees, Slater, Wyly 2012)

Indirect displacement instead of direct, 'exclusionary displacement'

“direct displacement cannot occur because the site is brownfield and as such has no resident population, indirect displacement-lower-income displacement in adjacent residential communities-is likely to occur instead” (Davidson & Lees 2005)

Exclusionary displacement: here residents cannot access housing because it has been gentrified (or abandoned) (Marcuse 1985)

Displacement as loss of place rather than physical displacement

The point here then is that *displacement* is much more than *the* moment of spatial dislocation. To reduce displacement to that moment is to strip meaning from lived space (Davidson, 2009b)

Socio-cultural displacement: the incomers take control of the local community apparatus

Geography of gentrification

‘Travelling’ of theories of gentrification and process of gentrification

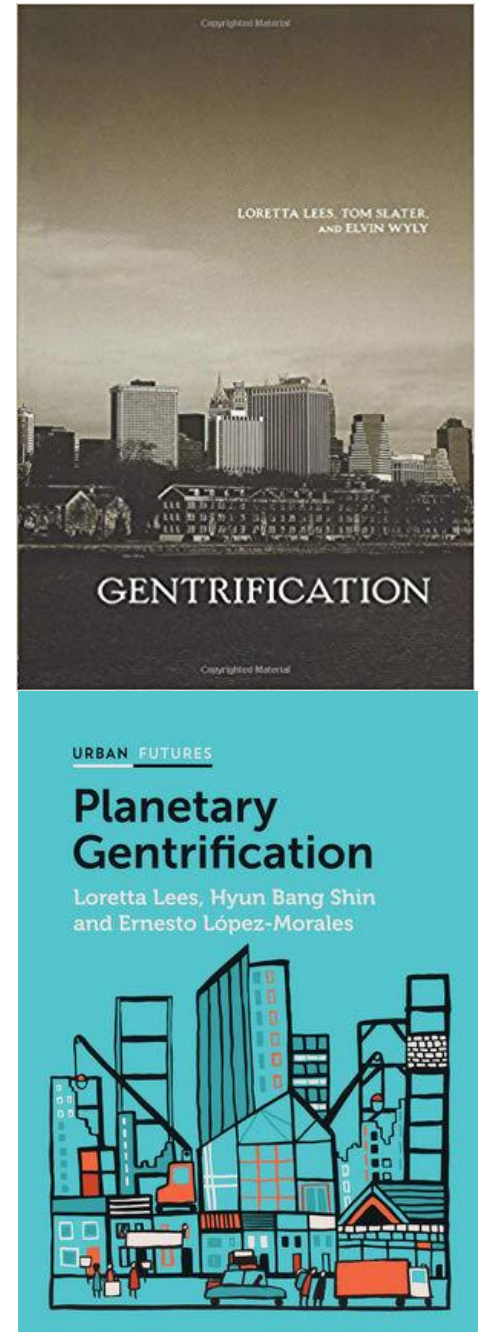
“how theories of gentrification have travelled and how the process itself has travelled (from the central city to rural or suburban gentrification, from historic architecture to new-build architecture, from metropolitan cities to provincial cities, and from world cities to emerging world cities” (Lees 2012)

Looking at gentrification from outside the Global North

“It is time now for gentrification researchers to decolonize the gentrification literature away from Euro-American perspectives and to pay much more attention to gentrification in the Global South”; “We need to look at gentrification from ‘outside the box’ of the Global North and the western postindustrial city” (Lees 2012)

Gentrification outside the Global North is not simply the recreation of the periphery

“We should not read gentrification in the Global South as simply the recreation of the periphery (the urban South) in the image of the supposed centre (London or New York)” (Lees 2012)



Gentrification in post-Socialist space

‘Socialist gentrification’ (Hegedüs and Tosics 1991): public urban rehabilitation projects affecting two blocks in run-down areas of inner Budapest in the late 1980s (to indicate that neither rent gap nor value gap theory had much relevance)

‘Soft gentrification’ (Wiest & Zischner 2006): state-led gentrification of inner city neighbourhoods in the East German cities, where lower-income groups continued to have access to the renovated dwellings and a radical displacement of local population could not evolve

‘Organised gentrification’ (Kovacs 2009): displacement of the original population in the old inner-city neighbourhoods of Hungarian cities was occurring with the active participation of the local governments

‘Façade gentrification’ (Marcinczak and Sagan 2011): the sporadic signs of upgrading in the inner city

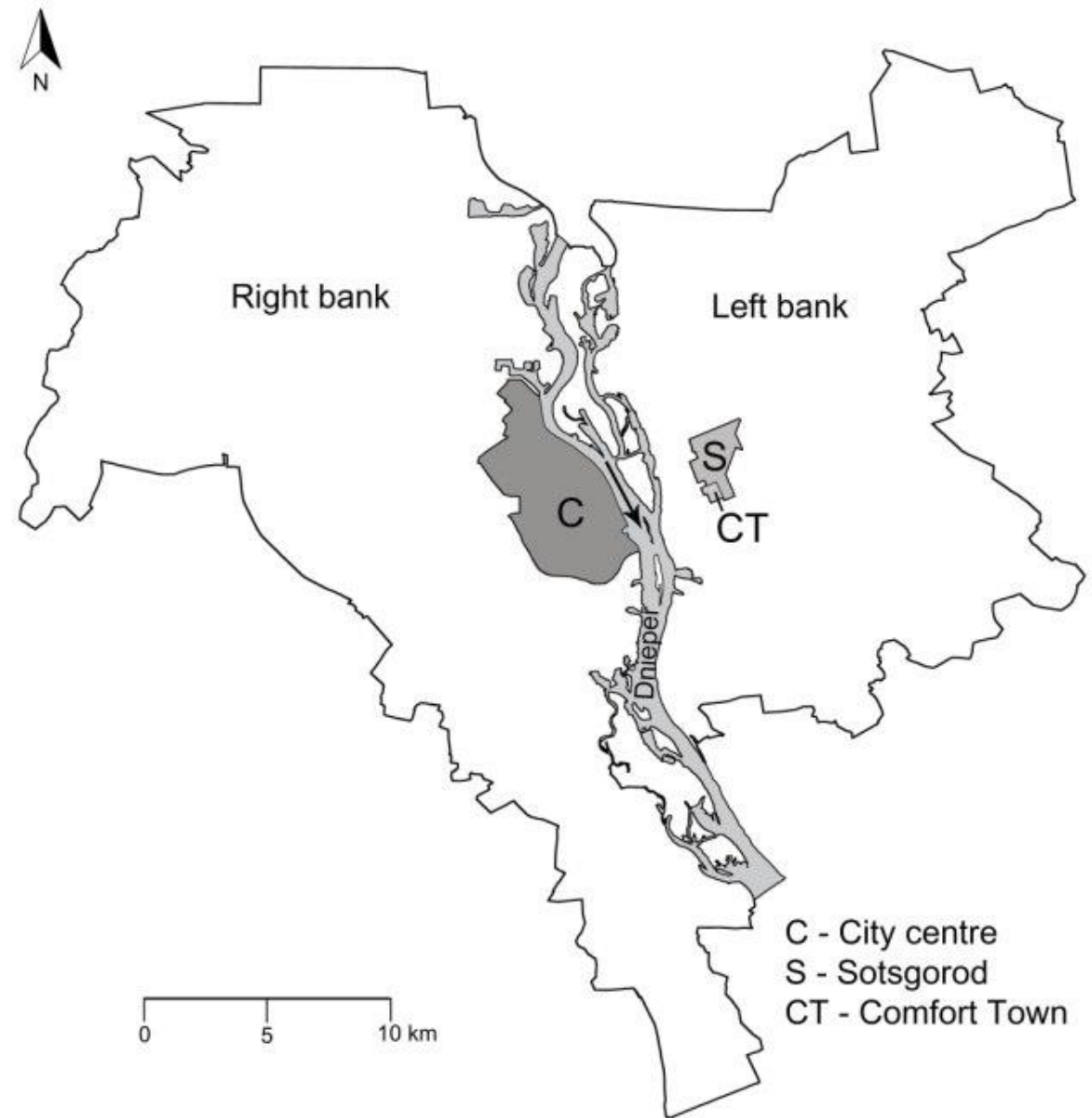
Case study

Sotsgorod

- is a socially mixed Soviet-era neighbourhood built from the late 1950s until the early 1970s on the less prestigious left bank of the Dnieper
- proximity to extensive industrial areas, most of which now brownfields

Comfort Town

- NBG area (the first apartments were delivered in 2010)
- is built on such a former brownfield



Comfort Town and Sotsgorod interface

- Comfort Town = "subscriptions only", colourful, dense, gated, on former brownfield
 - A unique case within a ubiquitous trend
 - The biggest island in the Kiev *newbuild archipelago*
- Sotsgorod = "open access", gray, kind-of-dense, stereotypically Soviet = khrushchëvki and later structures

Identified themes and contentious issues

- “Little Europe”
- Islands of civilization
- Gated and safe or sealed-off and incarcerated?
- Brownfield blues: Who cares, who dares?

Concluding remarks

- Little contact, or understanding, between locals and newcomers
- “European” is for local developers what “global” means for those based in London or New York
- CT is an “island of civilisation in a sea of delay”
- ... and in an archipelago of indifference, rather than antagonism, and fragmentation, rather than cohesion
- Displacement does not seem to occur