

Housing regeneration in Glasgow: Gentrification and upward neighbourhood trajectories in a post-industrial city.

Zhan McIntyre (University of Glasgow)

Introduction

There is growing concern among governments in the developed world about the future of cities (Schoon, 2001).¹ Arguably, this concern has had particular prominence for the ‘urban dinosaurs’, that is the de-industrialising or ‘rust belt cities’ that at one time depended upon heavy manufacturing as the main source of employment. The contraction of manufacturing employment in the older industrial cities in Europe since the 1960s onwards created specific challenges for these cities including massive unemployment, a growth in poverty, the physical and social degeneration of the urban fabric and significant population loss. Despite public investment and policy measures implemented by different scales of government, these problems have persisted (Bailey *et al.*, 1999). Therefore, an international trend of urban renewal is a focus on housing-led regeneration strategies.

It is noted by some commentators that the endorsement of housing rehabilitation, neighbourhood renewal and urban renaissance is a ‘mantle under which gentrification is being promoted’ (Atkinson, 2004, p.107; Lees, 2000). Simply put, gentrification is a re-occurring process in areas undergoing urban renewal projects. However, this is problematic in two respects. The first relates to the contested views regarding the goals of public policy. The second concerns the process of gentrification itself, specifically as it has been seen as a regressive and negative process within the academic community because of the displacement it tends to cause for the poorest and most vulnerable members of the community, and its portrayal as the physical expression of a more sinister and aggressive neoliberal ‘revanchist’ policy discourse (Smith, 1996; MacLeod, 2002; Atkinson, 2003; Harvey, 2003). Initially articulated by Smith (1996), ‘revanchism’ and the ‘revanchist discourse’ is borrowed from 19th century French history meaning ‘*revange*’. In Smith’s own words, American inner cities of the 1990s embody, ‘[...] a revengeful and reactionary viciousness against various populations accused of ‘stealing’ the city from the white upper-classes [...] [in] an effort to retake the city’ (1996, p.xviii).

In recent years, however, there has been a growing demand among urban researchers to question assumptions underpinning the negatives associated with gentrification, and a call to expand research to identify manifestations and examine impacts of the process, particularly in cities undergoing de-industrialisation. Instead, many gentrification researchers have increasingly chosen to examine the path-dependent ‘mechanisms of neoliberal localisation’ as a means of understanding

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the processes and outcomes of gentrification at inter- and intra- urban levels (Brenner and Theodore, 2002, p.22).

This paper contributes to the expansion of gentrification knowledge by examining the process in the context of Glasgow. The aim of this paper is to accentuate the importance of the 'geography of gentrification' (Lees, 2000) as a paradigm in understanding urban regeneration policies pursued vigorously at inter- and intra- urban scales throughout de-industrialising regions since the early 1990s. The paper comprises two sections. The first examines gentrification within the differing contexts of global cities and de-industrialising cities. This is followed by a discussion of the manifestations of gentrification in the context of post-industrial Glasgow.

Gentrification: debates, contexts and developments

Much controversy has surrounded the process of gentrification, more specifically, the costs and benefits it brings to urban neighbourhoods, and, in particular, how these costs are distributed among local communities (Hamnett, 1991; 1992; Smith, 1992). The term gentrification links:

Changes in inner urban housing markets to wider processes of economic restructuring, notably the deindustrialisation of developed industrialised countries, and the simultaneous increase in white-collar employment, particularly the growth of a new 'professional/managerial' class (or at least, a fraction of it) that come to reside in previously decayed inner-city neighbourhoods, renovating the housing stock and displacing poorer households. (Bailey & Roberts, 1997, p.562)

The focus of the gentrification literature has, until recently, been divided between two competing explanations of the process. The first explanation relates to Smith's 'supply-side' account of the process, which uses the explanatory power of structural Marxism to suggest gentrification is caused by the supply of gentrifiable property through the workings of the housing and land markets, the spatial flows of capital and the rent-gap'. Smith (2002) takes this argument further to suggest that the global phenomenon of gentrification can be attributed to 'the shift from an urban scale defined according to the conditions of social reproduction to one in which the investment of productive capital holds definitive precedence' (2002, p.80). In other words, towns and neighbourhoods are no longer merely a place to live – or in Marxist terms – a place in which labour can reproduce itself, but rather a source of investment, the spatialisation of capital investment at a local scale, which supersedes traditional links of neighbourhoods to social cohesion and community development. For Smith (2002) gentrification represents 'a global urban strategy' which is part of the shift from Keynesian demand-side urbanisation to neoliberal supply-side urbanisation (Harvey, 1985, p.202, 209).

According to Brenner and Theodore (2002), the linchpin of neoliberalism is ‘the belief that open, competitive and unregulated markets, liberated from all forms of state interference, represent the optimal mechanism for economic development’ (2002, p.2). Vital to any comprehension of urban regeneration processes taking place since the 1980s is a basic understanding of ‘actually existing neoliberalism’ which recognises the influence of the contextual peculiarities of each area. Actually existing neoliberalism represent ideologies produced within ‘national, regional and local contexts defined by the legacies of inherited institutional frameworks, policy regimes, regulatory practices, and political struggles’ (Brenner and Theodore, 2002, p.4). In other words, pure neoliberalism rarely exists in actuality; what do exist are various versions that must be adapted and manipulated to fit within the existing ideological terrain of any given town or city.

The second explanation concerns Ley’s ‘demand-side’ explanation of gentrification which highlights the importance of the actions of a ‘new middle class’ that have come to prefer and seek out residences in historical parts of the inner city, which had, until recently, been associated only with poorer communities and a process of urban degeneration. Ley’s explanation emphasised the role of individual actors over economic structures. For Ley the driving force behind gentrification was the location and tenure choices of a distinctive ‘new middle-class’. Although from this perspective the drivers of the process were different from Smiths structural argument, Ley’s analysis was still concerned with the negative impacts of displacement on individual households and communities from gentrification, community conflict and loss of affordable housing, mirrored by the view of many commentators who saw the process as problematic and socially unjust (Power, 1973; LeGates and Hartman, 1986; Atkinson, 2000).

	Production or ‘Supply-Side’	Consumption or ‘Demand-Side’
Main Issues	Supply of ‘gentrifiable’ property; the workings of housing and land markets; spatial flows of capital and the ‘rent-gap’; role of public and private finance; ‘uneven development’.	The characteristics of the ‘pool of gentrifiers’; ‘new middle-class’ ideology; consumer demand and consumption practices; (counter) cultural politics; the roles of race, gender and sexuality; education, occupational change and household composition.
Theoretical Influences	Structural Marxism; radical social theory; geographies of class relations and class struggles	Liberal humanism; post-industrial urbanism; importance of human agency over economic structure; human geography’s “cultural turn”.
Principle Data Sources and Methodologies	Quantitative analyses using census and housing data; mapping the gentrification ‘frontier’.	Qualitative analyses using interview data and ethnographic techniques. Some quantitative work with household censuses.

Figure 1 Summary of Early Explanations of Gentrification (Source: Slater, 2002)

These two competing explanations, summarised in Figure 1 above, both have much to offer researchers and represent complex and at times highly theoretical arguments. However, the failure of the two schools of thought to move beyond these arguments has frustrated many researchers (Clark, 1992; Redfern, 1997; Lees, 2000; Slater, 2003). Many researchers came to question the epistemological value of a diametrically opposed debate that showed no signs of reconciliation (Slater, 2003).

Following this, the ‘geography of gentrification’ (Ley, 1996) mentioned above, has experienced an increase in support and popularity. For many advocates, one of the key attributes of the geography of gentrification is the way in which it provides a framework for research in a wider range of geographical contexts, examining the process occurring at different rates under different circumstances, in different cities of different countries, and so encouraging a research agenda that takes into account the specific local socio-economic and historical circumstances that might influence the progression of the gentrification process.

This has policy implications for towns and cities lower down the urban hierarchy than the ‘Global Cities’ of New York and London. The latter have been the site of a substantial amount of gentrification research,² but they do not translate automatically into policy lessons for smaller cities with different socio-economic circumstances.

² Smith, 1979; 1992; 1996; Butler, 1995; 1997; Butler and Robson, 2001; Lees, 1994; 1996; 1999.

Gentrification in de-industrialising cities - contrasts within Global Urban Hierarchy

Global cities are seen as command and control centres of the urban hierarchy, central nodes for flows of finance trading, arts, culture and people (Castells, 1996). Further down the hierarchy, cities perform different functions within the global economic system. Central to this analysis is the recognition of the fact that uneven development is an inherent characteristic of capitalism, so at any one time, certain countries, regions, cities and localities will be in the throes of decline, while others will be experiencing capital inflows (Pacione, 1997, p.7), and the consequent international division of labour which is integral to supporting the model of capitalism dominant at any one time. Accordingly, the social and economic challenges and contexts facing de-industrial cities, are significantly different from those found in large global cities, and are subject to change over time. The main contextual differences between global cities and de-industrialising cities are summarised in Figure 2 below:

	Global City	De-Industrialising City
Population	Growing population (in-migration) since 1990s	Falling population
Employment	Diverse employment base e.g; finance, services as well as more traditional manufacturing industries	Declining employment base following closure of main industries – often dominant source of employment in the area
Property Demand	High value and in-demand land and property in CBD and city centre	Much abandoned land and property in city centre
Neighbourhoods	Polarised neighbourhoods – often stark difference exist between very rich and very poor areas in city centre	One-class neighbourhoods – often associated with social housing
Main Challenges	To overcome growing polarisation between very rich and very poor while ensuring continued growth	To bring employment and affluent population back to the city

Figure 2 Summary of Contextual Differences between Global Cities and Post-industrial Cities

This paper looks towards Glasgow as an archetypal city that falls outside the large global city. Glasgow was a city dominated by manufacturing and heavy industry, since the mid-19th century (or the industrial revolution) and thus attracted many economic migrants. Consequently, the population of these cities were relatively high, as was the demand for housing. However, the large population of Glasgow has been falling steadily since WWII, with losses accelerating following the closure of most of the area's manufacturing and heavy industry. The problems of depopulation were manifold, including: empty and void housing stock, which had a destabilising effect on local

neighbourhoods; low demand in both public and private housing; negative impact on amount of local taxation able to be raised; and a harmful influence on the image of the city. These problems were confounded in that much of the depopulation was selective. Those who could find jobs in other towns and cities left, while those who were unable to retrain or move for other reasons were left behind, in what was seen as a ‘dying city’ (Keating, 1988).

Given the very different contexts of global cities and post-industrialising cities mentioned in Figure 2 above, it could be argued that the impacts of the gentrification process, summarised in Figure 3 below, as well as the economic drivers and challenges facing de-industrialising cities, vary according to each city’s historical, socio-economic and political circumstances.

Neighbourhood Impacts of Gentrification	
Benefit	Cost
Stabilisation of declining areas	Community resentment and conflict
Increased property values	Loss of affordable housing
Reduced vacancy rates	Unsustainable speculative property price increases
Increased local fiscal revenues	Homelessness
Encouragement and increased viability of further development	Commercial / industrial displacement
Increased cost and changes to local services	Reduction of suburban sprawl
Increased social mix	Loss of social diversity (from socially disparate to affluent ghettos)
Decreased crime	Increased crime
Rehabilitation of property both with and without state sponsorship	Under-occupancy and population loss to gentrified areas
	Displacement and housing demand pressures on surrounding poor areas
	Secondary psychological costs of displacement

Figure 3 Impacts of Gentrification (Source: Atkinson, 2004: 112)

Atkinson and Hall (2002) argue that perhaps,

A different set of social costs and benefits might emerge from gentrification in cities characterised less by intense competition for housing and professionalised labour markets and more by selective population and economic decline. (2002, p.3)

Furthermore, the impacts and outcomes of gentrification in post-industrial cities remain under-explored, both theoretically and empirically. The variation in circumstances has also led to the recognition by many authors (Redfern, 1997; Lees, 2000; Slater, 2003), discussed above, that, the main theories of gentrification do not fit anywhere other than New York or London.

Gentrification across the city – a framework for inter-urban analysis

Clearly, the ‘geography of gentrification’ paradigm provides a perspective which allows gentrification research to be expanded within differing contexts of the global urban hierarchy. In

other words it is a useful tool in expanding inter-urban comparisons. However, another key attribute the geography of gentrification provides is an intra-urban perspective. Given that, another tendril of gentrification that can be explored using a ‘geography of gentrification’ framework is the differing manifestations of the process. Van Criekingen and Decroly have made a useful contribution to this gap in the literature by developing a typology of different types of gentrification that they found during their work in the cities of Brussels and Montreal, shown in Figure 4 below. They argue that ‘gentrification is a highly differentiated process’ which ‘occurs in various ways in different neighbourhoods of different cities, comprising different trajectories of neighbourhood change and implying a variety of protagonists’ (Van Criekingen and Decroly, 2003, p.2451)³. In other words, the term gentrification encapsulates more than the linear process of invasion and succession typified by the seminal work of Glass (1964).

	Initial	Drivers		Transformations			Outcome
	y						
	Decayed and impoverished neighbourhood	State Sponsored	Market Driven	Improvements to the built environment	Social status growth	Population change	Wealth neighbourhood increases
Gentrification	X	O	X	X	X	X	X
Marginal Gentrification	X	O	X	X	X	X	O
Mediated Gentrification	X	X	O	X	X	X	X
Housing Association Renewal	X	X	O	X	O	O	O
Upgrading	O	O	X	X	X	X	X
Incumbent Upgrading	X	O	X	X	O	O	O

Figure 4 Typology of Gentrification Source: van Criekingen and Decroly (2003, p.2452) (Third column and fifth & sixth rows (highlighted) added by author)

Of specific importance to policy review is the concept of ‘Mediated Gentrification’. There has been much debate with regard to whether or not developments that have taken place after intervention from the public sector can be seen as gentrification, as it has been seen as a bottom up

³ See van Criekingen and Decroly (2003) for full discussion.

process. However, Bounds and Morris argue that it is “the social and cultural phenomenon of gentrification that underpins the attraction, social composition and success of redevelopment” and therefore can be used as a strategy of state and private capital in the development of the inner city (Bounds and Morris, 2006, p.100).⁴ In its simplest sense, mediated gentrification has two components:

- Gentrification that takes place within an area that would have been unlikely to undergo change at the same *speed* and *degree* if state had not intervened.
- An urban regeneration process facilitated by *policy makers* which has as its specified goal *gentrification outcomes*, i.e., change in physical environment, social status growth and population change.

Given the gap in the gentrification literature, an examination of the process within the wider British and European context of post-industrialising cities through ‘the lens of Glasgow’s decline and re-emergence as a city of self-proclaimed style, culture and renewal’ (Atkinson and Hall, 2002, p.3) would be useful for Glasgow, but also in terms of lessons that can be drawn for other post-industrial cities. With this in mind, the following discussion examines the situation in Glasgow, and draws on evidence from two Glasgow neighbourhoods.

Exploring the Geography of Gentrification: Glasgow

As a city steeped with industrial heritage and the site of some of the worst poverty in the UK, (Bailey *et al.*, 1999), Glasgow has a housing landscape that covers a wide-spectrum of dwellings, ranging from poor quality, un-lettable flats in council estates to large, detached houses in the leafy suburbs of the city. However, the housing stock in Glasgow is dominated very much by tenement flats and social rented housing which is a legacy stemming from the city’s industrial past. Glasgow has been experiencing steady and significant population decline over the past forty years, highlighted by Figure 5 below. This has led to falling housing demand, a diminished working population able to pay tax and a possible reduction in the dynamism and vitality of the city – a commodity seen as crucial in attracting and retaining investment and new people (Lever, 2001).

⁴ See also Lambart and Boddy, 2002; Hackworth, 2002 and Berry, 1999).

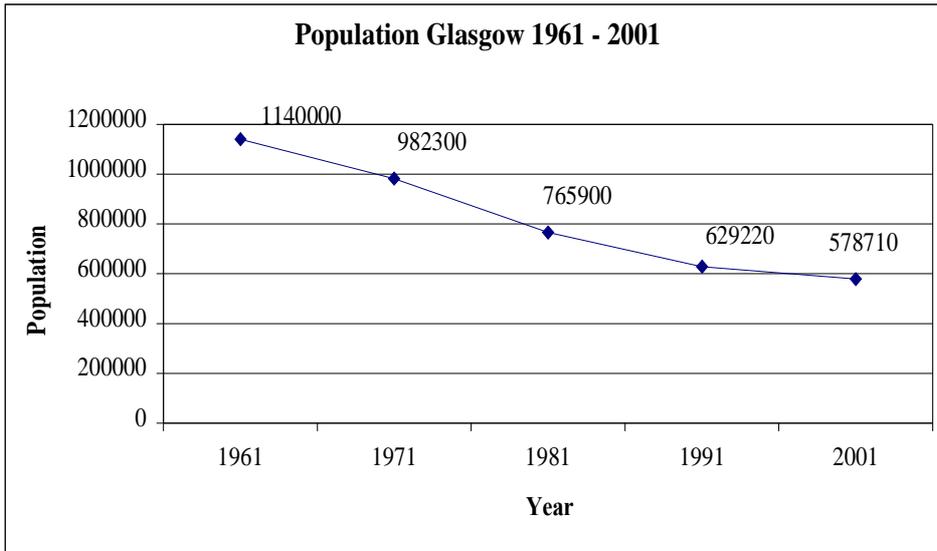


Figure 5 Glasgow Population 1961 - 2001 (Source: THE CITY COUNCIL)

Returning to Figure 3, Glasgow City Council like many urban governments of post-industrial cities, faces a difficult challenge reconciling the need to provide low-cost housing with the desire to develop or redevelop sites within the city with more expensive housing with a view to attracting young affluent professions to the city core. This is set within a context of the fiscal strain caused by high cost provision of housing to a dependent population, while undergoing welfare restructuring. From this point of view attracting a low ‘cost’ and tax paying population could be seen as a boon for the City Council. Furthermore, it may go some way to addressing the legitimate concern of the loss of the city’s social diversity following the exodus of much of the city’s middle classes over the last few decades. A simplified summary of the concerns of urban policy are shown in Figure 6 below:

Types of Policy	Redistributive Policy	Pro-Growth Policy
Goals	<input type="checkbox"/> Distribute opportunities and resources to deprived groups directly	<input type="checkbox"/> Encourage economic growth in inner-urban areas, attracting new business, services and residents that can increase revenue for city
	<input type="checkbox"/> Reduction in gap between rich and poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Create and sustain positive image of city that can be marketed globally in order to compete for internationally mobile capital
		<input type="checkbox"/> Benefits will accrue for all with increased job opportunities and investment, and through mechanisms of trickle-down and multiplier effect

Figure 6 Goals of Urban Policy

These two approaches reflect the changing role of the state from a Keynesian style ‘provider of welfare’ to a more ‘neoliberal’ style ‘economic facilitator’ discussed earlier. As Brenner and Theodore (2002) highlight these two different approaches are not always manifest exclusively in each area, and may exist side by side, or in a ‘hybridised’ form (2002, p.14). However, when resources for public policy are highly constrained there is often a danger that a ‘pro-growth’ discourse is pursued at the expense of a redistributive one. This has become apparent in Glasgow as the City Council has undergone several changes which mark the ‘destruction and creation’ of welfarism and neoliberalism in Glasgow respectively, in what Brenner and Theodore term ‘Mechanisms of Neoliberal Localisation’ (2002, p.23)⁵. One of the manifestations of these ‘Mechanisms’ has been the shift from the role of the City Council as one of the largest social landlords in the UK, to a new strategic role of housing development for both Housing Associations and Private Developers. The new aims of the City Council are set out in Table 7 below.

Six Key Aims of Glasgow The City Council’s Local Housing Strategy	
Aim A	To promote the regeneration of the city
Aim B	To raise the city’s housing in all tenures to satisfactory standards, with affordable costs
Aim C	To meet people’s changing housing needs
Aim D	To prevent and alleviate homelessness through the delivery of effective services
Aim E	To ensure equality of access to housing
Aim F	To promote effective delivery of housing services in the city

Figure 7 Aims of the the City Council Local Housing Strategy 2005 – 2008 (Source: Glasgow The City Council)

From this it is evident that one of the key assumptions underpinning the City Council’s present economic strategy is the necessity for housing capable of meeting the aspirations of a growing affluent middle-class. The City Council produced the Local Housing Strategy from a number of research reports and projections on population change and housing demand.⁶ The population projections the City Council used while developing the strategy suggested that the population of Glasgow would fall by around 10,000 over the next decade from 609,370 in 2000 to 599,927 in 2010.

Despite the falling population, the City Council predicts that the demand for housing will grow by 1,250 per year. The increase in demand is not uniform across tenures. There has been a

⁵ See Brenner and Theodore, 2002: pp.20-25 for full discussion

⁶ Glasgow City Council, Department of Urban Studies, Scottish Homes completed various reports.

marked decline in demand for socially rented housing. Figure 8 below shows that demand for Council housing almost halved between 1990 and 2000, and this trend is expected to continue.

Tenure changes in Glasgow 1991 - 2003				
Dwelling Type	1991		2003	
Owner Occupied	99,235	(34%)	139,136	(48%)
Local Authority	138,347	(48%)	80,186	(28%)
Other / Rented	50,585	(18%)	68,189	(24%)
Total	288,167		287,511	

Figure 8 Tenure Changes Glasgow 1991 – 2003 (Source: Glasgow The City Council)

Falling population, evolving housing demands and a change in ideological alignment combine in Glasgow to present a challenge to regeneration and housing welfare. However, as the challenges and problems facing the City Council are not uniform across the city as a whole, a more nuanced approach is required in order to explore and understand the processes and impacts taking place across the city.

Conclusion

This paper has responded to the growing call to expand the geography of gentrification in two ways: by examining the role of gentrification in the context of a city lower down the urban hierarchy via comparing the contexts of global and de-industrialising cities. Furthermore, it has used the example of the de-industrialising city of Glasgow, to highlight the value of a gentrification paradigm that is sensitive to the historical housing and economic contexts of a city, and allows inter- and intra- urban comparisons.

To revisit an assertion made previously, the process of gentrification in its different forms outwith ‘Global Cities’ remains under-explored. Further research involving the various stakeholder groups (i.e; residents, both homeowners and renters, local and state governments and business groups) would allow specific policy lessons and interventions to be developed to ensure an urban environment that incorporates a strong economy with a more integrated and less polarised population. Due to its evolving role as a de-industrialising city to a financial and service centre, the city of Glasgow will continue to undergo changes in terms of population, employment and housing in relation to the wider economy in Scotland, the UK and even globally. Gentrification represents a process that may influence future changes and challenges in the city. The idea of gentrification contributing to any sort of urban regeneration has raised some concern among researchers because of its traditional associations with displacement of vulnerable residents and community conflicts. However, many gentrification researchers have recently questioned the relevance of research predominantly conducted in global cities that themselves represent extreme contexts and outcomes.

The persisting challenge for the future is to examine the costs and impacts of gentrification in cities occupying different positions within a wider global urban hierarchy (Atkinson and Bridge, 2005) and recognise the nuanced differences between and within these changing cities.

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