

EFFECTS OF TOURISM: GENTRIFICATION

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Abstract: Gentrification or gentrifying is seen, by some authors, as the process in which a working-class urban area and neighbourhood is changed/transformed/turned into a recreational/residential area/neighbourhood for the middle and upper-middle classes – thus substituting a social group for another. This phenomenon affects mainly Mediterranean countries (and cities) such as Spain, Italy, and Portugal, and extremely rarely Asian countries such as South Korea. Gentrification has negative effects on both the urban area and its inhabitants.

Key words: gentrification, urban area, tourism, negative effects

INTRODUCTION

Gentrification or gentrifying – a concept that celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2024 [12] has been defined as “the process by which certain working class areas and neighbourhoods in cities are transformed into residential, recreational or other uses for the middle and upper-middle classes, with the consequent substitution of one social group for the other” [12]; “a social process that seeks to use a range of aggressive global scale strategies to reclaim urban centres for the middle and upper classes” [9]; “a social phenomenon whereby an area’s existing residents are alienated by rising real estate prices” [4]; “arrival of new highly-skilled and/or high-income residents, changes in the urban landscape, displacement of population with lower resources, and existence of public and/or private capital investment” [7]; “one of the classical and main forms of the urban project of modernity” [24]; “replacing the resident population in a neighbourhood with one of higher socioeconomic status” [1]; “the passage of the neighbourhoods located in the centre of the city, of a state of relative poverty, with limited real estate investments, to a reinvestment with social and urban mutation” [6]; “a lower income population replaced by one of a higher status”, “population from lower socio-economic status being replaced by a higher status population” [9]; “synonym for touristification”, “the process of upper-class population moving in working-class neighbourhoods” [22]; “the phenomenon whereby residents of popular areas are driven out as a result of local development”) [4]; “increase in real estate prices and displacement of original residents, because of the influx of middle-class inhabitants from other areas” [11].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The material used in this study consists in articles and books on the phenomenon of gentrification to define it and to establish its typology. The research method used is bibliographic.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The most common relevant processes related to gentrification are: commodification (“the action or process of treating something as a mere commodity [a useful or valuable thing]” [23] and expansion of “tourist-oriented and youth-oriented nightlife in central areas of the city” [21,25]; “demise of traditional retail and small-scale artisan manufacturing replaced by tourist-led businesses” [25]; increasing marginalisation of “undesired”

consumptions, practices and presences because of the zero-tolerance policies of urban governance [24]; “increasing tensions in local real-estate markets, provoking an increasing spatial displacement of lifelong lower-class residents” [5]; “material and symbolic dispossession of residents caused by the rapid touristification of their neighbourhoods” [10,28]; relationship between “urban touristification” and the promotion and implementation of “gentrification policies” [26]; “role of urban development policies in touristifying the post-industrial city by favouring the expansion of (de-)/(un-)regulated peer-to-peer economic activities such as Airbnb apartments”. [10]

Scholars have distinguished several types of gentrification:

- Commercial gentrification, which consists in eliminating “sub-standard housing and in reducing population densities in the historic centre by enabling changes in land use – from residential to commercial: creating new parks, putting aside land for future developments linked to infrastructure renewal,” setting up a real estate market, and widening roads; is the result of preserving and reusing urban heritage assets; supposes the integration of contemporary commercial architecture into historic settings; turns residential areas/districts into new and sophisticated commercial and leisure areas/precincts/premises [11,19]; displaces “traditional commerce occupying the most relevant and visible spaces in the most representative areas of the historic centre” [1]; displaces private-“food consumption–related activities (restaurants and bars), stores (newspaper and tobacco, delis and supermarkets, and clothes), and recreational activities (music, cinema, museums, social activities, and sports facilities)”-and public-(“basic city facilities connected to health, administrative offices, and postal services”)-services [2,17,18]; involves “classical residential gentrification”, “commercial activities”, and “activities for the elite” [3]; can “be contextualized in the emerging consumption of the new middle class, who, in Western cities, denotes a particular segment of the service classes with greater access to cultural and economic capital in post-industrial society”, is “generally seen as squeezing the survival space for original residents and traditional industries by driving retail shop/house prices higher, forcing outward migration”, “is a type of industrial gentrification”, is “representative of industrial gentrification”, and is “the transformation of residential, commercial, or industrial spaces into spaces with higher-value retail businesses; this process often entails the displacement of original residents and business owners” [20, 29]; means “an urban, economic and sociological transformation of a given territory by public-private investment after a period of abandonment”. [1]

- Industrial gentrification, which includes commercial gentrification. [29]

- Physical gentrification, which is defined as “urban renewal” [10].

- Residential gentrification, which can “be contextualized in the emerging consumption of the new middle class, who, in Western cities, denotes a particular segment of the service classes with greater access to cultural and economic capital in post-industrial society”, is “generally seen as squeezing the survival space for original residents and traditional industries by driving retail shop/house prices higher, forcing outward migration”, results “from the housing choices of the emerging middle class in inner cities”, and was “triggered by the movement of large-scale urban redevelopment”. [14,29]

- Rural gentrification, which is the mirror of urban gentrification. [29]

- School-district gentrification, which is a smaller-scale urban gentrification. [29]

- Studentification, which is defined as “a set of social, economic and environmental changes that cause a massive increase in the student population in some areas of a university-based city”. [1]

- Tourism gentrification, which has consequences on “natural and built environment”, on “cultural landscape and identity”, and on “historic and natural features” [4,7]; implies “a wide mutation of the territory structure and everyday dynamics, in which

residents can lose their primary role of city users and perceive a loss of quality of life and of the city's liveability"; is caused "by the privileged position of the neighbourhood, which displaces residents and businesses that cannot cope with the rise in prices of real estate and premises"; is known as "expulsion of residents"; may "imply a process of population displacement by tourists"; and refers to "the transformation of a neighbourhood into an enclave for tourist and leisure activities" [4,8,13,15,16,22].

- Transnational gentrification, which has been defined as "a gentrification phenomenon that connects redevelopment capital to housing demand not within a single city-region but transnationally, and thus creates new possibilities for profitable housing reinvestment – and new threats of displacement – in markets where such possibilities would not have existed on the basis of local demand alone", "a process of neighbourhood change both enabled by and formative of a spatially embedded transnational 'gentry' whose locational mobility creates new possibilities for profitable housing reinvestment in geographically disparate markets where such possibilities would not have otherwise existed", "a process that connects leisure-driven migration to spatially distant neighbourhood reinvestment schemes that existing local demand may not have allowed for" [26,27] a process that could be synthesized as in Figure; "includes some patterns of second-home ownership" such as gentrifying global class, residential tourism, retirement migration, and transnational elite [25]; is a "new urban strategy and practice to revalorise real estate and appropriate urban surplus in unique urban areas", a "complementary process to gentrification", "highly mobile foreigners from middle and upper-middle class backgrounds – from exchange students to retired professionals – living in foreign cities" [6]; takes place "in the area with the highest pressure from tourism in the city" [7].

- Urban gentrification, the most common of all types of gentrification.

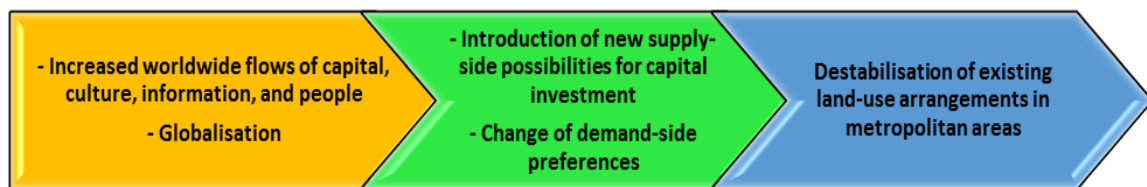


Figure 1. Process of gentrification

Source: [26]

CONCLUSIONS

The study of literature dedicated to gentrification allows the following conclusions:

- Gentrification/gentrifying has been defining in various ways and there is no definition unanimously accepted for this process;

- Gentrification is related to several relevant processes: commodification, "demise of traditional retail and small-scale artisan manufacturing replaced by tourist-led businesses," increasing marginalisation of "undesired" consumptions, practices and presences because of the zero-tolerance policies of urban governance, "increasing tensions in local real-estate markets," "provoking an increasing spatial displacement of lifelong lower-class residents," material and symbolic "dispossession of residents caused by the rapid touristification of their neighbourhoods," relationship between "urban touristification" and the promotion and implementation of "gentrification policies", "role of urban development policies in touristifying the post-industrial city by favouring the expansion of (de-)/(un-)regulated peer-to-peer economic activities such as airbnb apartments";

- There are several types of gentrification, but all of them are not dully defined: commercial gentrification, industrial gentrification, physical gentrification, residential gentrification, rural gentrification, school-district gentrification, studentification, tourism gentrification, transnational gentrification, and urban gentrification.

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