

University of Chile
Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism
2021, First academic semester

Gentrification and the neoliberal city

Information

Associate Professor: Ernesto López-Morales

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Course Meetings: Monday

10:15AM – 13:30PM

Place: (online by Zoom)

Office Hours: (online by Zoom) Tuesday, 15:00PM – 16:30PM (by previous appointment)

Guest speakers proposed (tbc):

Tom Slater (U. Edinburgh); Mayra Mosciaro (U. Leuven), Marieke Krijnen (independent); Francisco Sabatini (UDEC/PUC); Shenjin He (U. HK); Orlando Santos Junior (UFRJ), Luis Salinas (UNAM), Elke Schlack (PUC), Mercedes DiVirgilio (UBA).

Presentation

Gentrification is a contentious word. It is both an outcome of urban regeneration and a desired urban policy goal. Many people applaud urban regeneration; however, usually, more people become excluded or displaced for economic reasons when it happens. The term 'gentrification' was incepted by a Marxist scholar in Europe in the 1960s, although earlier examples of mass-scale gentrification were the Haussmann's Plan for Paris from the 1850s seen by Walter Benjamin, and even former cases. In Latin America, gentrification comes from the conflict between the colonial past, modernization, and neoliberalism. In China, gentrification relates to the transitional phase from socialism to hybrid neoliberal/developmentalism. A gentrification hypothesis for Europe is the growing colonization of neighborhoods in Southern Europe by investors from northern European countries (tourist-led gentrification), as State-led gentrification comes from the ongoing privatization of housing welfare.

This course addresses state policies of housing financialization, large-scale privatization, and commodification of land and housing stocks under neoliberal rule, too often for the sake of short-term corporate economic interests. We analyze housing evictions and exclusionary displacement generated alongside much-praised market-led urban reinvigoration. We will address the visuals of gentrification, its architecture, its aesthetic, and its physical aspects.

Further, gentrification embeds injustices related to class, race, gender, sexuality, among other topics, as most world cases respond to the desires of the affluent, white and heteronormative agents; thus, gentrification expresses their domination over urban space. This course draws on theoretical and empirical data obtained over several years of field research in Mexico City, Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, and Santiago de Chile, besides the theoretical analysis conducted with international peers on other world cases. This course offers a critical, comparative, and interdisciplinary approach to gentrification in Chile, Latin America, and the world. Its scope is international, comparative, critical, and policy-relevant. International peer researchers will be invited as guest speakers to contribute from Latin American countries and beyond.

Teaching goals

1. To train in interdisciplinary urban analysis via a comparative politico-economic approach that considers material, social and cultural variables.
2. To co-build a regularly functioning, respectful, and enjoyable academic space.
3. To learn about gentrification cases in different regions of the world.

Key topics addressed

Gentrification's historical background; gentrification's demand-side thesis (liberal); gentrification's supply-side thesis (Marxist); planetary gentrification, land and housing neoliberalism; gentrification waves; State-led gentrification; agent-led gentrification and touristification; gentrification and informality; gentrification's class, race, and gender; displacement and evictions; the postcolonial/decolonial critique.

Study-cases from the US, UK, Italy, Spain, Czech Republic, Russia, Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Costa Rica, Ecuador, China, South Korea, and Japan.

Assignments and grading

Grading scale: (1 to 7 pts.)

Primary assignment: Two essays written in English +/- 2,000 words inc. bibliography. National and international students will select a case and bring examples from their latitudes—**submission dates: Weeks 6 and 11** (70%)

Secondary assignment: Mid-phase memos plus participation and attendance (30%)

Products

- State-of-the-art understanding of gentrification, covering different world regions.
- Basic knowledge about different types of cities, their socio-economic features, architecture, and urban spaces, and urban/housing policies at play.
- Training in academic reading and discussion, logical analysis, and philosophical reflection.

Schedule

Week	Day	Topic
1	March, 29 th	Welcome / A gentrification synopsis
2	April, 5 th	Gentrification historical narratives / the gentrification-waves thesis
3	April, 12 th	Demand-side thesis / the liberal approach / brownstoning and other cultural movements
4	April, 19 th	Supply-side thesis / the Marxist approach / revanchism / rent gap in Chile
5	April, 26 th	The economy of gentrification / Fifth-wave gentrification in financialized economies
6	May, 3 rd	State-led gentrification: Differences in East Asia, Europe and Latin America
7	May, 10 th	Gentrification, creative class and touristification / e-platform gentrification / Super gentrification / market gentrification
8	May, 17 th	Rest week
9	May, 24 th	Slum gentrification / Gentrification in the global south / marginal gentrifiers / gentrification racialized
10	May, 31 st	The postcolonial / decolonial critique / alternative narratives
11	June, 7 th	Displacement and resistances to gentrification / Conclusions

About the lecturer Ernesto López-Morales:

Since 2005, Ernesto has been engaged in empirical research on property-led gentrification in deprived inner-city areas of Santiago, Chile, adopting a critical approach to urban redevelopment and the right to housing. Later his work has gone against established orthodoxies in Latin America and abroad, such as neoclassical explanations of the extreme appreciation of value in central areas and other common assumptions that serve state bureaucracies and private real estate elites. Further comparative empirical research into the Mexican, Brazilian, and Argentinean cases has been carried out systematically since 2013 through collaborative research with scholars from Leicester University, LSE, Buenos Aires University, Mexico National University, and Federal Rio de Janeiro University, and complemented with fundamental inputs from local activists. Published works here: https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=5w40_sYAAAAJ&hl=es

Lecturer's commitments

Accessibility (office hours – meetings previously appointed); quick response to emails; prompt return to grades and detailed feedback on the assignment; tolerant, respectful, and participative classes.