MAKING SENSE OF GENTRIFICATION

SOC 2202: CITIES AND SOCIETY
FALL 2019

PREVIOUSLY . . .

- Postmodern Urbanism

    - Antecedents — The Multiple Nuclei Model

    - Community Liberated Thesis

        - THRUST: The proliferation of modern technology (communication and transportation) has "liberated" urbanites from the restrictions of space and place. Thrusts:

    - Historical processes and modes of production under capitalism, combined with new economic and social arrangements that create landscapes that reflect past and present relations of power.

    - There is no singular or dominant approach to understanding contemporary city development (growth). To suggest one is contradictory to the notion of postmodernism.

PREVIOUSLY . . .

- Major Themes of Postmodern Urbanism

    - Multiculturalism

    - Cognitive Mapping

    - Economic Restructuring (Fordist to Post-Fordist produces dislocations of cities)

    - Los Angeles as Indicative of Postmodern Urbanism

        - Spectacular spaces with little relations to one another

        - Composed of multiple urban cores/no downtown

        - Cities as regional rather than centered around a CBD

CONTEMPORARY URBANISMS

edge cities - cities where the concentration of businesses, shopping, and entertainment exist outside the central business district.

privatopia

heteropolis

cities as theme parks

fortified cities

interdictory spaces

CONTEMPORARY URBANISMS

edge cities

privatopia - private residential governance

heteropolis

cities as theme parks

fortified cities

interdictory spaces

CONTEMPORARY URBANISMS

edge cities

privatopia

heteropolis - cities characterized by a high degree of diversity

cities as theme parks

fortified cities

interdictory spaces

CONTEMPORARY URBANISMS

edge cities

privatopia

heteropolis

cities as theme parks - the "Disneyfication" of urban space.

fortified cities

interdictory spaces

CONTEMPORARY URBANISMS

edge cities

privatopia

heteropolis

cities as theme parks

fortified cities - cities characterized by high-tech policing and surveillance.

interdictory spaces

CONTEMPORARY URBANISMS

edge cities

privatopia

heteropolis

cities as theme parks

fortified cities.

interdictory spaces - spaces designed to repel people from (mis)using them.

EXAMPLES OF INTERDICTORY SPACES

RYAN CENTNER
SPATIAL CAPITAL

- DEFINITION: the capacity to stake exclusionary claims, perceived by others as socially legitimate, on urban space that could reasonably be open to others who were not participating in the new economy.

  - produces privileged consumption (expensive residence, high-end arts patronage, large non public celebrations, usage of elite eating and drinking establishments).

  - differs from previous strategies of consumption by urban cosmopolitans.

In Centner's study we find that dot-comers have a lot of spatial capital and drive gentrification in San Francisco. Thinking back to Logan and Molotch, does the growth machine favor the behaviors of dot-commers, "privileged consumptions?" Does this combination of power take away all spatial capital from locals being forced out? Are there any ways locals can reclaim spatial capital from dot-commers and other similarly privileged groups?

—RONNEL R-M., EXPERT QUESTION

Ryan Centner argues that "Spatial capital is… the ability to commodify space, the power to take – and make – place in the most literal sense. Kidder defines space as "…[involving] abstract geometry (direction, distance, shape, size, and volume), whereas place "… is about the cultural significance attributed to spaces." What examples of community "places" have we read about? What have these communities done to build their "place"? What influence has the rise of "dot-com" companies and "global ethnoscape"/Parkour had on spatial capital and gentrification?

-LAILOO P., EXPERT QUESTION

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY GENTRIFICATION?

GENTRIFICATION:
AN OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

DEFINITION:

"An economic and social process whereby private capital (real estate firms, developers) and individual homeowners and renters reinvest in fiscally neglected neighborhoods through housing rehabilitation, loft conversions, and the construction of new housing stock"

Gina Perez, *The Near Northwest Side Story* p. 134

GENTRIFICATION

- coined by British sociologist Ruth Glass in 1964 to explain the return of the gentry (the middle-class) back to the urban core (read: low-income urban areas).

- **1970s:** New residential patterns in North America and Western Europe contradict prevailing understandings of the declining urban core.

  - driven by private investment, "sweat equity," and **incumbent upgrading**: physical improvement by existing residents (upgrading without displacement).

    - reflect economic changes in the city which focused on the service industry and available cultural and commercial amenities in CBDs.

- Early studies of gentrification explore the nature and consequences of neighborhood change — the return of the middle class to neighborhoods and the displacement of the residential old timer.

Gentrification: An Introduction

- Economic Process (production-side theory)

- Social Process (consumption-side theory)

Gentrification — Production-Side Theory

- **Neil Smith (1979), "Toward a Theory of Gentrification: A Back to the City Movement by Capital, Not People"**

  - Gentrification as an economic process consequent to the fluctuating relationship among capital investments and the production of urban space.

    - Deindustrialization (the reduction of industrial jobs and of middle-wage employment) means the less investment capital to maintain the upkeep of housing and buildings within the city.

    - Decentralization and Centralization of Capital (decentralization of professional and managerial jobs in the face of a global economy) centralizes CBDs as the bases for industries of the new economy.

      - **rent gap theory (Neil Smith):** the disparity between the cost of land given its present use and the potential cost of land gleaned under a better and higher use.

MOTIVES

- Economic opportunities
  - investment opportunities, the search for affordable housing
- Land Amenities
  - landscape, natural resources, historicity
- Cultural Taste
- The "urban pioneer" myth
  - **the revanchist city:** middle class seeking "revenge" against poor and minorities who "stole" the inner city from the respectable classes.

GENTRIFIERS

- First wave gentrifiers: reflect gentrification as a **emancipatory urbanism** — claims to space subvert the dominance of hegemonic cultures and create new conditions for social activities making it possible for new kinds of spaces.
  - bohemians, gays and "incumbent upgrading"
  - become displaced as investment makes the neighborhoods they create "unaffordable."
  - first-wave gentrifiers move on to different neighborhoods

GENTRIFIERS

- Second Wave Gentrifiers — re-gentrify neighborhoods

  - extra capital from wealthier class (developers) displaces first wave gentrifiers and creates tensions with middle-class residents.

  - **super-gentrification:** the transformation of already gentrified, prosperous, and solidly upper-middle class neighborhoods into much more exclusive and expensive enclaves.

In *Race, Class, and Politics in the Cappuccino City*, we learned how the federal, state, and local governments partnered with the private-sector to redevelop DC's old downtown into a popular, urban entertainment center. This was deemed necessary as DC, unlike other cities, cannot collect tax to raise funds as over 50% of DC's land are non-taxpaying entities (government agencies, universities, nonprofits). This redevelopment attracted young professionals and those following the urban-turn-around trend to look into cheaper housing surrounding DC's old downtown, which happened to be low-income, neighborhoods of color.

After learning about the history of the Black machine and collapse of African American leadership within DC, as well as understanding the reasons for the partnership between the private- and public- sectors to develop the city, is the displacement of residents in low-income, minority communities inevitable? What could have the government done differently to develop the city in ways that could take on the newcomers preparing for their jobs in these urban centers, as well as protecting the outer, minority communities from being burdened by increasing housing values and displacement? Is it possible to obtain this sort of mixed-income housing if there is lack of integration and widening class disparity?

—EMILY L., EXPERT QUESTION

- The author explains that often times blackness and the dark/iconic ghetto are branded and commodified to attract outside residents who want to experience an "authentic Black space." At the same time, "the persistent racial stereotyping of minority neighborhoods, especially those with a large African-American presence... make those areas the least likely to redevelop," and a pattern developed where urban areas would only experience redevelopment after the influx of white residents. In essence, this means that black culture and experiences can be sold to lure in residents but black bodies themselves prevent redevelopment and investment into a neighborhood. How can these two realities co-exist? Is it possible for Black residents themselves to benefit from the perceptions that are sold about them, instead of being consistently relegated to low-income housing while their experience is marketed as attractive?

—BETTY L., EXPERT QUESTION

Throughout his book, Derek Hyra explains instances of redevelopment that can shift an area from an infamous drug center into a farmer's market, for example. Does this mean that gentrification can have positive impacts? Or does its negative impacts— like residential displacement or diversity segregation— eclipse the potentially positive aspects?

—BETTY L., EXPERT QUESTION