

15 Out of squalor and towards another urban renaissance?

Gentrification and neighbourhood transformations in southern Europe

Petros Petsimeris

Introduction

This chapter examines the forms of gentrification processes in the core cities of southern Europe. Special emphasis is given to the relationships between gentrification and temporality, its historic context and to the particular types of gentrification found in this region. While there is an important bibliography on the structure and the evolution of the southern European city (Gambi 1973; Aymonino 1977, 2000; Zevi 1997; Martinotti 1993; Leontidou 1990; Tsoulouvis 1998; Capel 1977), a limited number of studies focused on gentrification have been undertaken. These have mainly been PhD theses or studies in progress. However, this does not mean that the phenomenon has not been analysed. A number of monographs have studied the process of embourgeoisement, the social segmentation of housing and of inter and intra-urban mobility closely related to the gentrification processes.

A number of analyses of intra-urban or intra-metropolitan spaces and neighbourhood transformations have been made to date which include Gambi (1973) and Zevi (1997) for the main Italian cities, Dalmaso (1971) for Milan, Cederna (1956, 1965) and Seronde-Babonaux (1980) for Rome, Dematteis (1973), Petsimeris (1998, 1991) for the cities of the Italian industrial triangle (Turin, Milan and Genoa); Castells (1981) for Madrid, Ferras (1976) for Barcelona and, finally, Leontidou (1990a, 1990b) for Athens and Tsoulouvis (1998) for the main Greek cities. Other authors have studied the question of historic centres (Cialdini and Faldini 1978; Comoli *et al.* 1980) and privatisation

and speculation in these centres (Crosta, 1975; Potenza 1975). Such studies have had an important influence in Spain and in Greece but also in other European countries but much less so in the English-language geographies of these cities. The purpose of this chapter is to build on these studies in the context of renewed questions about the gentrification of various cities in southern Europe which have generally been under-examined.

An ignored process?

For the south European cities there have been few studies concerning the gentrification process according to the definition given by Ruth Glass. The term gentrification was initially neglected and scholars have used other terms such as 'affinage du centre' or 'imborghesimento'. In the mid-1980s some scholars used the term but changed the spelling (gentryfication) and nowadays the term has been broadly adopted with adaptation of the pronunciation 'gentrificazione', 'jentrification', 'geantification'. It thus became fashionable in usage by the media and was frequently confused with wider processes of imborghesimento (embourgeoisement). Regardless the term remains unpopular for left-wing politicians for many 'non ha senso' and for some continental former radical geographers gentrification is a fixation of the Anglo-Saxons who perhaps see it everywhere. We should admit that it is an uneasy term to use and in southern Europe after a period of neglect it became a fashionable term used both as abuse or in uncritical ways. To some extent every painting of a façade, every bar selling Illy coffee or increases in the number of white-collar workers was often seen as gentrification without any debate about what these changes really constituted.

The places most affected by gentrification, the historic centre, had not had a better chance of change than was now emerging and what had been a neglected area had often become a place of perceived physical, social and cultural renewal. The term 'centro storico' was ignored in a similar way as the term of gentrification. Gambi has pointed out the use and abuse of the term 'centro storico' and the complexity of its delimitation. In the *Dizionario Encyclopaedico Italiano*, one of the most prestigious and comprehensive repertoires of Italian language, in its 1956 and 1960 editions does not mention the term. However, in the edition of 1970 the term appeared with a new definition of 'centro direzionale' or CBD. According to Gambi this is also 'because the difficulty of a generally accepted definition of the term and also to the fact that the question of the historic centre is not an abstract exercise but is linked everywhere with the policies of intervention for its conservation or transformation'. In other words the city centre had little linguistic sense in the context of these cities and that the rise of a central city terminology profoundly affected new possibilities for state sponsored revitalisation in these areas.

Gentrification as fashion

Here I adopt ideas relating to fashion found in the writings of Simmel to describe gentrification processes in southern Europe. According to Simmel:

fashion is a form of imitation ... in changing incessantly it differentiates one time from another and one social stratum from another. It unites those of a social class and segregates them from the others. The elite initiates a fashion and when the mass imitates it in an effort to obliterate the external distinctions of class abandons it for a newer mode a process that quickens with the increase of wealth.

(Simmel 1957: 541)

We can argue that fashion certainly affects the ways of life and housing choices for the wealthy. In southern European cities it would appear that there were different 'fashions' expressed in terms of the location, ways of life and type of housing sought by elite groups. What differentiates the southern European cities from their American and British counterparts is that the elites have always had a residential location in the centre. Indeed, we can also argue that gentrification is not a recent phenomenon in the region but one which affected its cities during the Renaissance and the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Southern European cities are highly heterogeneous and complex, and the processes of gentrification are for this reason very different in terms of its temporality and spatiality. Although we might trace early processes of gentrification here during the renaissance, contemporary gentrification arrived at the end of the twentieth century as a result of a search for distinction by the elites in a wider context of the homogenisation of the urban landscape due to the urbanisation of the 1950s and 1960s. The following suburbanisation, selective reurbanisation and de-proletarianisation fuelled the processes of gentrification. The main difference with the global cities of Britain and the United States is that while they had a stronger architectural heritage they also had a much smaller number of economic elites. They also had a dual urban core in terms of social and functional structure with the rich often living side-by-side with poorer groups. Through a number of examples we now examine patterns of action and propose a provisional typology of the gentrification phenomenon in southern Europe. In particular we will try to answer the following questions. Is gentrification a new phenomenon? What are the processes of gentrification affecting the main metropolitan areas in the region? Finally, what might we see as the key differences between these processes and those of other advanced capitalist cities?

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Earlier forms of gentrification

Contrary to those generalisations which consider the southern European cities as pre-industrial entities in terms of their urban processes and urbanity, the analysis presented in this chapter shows a greater complexity of the social division of these spaces and appropriation through gentrification. Despite the identification of gentrification by Glass in the London of the mid-1950s, in the southern European cities and not only there, this process was in action at least by the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. As Walter Benjamin pointed out, Haussmann's physical restructuring of central Paris had many facets but the main result of this was the complete functional and social appropriation of the central areas of Paris.

Other similar phenomena were enacted across Europe where the destruction of city walls took place or where there were demolitions in order to create a modernised city. One of the most extraordinary of these events was the demolition of part of central Florence for the realisation of its *Piazza della Repubblica*. Here we can see the arch on which, in Latin, one can read the hostile attitude of the new urban pioneers of the time after the eviction and destruction of the former neighbourhood. The demolished neighbourhood is defined as 'secolare squalore' amongst which were, in fact, many important buildings of architectural heritage, including those by some of the masters of the medieval and Renaissance periods. The inscription reads 'il centro della città da secolare squalore a vita nuova restituito 1895' (the centre of the city after centuries of squalor brought back to life).

The thousands of tourists enjoying their cappuccinos and aperitivos in the piazza are probably not aware that it was in this very area that 'cardo' and the 'decumanus maximus' (the heart of Roman Florence) were conjoined and that the inscription relates in fact to the revanchism of the city's elite of that time. Amongst the so-called 'squalor' had been demolished the Jewish ghetto, the *Mercato Vecchio*, and an important part of the economic structure of central Florence. This case is not isolated; similar processes affected other southern European cities before and after this year.

In Turin the beautification of via Dora Grossa (now via Garibaldi), one of the main axes of the pre-industrial city and one of the most beautiful cities of Europe in terms of its urban design, suffered the consequence of important functional and social changes (Comoli *et al.* 1980; Magnaghi and Tosoni 1980). For Sabater (1990) the development of the Cerdà Plan in Barcelona at the end of the nineteenth century also had similar important consequences in terms of the city's gentrification and displacement of both its elites and lower income groups.

All of this suggests that processes of gentrification are as old as the 'modern' city, if not older, and have occurred in a much wider range of urban contexts than the existing literature would often have us believe. Equally old is the revenge of the winners, or appropriators, the big and small Haussmanns of these various cities. Similar operations took place during Mussolini's era with the 'help' of

important masters of rationalist architecture. The various 'via Romas' show us the formal result in terms of the aesthetic character of many central neighbourhoods. Here again the pre-existent communities, or 'squalori', were transformed and broken and a new urban space created that was rectilinear, ordered, with granite columns and regular façades were born in a context of eviction and succession (Cederna 1979).

Fashion, mirrors, imitation and diffusion

A number of scholars describing the processes of urban change in US and British cities in the 1950s pointed out rapid changes in the use, succession and incompatibility between older forms and new uses. For example, Rossi described the changes in the American city in the following way:

The city changes without cease. Homes give way to factories, stores and highways. New neighbourhoods arise out of farms and wasteland. Old residential districts change their character as their residents give way to different classes and cultures. Business districts slowly migrate uptown. Mansions of yesterday sport 'rooms to let' signs today. Tenements once rented to immigrant European peasants, now house migrants from our own rural areas. How do these dramatic changes come about? In the past industry and commerce in their expansion encroach upon land used for residences. But, in larger part, the changes are mass movements of families – the end results of countless thousands of resident shifts made by urban Americans every year. Compounded in the mass, the residence shifts of urban households produce most of the change and the flux of urban population structures.

(Rossi 195: 1)

Nine years later Ruth Glass (1964) was describing the dramatic changes in Inner London and the transformation of modest buildings into 'elegant, expensive residences' with significant increases in their value and with important consequences in terms of social succession. Are similar processes to be found in Southern Europe?

In southern European cities we have seen former hospitals and asylums transformed into hotels, institutions for the poor and elderly turned into research institutions and business schools, while houses are transformed into university departments and flats to fashion design studios or small 'studio' firms. In addition, former mills and pasta factories have become luxurious apartments, stables transformed into ateliers for young architects and young artists. Meanwhile, inexpensive popular tavernas and trattorie are transformed into exclusive restaurants. Entire high-streets with a range of commercial functions are invaded by more luxurious fashion functions. At the same time there is an important

augmentation of the price of property and a dramatic decline of the population of the core areas.

These various changes have resulted in a decrease of residence in core areas, evictions and massive succession within the functional structure of the city. Price increases have affected all types of property and there has been a demand for buildings and flats that were often considered residual and neglected during the 1970s. At the same time the transformation of Italy, Greece and Spain, from nations of emigration to nations of immigration, had the consequence of the arrival of massive flows of international migrants, mainly from the less developed areas of the world. This led to the rapid change of certain areas that became specialised in ethnic businesses or a mix of traditional handcraft and new ethnic activities. Some parts of the historic centre, areas in proximity to the railway stations and some central places, also assumed the function of ethnic sociability.

The form of the intra-urban space

The southern European city is a mosaic of social zones which are socially, ethnically, culturally and economically differentiated. In the historic centres the types of distribution of the different income groups reflect the interaction of labour and housing markets which act as filter for the selection of activities and social groups. The increasing importance of home ownership has resulted in a decline of mobility and the consolidation of existing social forms (Padovani 1996; Leontidou 1990a, 1990b).

A number of positive or negative externalities have been conditioned by the social, economic, ethnic and cultural structure of these intra-urban spaces. Of the historic centre in particular this has not depended on local characteristics and local forces but more and more from a mix of local and international events. Even if we use the term gentrification to designate these various changes it is still not clear whether this is the same thing. The rigidity and complexity of social divisions associated with the contradictory characteristics of the residential stock (heterogeneity in economic, social, artistic, architectural and historic terms), give rise to processes of appropriation and/or reappropriation of some segments of the housing market.

In certain neighbourhoods (particularly those which are either central or pericentral) one can witness processes of expulsion and the substitution of lower income groups by higher income groups. In the historical centre or central core, originally with town houses for the wealthy, and later occupied by the first arrivals of immigrants (filtering down between 1950–70) have often become higher-class areas (reverse filtering). It is this part of the city that is affected by processes of gentrification. But it is important to underline the heterogeneity of this area in terms of architectural typologies, form, type, degree of decay, flexibility for refurbishment or adaptation, location. In terms of heritage this area has an important

architectural variety. Not all of these types appear to be gentrifiable due to quality of the materials and costs of transformation. Certainly what is nowadays the centre was the whole of the city and as such was heterogeneous in terms of its social groups, functions and buildings.

In the pericentral belt of the central city there were more varied styles. Since the beginning of the twentieth century city authorities have often located public housing on the edge of the area. Some of them are of good quality and have been gentrified (from lower-income groups to medium-income groups after the 'right buy' of the 1980s). Many of these pericentral neighbourhoods experienced gentrification processes due to their good accessibility, low congestion and important functional structure at the local level.

In the longer term upper-class areas that are environmentally the most attractive, such as areas of low-density housing, have always been occupied by the wealthier sections of the population. These areas have had a tendency to attract more and more high-income groups. When saturated younger generations have often chosen to occupy niches in the historic centre and pericentral areas this increases the tendency of gentrification in these areas.

Finally, in the outer city, or 'le periferie', high-rise housing of lower quality has dominated with lower-middle and working-class groups occupying them. In these areas there has not generally been what we might call gentrification but due to wider changes in the economic base of the city there have been processes of social succession where working-class households have been substituted by white-collar or students over time. However, in some areas of urban renewal and transformation from brown field areas to tertiary areas, such as universities, residential areas have shown gentrified islands in a sea of uniformity.

Urbanisation and homogenisation of the urban landscape as drivers of gentrification

After the 1950s the main urban areas of Spain, Italy and Greece experienced huge concentrations mainly during the period between 1950–70 followed by a period of suburbanisation mainly after the 1980s and a decline of the city core (Tsoulouvis, Petsimeris, Nello, Dematteis). This had important consequences in terms of the production of space, land uses and urban and architectural forms. Areas characterised by urbanity and complex typological articulation in terms of architecture design and urban design were transformed into a much more homogeneous landscape. The processes described by a number of scholars Pikionis (1985), Psomopoulos for Athens (1977) and Insolera (1980) could be generalised if we change the toponyms and suggest a *general model* of development of the south European city:

From 1950, and particularly after 1960, a rapid outward movement of population took place. This resulted in the linear expansion of urban development along the major circulation axes and a closing up of existing built-up areas. The north of Athens, along the foothills of Mt Penteli, and Mt Parnes, and in the regions between Peania and Koropi to the northeast of Mt Hymettos, new primarily residential areas sprang up. At the same time, almost all the coastal sections in the study area witnessed extensive construction of second homes and tourist facilities. Astronomic land prices and the absence of effective housing programmes caused large sections of the population to move to cheaper land in areas not covered by any town planning regulations. This uncontrolled development has led to severe abuses of the land. Uses have been irrationally distributed and areas have been created with many incompatible uses, also residential settlements have expanded into areas that should have been reserved for other purposes. These practices were greatly facilitated by legislation which permitted the parcelling of large tracts of land into small plots, plus the lack of any zoning or other effective controls over land speculation and building designs.

(Psomopoulos 1977: 121)

Insolera, describing the urban sprawl in Rome on the basis of aerial photos, suggests that at the beginning of the period 1960–80, Rome took form of a ‘discontinuous megalopolis’ during which *abusivismo* (illegal urban development) became widespread and Roman rural environs, originally characterised by an undulating landscape, were completely changed through the construction of houses and intensive built-up sprawl. Apparent here were changes of the built environment into two clear types, one where the street predominated and the other where no design was particularly distinguishable (Insolera 1980).

For Lila Leontidou (1990) this formalised duality was due to a market duality where, in Greece:

popular suburbia was combined with independence from the capitalist market. The expansion of capitalism took the form, not of rationalization and concentration of capital, but that of the domination of a rather competitive and speculative market over the previous widespread informal housing sector. The Greek housing and land market were traditionally dual, composed of a dominant capitalist/speculative and a subordinate owner-built/informal sector; landownership was fragmented; and the role of planning was minimal. Capitalism then expanded and came to control housing production, and the dual market was increasingly unified through the suppression of the informal sector.

(Leontidou 1990: 269)

In fact the urban landscape suggested that building in the city had created dense built volumes and extreme population concentration (up to 1,000 persons per hectare). Historical landmarks, such as neoclassical public buildings, were surrounded by bland architecture of white cubic forms (Papageorgiou-Venetas 2002). During the 1950s and 1960s thousands of migrants from rural areas and remote regions located in the older parts of the historic centre where they remained economically and socio-culturally divorced from the high-level service structure that was to emerge at that time. In the 1990s third-world immigrants were also concentrated into the same spaces. This colossal and rapid influx of new population occurred in the absence of any substantial policy of 'controlled growth' on the part of the national and local authorities. Post-1970 immigrants mainly settled in residential areas in or close to the city centre. In the early 1970s they took up residence in the mid- and upper-income areas and in some predominant working-class areas.

Following a period of deurbanisation and deindustrialisation the city centre was now affected by abandonment and gentrification, reflecting long-term changes in the economy of the city centre with a shift from manufacturing to service industries, and a corresponding shift in employment in the tertiary sector. At this time large parts of the workforce were made redundant forcing a corresponding reduction in their ability to pay rent. Increasing professionalisation and concentration of management and technical functions obversely created demand for higher-income housing.

These processes have had important spatial consequences, not least of which is the expulsion of blue-collar workers from the central and peri-central housing markets described earlier and where professionals and managers are exerting increasing levels of demand. New housing adjacent to the Central Business District (CBD) reflected these changes and the increasing co-presence of renewal policies. The pull exerted by one group on the changing economy of the CBD fitted with the push against by another. For the higher-income, young households, all roads now led to the historical centre while, for the working class, all roads led to a social and geographical periphery. Thus, the increasing polarisation of the economy was reflected in the increasing polarisation of neighbourhoods: at the one end, deurbanisation, deindustrialisation and abandonment, while, at the other, selective re-urbanisation and gentrification.

In this context a period of gentrification can be interpreted as a search for alternative locations by the elites in the context of an increasingly homogenised and poverty-stricken periphery. However, not all the cities have the same level of gentrifiable buildings and not all cities have attracted international, national or regional elites as potential gentrifiers. In addition, in a hierarchy of desirability Thessaloniki's and Athens' heritage housing stock is far behind that of Rome's, Madrid's, Barcelona's or Milan's.

The cores of the metropolitan areas have been characterised by strong social polarisation that is at its most extreme in the case of owner-occupied housing for lower income groups. The levels of segregation and dissimilarity indices here have increased in a context of deurbanisation and deindustrialisation. In historic centres there has been a marked social polarisation between higher-income groups located in renewed housing, and minority ethnic groups concentrated in areas of deprivation. Due to filtering lower-income groups are able to move into more central locations, especially when the central area begins to decay. However, due to either cultural reasons and/or low incomes, these groups have benefited less from the central location and upscale services (shops, theatres, etc.) than the higher social groups.

After the period of quantitative urbanisation there was a phase of huge selection of the social groups in the centre of the main Italian cities. During the period 1981–91 there was a decrease in the active population but this trend is the result of two parallel but contrasting phenomena. On the one hand the process of professionalisation, and on the other, the process of deproletarianisation of the urban social structure. This was evidenced by a substantial increase (around 50 per cent) in the number of people in the social groups at the top of the social hierarchy, and a dramatic decrease in the numbers of persons in the working-class group (around 30 per cent).

From the comparative analysis of the core cities of the Italian industrial triangle (Turin, Milan and Genoa) it can be demonstrated that the decline of population in the core areas has not affected all social groups. During the period 1981–91, Turin, Milan and Genoa saw a decline of the population (–12.7 per cent, –11.12 per cent and –3.31 per cent respectively). Similar tendencies have been observed in Florence. This evolution has affected different social groups in different ways. By disaggregating the different components of the active population one can see that the upper socio-professional groups (professional, managerial and business owners) are increasing substantially. White-collar and self-employed groups have remained stable or in slight decline while the working-class group (*lavoratori dipendenti*) have recorded dramatic declines. This is not the only effect of the deindustrialisation but also the effect of a selective filtration through the housing market.

The decline of the working class has been greater in the cities where the restructuring processes were more substantial (Petersen 1998). In the case of Milan between 1971 and 1991 saw its active population pass from 684,000 in 1971 to 584,000 in 1991 and at the historic centre from 54,000 to 39,000 respectively. However, the upper social groups increased from 55,000 to 144,000 and in the historic centre from 10,000 to 20,000. The working class meanwhile decreased from 263,000 to 137,000 and from 20,000 to 5,600 in the historic centre. In short the decrease of the working class was –48 per cent in Milan city and –71 per cent in the historic centre while the number of managers increased by 92 per cent.

Similar changes have been observed in Rome, Florence and Bologna. However, this is not an Italian tendency. It is demonstrated in changes for the other metropolises of northern Europe and for Spanish and Greek cities (Tsoulouvi and Leontidou, *London and Paris*). From an empirical analysis of southern European cities it is clear that the centres of the bigger cities had the role of filter for select social groups. The selective urbanisation of the elites and this cultural change had as a consequence the search for diversity and heterogeneity in an urban landscape of increasing homogeneity. The following areas serve as further examples that can help us to understand the changes taking place in southern European cities today.

Athens

Plaka is a condensation of Greek history with traditional ways of life and its many small tavernas. It was mainly developed during the nineteenth century and in particular after 1832, the date of the proclamation of Athens as the capital of Greece. The residential area is mixed with monuments of the Byzantine and Turkish periods and the architectural style is a mix of the popular architecture of Greece and elements of neo-classical architecture imported by the Bavarian first king of Greece. The population of the area was traditionally a mix of popular workers' quarters with some villas for the wealthy and middle classes of the nineteenth century. After this period there was a decline of the population and an out-migration of the elites that moved towards neighbourhoods in central Athens or to the suburbs of the north. After this apparent decline started, a period of re-appropriation by newer elite fractions became apparent. These groups were now looking for a new, more exclusive style of life and for buildings with more architectural character and investment value. Again, it is possible to argue that this was linked to the processes of homogenisation taking place in the urban landscape of that time.

The neighbourhood is located in the contiguous area in the northern and eastern part and is contiguous to the commercial and administrative centre of Athens to the north and the limits of the ancient agora in the west. It is one of the most ancient quarters of Athens and one of the most visited areas by tourists. It is associated as an important attraction in terms of its heritage, cultural symbolism and centrality. The area has never really had the same kind of social diversity and heterogeneity of other historic centres like that of Rome, Madrid, Barcelona, Milan and Turin which were more diverse in their composition. The area, after a period of filtering and abandonment, experienced a massive tourist influx, thirsty for Greek folklore (with its bouzouki and folk music areas, traditional Greek fiestas), and a parallel development of handicrafts and craftsmen. Since 1980 there have been important public policies which have looked to upgrade the area and have, as a consequence, served to gentrify the area through a process of social and functional succession. All things now are 'proper', the traffic is not as chaotic, the neo-classical

architecture and two-to-three-storey buildings have been restored and the traditional popular characters, most of which were immortalised by the popular neo-realist cinema of the 1950s and 1960s, have now been transformed. However, the degree of gentrification in Plaka has never been as significant as that which we may find in cities like central London and New York.

Venice

Analysing Venice is complex. In one sense the whole area can be considered as a historic centre given its relatively small size and heritage. We will limit ourselves here to present the many hotel developments and luxurious apartments in the relatively poor island of Giudecca. Giudecca will be well-known to urban scholars from Wirth's research on the origins of the Jewish ghetto. The island was also named 'Spinalunga'. This area, after a period of upgrading as a summer resort for the wealthy, became a poor area through processes of investment in industrial uses for the island. One of the most impressive buildings on this area is the Mulino Stucky Mill. This building was designed by Ernst Wullekoph and commissioned by an English entrepreneur at the end of the nineteenth century, but was abandoned in the mid-1950s.

According to *piano regolatore* policy documents:

the Giudecca Project includes a series of steps which make use of unused industrial areas or old abandoned buildings in order to bring jobs to the island. The project includes the Mulino Stucky congress centre, parks and partially public residential areas that will be offered at reduced prices (p. 84).

In terms of housing on the island there is the explicit admission that the structural plan can do little for the level of prices and the decline of population. However, much of this decline has been due to the inability of lower-income groups to access the prohibitively priced housing. However, there have been measures introduced for the hundred and more evicted families and a provision to build new houses for these people or negotiate the rent between the municipality and the landlord. In 1993 there were seventy-two such contracts. We should also emphasise that the municipality of Venice was very sensitive in terms of social housing because they refused to sell the 4,132 they owned. In fact this case was taken to the constitutional court. Venice shows processes of both privatisation as well as a resistance to gentrification through the attempt to preserve low-income groups in the city.

Rome

Like Venice, Rome may be considered a vast historic centre, particularly the area within the Aurelian walls. In this city there are similar processes of gentrification

affecting other historic centres and a significant demand for housing. Here I look at those areas that have been gentrified due to the recycling of brown field land. The former pasta factory of Pantanella has been transformed by a development agency into luxurious housing explicitly referring to the tastes of those urbane clients they wish to attract. Shortly after a Mercedes dealership arrived as well as a 'bingo' hall (rather oddly given its working-class associations in the United Kingdom) and numerous luxury bars. The area of development filtered down after the cessation of the local industry and appropriated by immigrants as with other urban centres. The development had at least two objectives: to liberate the area from this marginal population and to integrate the abandoned brown field area into the rest of the city. The development sought to attract yuppies and young affluent groups who might come to spend the weekend in Rome. In practice there are also processes of studentification (the students of wealthy parents), in the sense that Darren Smith uses the term in this volume; investment purchases and couples with children.

A similar development has also been initiated in the industrial area of Rome close to the Ponte delle sette industrie. In this area another developer has transformed the Vatican Mills by converting them into luxury apartments. In terms of form it is quite similar to the architecture one sees on the waterfronts of Liverpool or London. It is also close to a very popular area of Rome in the form of the main industrial area of the capital, though less important when compared with the industrial areas of Milan, Turin, Athens and Barcelona. After the conversions were completed 'yuppy cars' (Swatch and Minis) could be seen in abundance as well as promotions for festivals of dance and music. Residents appear to consider themselves as part of a big community while an upmarket baby shop is opening in front of the building, an irony given the lack of children in the development itself. Even more ironic is the constitution of the households themselves who, in their younger years, would have been opposed to the renewal of the historic centre and its gentrification.

San Salvario-Valentino, Turin

Our final case study is that of San Salvario-Valentino which formed one of the early extensions of the city of Turin. Città quadrata is the main historic centre of the western expansion of the boroughs contiguous to the medieval city. The eastern side (Corso Massimo d'Azeglio parallel to the river and next to the park of Valentino) is now occupied by the faculty of Architecture of Turin University. On the west side it is delimited by the railway station of Porta Nuova. On the north it is contiguous with the historic centre, the administrative and commercial area of Corso Vittorio Emanuele, and to the south the quarter of Lingotto where there the Lingotto industry of Turin and now directional headquarters of Fiat is located.

This area is one of the most complex in terms of a typology of gentrification

activity in the region. It is characterised by the presence of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century buildings, though not as prestigious as other areas in the city. In the past the area was a concentration of ethnic and religious minorities (Jews, Valdesians, Protestant and Catholic communities). One of the most important aspects of this area is the presence of the universities which led effectively to a 'student invasion' of the housing stock and a net gain in functions taking place in these areas. In the segment of the neighbourhood delimited by Via Madama Christina and Corso Massimo d'Azeglio the presence of students is significant and a number of university faculties are also located there.

In the neighbourhood there is a significant diversity of architecture, mainly luxurious buildings dating from the gentrification and renewal of the area in the 1960s and 1970s. On the western edge and centre of the neighbourhood was an important concentration of low-income groups during the late nineteenth century and later during the 1970s. Many of the changes in the area relate to the presence of the university, to a process of studentification and the influence felt due to the proximity of the faculty. In this process students were more able to compete for accommodation than medium- to low-income groups of one or two earners living in the area. The area thus became occupied by academics, professionals and dual income families, but also working-class families (some who had arrived from the south that arrived in Turin in the early 1960s and 1970s).

The historic residential part constitutes around half of the total area. The area as a whole is now ranked as one of the four wealthiest areas in Turin. However, though the process of gentrification has been extensive it has never fully dominated because of the range of architectural forms in the area as well as the range of vertical and horizontal dwelling types and the mix of housing conditions and decay.

The area started to become the centre of the media attention after the *Stampa* newspaper started referring to an immigration problem. Some residents of the neighbourhood began to act as vigilantes against Africans and Albanians who had moved to the area. The involvement of right-wing parties began with requests to have a greater police presence in the area while left-wing parties started to request more immigration controls. The neighbourhood became a centre of attention for the media, both nationally and internationally. The result was the decrease of property prices in the area along with panic selling and one of the most well-known and respectable areas of the city became a national landmark now known as a ghetto. Even respectable newspapers (*Il Manifesto* and *Le Monde diplomatique*) carried articles titled 'Turin; city with a ghetto at its heart' with a photo of an immigrant black man on his balcony behind a line of drying clothes.

The end of the story is that the situation in San Salvario has changed. The results of the 2001 census will, no doubt, reveal important changes while field trips already show important works of rehabilitation in the area. While some people bought their flats because they were unable to move or because they wanted to stay, things are now becoming less problematic though policing remains strong

during the night and there is a significant drug market at the junction between Via Santanselmo and Via Principe Tomaso. A certain number of big developers have bought entire buildings now being rehabilitated into housing for middle-class households with a large increase in their value.

In terms of retailing there are now more ethnic bars, cheap telephone and internet centres, kebab shops which were non-existent in Turin in the 1970s and 1980s, as well as food shops for African and Asians. There remain areas that may be gentrified in the future even while other areas within the neighbourhood may be likely to continue filtering down income groups in the area. The new complex situation suggests a kind of urban poker in which entire buildings are being speculated upon with the outcome being a new set of winners and losers in a neighbourhood that has seen a tumultuous history. Like the other case studies featured here San Salvario shows a complex pattern of appropriation in the form of gentrification with an attendant process of displacement while, at the same time, the areas often retain an impression of strong social diversity in ways which perhaps differ from the gentrified neighbourhoods of the United Kingdom or United States.

Conclusions

Gentrification in a range of southern European cities has taken place alongside their counterparts in the urban north and west. The chronology and location of gentrification activity here appear outside the frames within which the debate has traditionally been focused. While it is difficult to suggest a south European 'type' it is also clear that the gentrification has some particular features while carrying a set of underlying and shared features with that seen elsewhere. Nevertheless, a reading of the architectural and physical form of these cities appears essential in understanding the relatively significant and socially selective move to the central city. In addition I have argued that notions of urban revitalisation, captured by the inscriptions of past city fathers, suggest much earlier waves of gentrification, displacement and an anticipated urban renaissance predicated on rising above the squalor that lower class uses of the central city appeared to represent.

We may conclude that gentrification processes have often not had the same root causes and intensity as those of North America and Britain mainly due to the form of the historic centres and their social and functional complexity. The main similarity between these two contexts concerns the core city in terms of its economic, social and symbolic centrality. In Athens, Barcelona, Madrid, Rome, Milan and Turin the inner areas have experienced increasing concentrations of population with higher incomes. Another similarity concerns the rapidity of urbanisation and concentration of population (mainly internal migration) to the core areas from the 1950s to the 1970s and, after the 1980s, the attraction of economic migrants from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe towards the city and in particular in the core areas. Thus we can identify a bifurcation in

the trajectories of many neighbourhoods in these cities with simultaneous downward and upward social changes.

The main differences in the patterns of urban change I have looked at here concern the degree of urbanisation and the physical structure of the historic centres. In Greece the historic city centres are not as large in terms of residential capacity and architectural complexity as those of the main Italian and Spanish cities and the conservation is far behind that of the Italian historic centres. Today these urban agglomerations are undergoing a process of profound socio-economic change, and like practically all metropolitan areas and large cities which grew very rapidly during the postwar boom, are now having to face the consequences of stable or declining populations. In addition the industrial sector is declining in importance in terms of employment and no longer has such a strong influence as a locational attractor.

The generally muted existence of a new or expanded middle class is not particularly sustainable in the Italian, Spanish and Greek context. Nevertheless, socially selective settlement in the inner-city areas appears all the more pronounced when set against the population loss of many of the urban centres. Cities like Rome and Barcelona do appear to have become more connected to an international set of flows but this is as much linked to immigration of desperate groups of refugees as to a weightless trans-urban elite. This is also true of many of the neighbourhoods I have spent many years exploring. Gentrification appears as a partial but increasingly important phenomena but one which has rarely been a total force. However, we should be wary of the goals of urban planners and policy-makers all looking to emulate the success of cities like Barcelona and perhaps increasingly seeing the saviour of the city increasingly as the middle classes. Is it possible that a new urban renaissance is intended but which will repeat history? The possibility remains that a programme is being unwound which will again strive to rise above the perceived 'squalor' imposed on the lives of the affluent by the poor, the migrant and working classes.

Gentrification in a Global Context

The new urban colonialism

Edited by

Rowland Atkinson and Gary Bridge

Gentrification in a Global Context

Gentrification in a Global Context brings together fresh theoretical and empirical work on gentrification in the context of increasing changes and pressures focused on neighbourhoods in cities across the globe. Processes of class colonisation in the deprived locales of cities across the world now appear commonplace with the consequences often being a series of secondary social problems which have included the dislocation of the urban poor and a growing community conflict over local territories.

This book provides a balanced re-assessment of a subject that has deeply divided commentators, policy-makers and community activists. While gentrification has appeared to physically improve neighbourhoods and has been linked to the wider economic development of cities it has also forced out existing residents leading to fundamental questions about the social cost of urban revitalisation. Gentrification in a broad range of countries across the globe is presented with authors considering well-trodden debates as well as new primary research.

The causes and consequences of upward neighbourhood trajectories require a new contextualisation in the face of globalising economic shifts, neo-liberal urban policies, the need to promote re-development in de-industrial cities and the continuing growth of professional class fractions in many new national economies. The authors in this volume provide critical reflections on this much discussed phenomenon that give new light and energy to a contested form of urban change which continues to challenge observers.

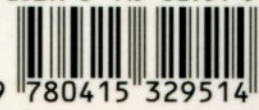
Aimed at undergraduates, academics and those with an interest in urban affairs and injustices more generally, this book is designed to be an integrated introduction as well as contemporary survey of gentrification with an expansive set of geographical reference points. A truly global collection, comprises contributions from the USA, UK, Canada, Australia, Japan, Eastern and Southern Europe, Turkey, Brazil, Germany, and Poland among others.

Rowland Atkinson is a lecturer in the Department of Urban Studies, University of Glasgow. **Gary Bridge** is senior lecturer at the Centre for Urban Studies, School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol.

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