

RGS-IBG Annual International Conference 2011

The Geographical Imagination

Session proposal form

Please fill in all the details below and return to AC2011@rgs.org by **25 February 2011**.

Session summary	
Session Title:	Gentrification in the Global South: Dilapidation, Obsolescence and Land Exploitation
Research Group sponsor (if applicable):	Urban Geography Research Group
Session Convenor(s):	Dr Hyun Bang Shin (London School of Economics and Political Science); Dr Ernesto Lopez-Morales (University of Chile)
Session Convenor(s) Email:	h.b.shin@lse.ac.uk; elopez@uchilefau.cl
Session Abstract:	<p>The session aims to examine how gentrification as an urban phenomenon is played out outside the domain of the European and North Atlantic regions. In particular, we propose to address the production of gentrifiable properties and areas through the interaction between obsolescence (fall of exchange value) and dilapidation (decrease in the use value), reinforced by the re-appreciation of landed value and rent gap exploitation. Dilapidation may occur as a result of physical deterioration caused by either deliberate actions/inactions by property-owners or state institutions (e.g. redlining or blockbusting). Obsolescence, on the other hand, may result from changes in the preference for a particular building style or aesthetic tastes, but increasingly, it is the deliberate acts of market agents that affect the artificial decline of the exchange value. As these processes of devaluation take place, they produce waves of displacement and eventually eviction, prompting potential urban segregation. Although the public policy usually sees the construction of trendy commercial buildings as a neighbourhood saviour, this form of urban production overshadows existing buildings and often leads to the obsolescence of the latter, prompting a further chain reaction of redevelopment that aims at higher rates of financial gains.</p> <p>In the Global North, obsolescence is said to concentrate on areas with the highest return on investment in a market that has been increasingly entwined with the global financial capital. In the Global South, the question seems to centre on the extent to which the state and market agents (at local, regional or national level) interact with each other to boost property-led redevelopment and create a series of market incentives to attract (globalised) financial capital. These activities often rampantly bypass mechanisms of social participation and political accountability.</p> <p>In this regard, we aim to explore these issues in relation to the cities in the Global South, with reference to (but not limited to) cities in Asia and Latin America. We expect to establish a platform for a dialogue among researchers in order to shed light on how gentrification can be understood and experienced against the backdrop of its very political, economic and social roots. This, we expect, would contribute to the restoration of a debate that has been evicted from the global academia.</p>
Keywords (max 5):	Gentrification; Global South; Obsolescence; Dilapidation; Land exploitation

Session Requirements		
Number of timeslots required in the conference programme	2	Session slots will be approximately 1hr 40minutes long, which accommodates 5 papers of 20min each including questions, or 7-10 shorter papers depending on format.
Type of session proposed e.g. papers, papers with discussant, posters, panel discussion, workshop...	Paper presentation	The session organisers welcome innovative session formats. If you'd like to discuss a session format, please contact the organisers at AC2011@rgs.org .

Special audio visual requirements	As provided by the hosts	Laptop with audio speakers, data projector and screen will be provided in each room. Most rooms should also have internet access (either wired or wireless). Speakers should bring their own laser pointers etc.
Any other special requests to be considered	None	e.g. mobility requirements, room request, timetabling request.

Session details	
Session 1	Gentrification in the South – Historical and theoretical perspectives
Session 1 Chair	Dr Hyun Bang Shin London School of Economics and Political Science
Session 1 Chair email	h.b.shin@lse.ac.uk
Paper 1 Title:	Locating Gentrification in the Global South: Dilapidation, Obsolescence and Land Exploitation
Paper 1 Abstract:	The paper examines cities in East Asia and Latin America as sites of contestation for the production of gentrifiable properties. Through the interaction between <i>obsolescence</i> (fall of exchange value) and <i>dilapidation</i> (decrease in the use value), the paper argues that ‘places’ in strategic locations selectively experience re-appreciation of landed value and rent gap exploitation. As the processes of devaluation take place, they produce waves of displacement and eventually eviction. Although the public policy usually sees the construction of ‘trendy’ commercial buildings as a neighbourhood ‘saviour’, this form of urban production overshadows existing buildings and often leads to the obsolescence of the latter, prompting a further chain reaction of redevelopment that aims at higher rates of financial gains. In this paper, we focus on these deliberate acts of market agents in relation to the act of the (often) interventionist state that increasingly sees the commodification of existing space and place-making as part of urban development strategies. The key question we raise is the extent to which the state and market agents (at local, regional or national level) interact with each other in order to boost property-led redevelopment and create a series of market incentives to attract (globalising) financial capital. These activities are often found to be rampantly bypassing mechanisms of social participation and political accountability.
Paper 1 Author(s):	Hyun Bang Shin (London School of Economics and Political Science); Ernesto López-Morales (University of Chile)
Paper 1 Presenter(s):	Hyun Bang Shin (London School of Economics and Political Science); Ernesto López-Morales (University of Chile)
Paper 1 Author(s) email address:	h.b.shin@lse.ac.uk; elopez@uchilefau.cl
Paper 2 Title:	New and old urban colonialism: Gentrification in hisotrical perspective
Paper 2 Abstract:	The term ‘gentrification’ was first coined by the urban sociologist Ruth Glass in 1964 to describe the ‘invasion’ of working class quarters in inner London by middle-class groups. Glass deliberately drew allusions to the ‘gentry’ not only to highlight new upwardly-mobile fractions within traditional British social hierarchies but because many of the houses that had been taken over had first been occupied by the Victorian bourgeoisie before their widespread flight from the industrialised inner-city. Since Glass coined the term and spawned the sub-discipline, gentrification researchers have frequently resorted to historical analogies, metaphors and comparisons. These have included references to 19 th Century ‘revanchism’, the term ‘neo-Hausmannisation’ and gentrification as a ‘new urban colonialism’. Yet, despite these resonances and allusions, gentrification has rarely been considered in historical perspective. There has instead been a widespread tendency to assume gentrification began with the origin of the term in 1964. This presentation will use examples from across global South and North to argue that placing gentrification against similar historical processes can help illustrate some of the political dynamics, social relations and cultural formations of contemporary urban redevelopment. Moreover it will argue that investigating present-day processes of gentrification can similarly illuminate our understandings of the historical dimensions of class-based urban change.

Paper 2 Author(s):	Andrew Harris (University College London)
Paper 2 Presenter(s):	Andrew Harris (University College London)
Paper 2 Author(s) email address:	andrew.harris@ucl.ac.uk
Paper 3 Title:	Urban theory as empirically embedded: Mutated gentrification and downward raiding in a South African 'slum'
Paper 3 Abstract:	<p>Urban theory and empirics are intrinsically linked, with both reliant on the other. However, as contemporary urban critiques have highlighted, 'urban empirics' largely represent Anglo-American experiences, thereby resulting in non-universal urban theories. Rooted in these critiques, this research explores two parallel urban concepts, gentrification and downward raiding, that are entrenched in divergent empirical contexts and academic literatures. Despite describing very similar processes of urban class-based (largely residential) change the concepts are rarely considered analogous, separated by assumed empirical utility. While gentrification is largely reserved for the Western central city (with some recent exclusions), downward raiding is employed exclusively in reference to the Southern 'slum'. This research challenges the empirical concentration of these urban theories. Focusing on the sale of state-subsidised houses in urban South Africa, research challenges the convention of equating a global South 'slum' location exclusively with downward raiding, and argues the relevance of mutations of both concepts in a single empirical site. This atypical gentrification case study is used to highlight the ways in which gentrification theoretical debates can and should learn from non-Anglo/Western empirical examples. In addition, the comparison between two narrowly empirically embedded theories also reveals the inadequacy of such empirical limitations, further highlighting the need for urban theory to learn from a broad range of empirical examples.</p>
Paper 3 Author(s):	Charlotte Lemanski (University College London)
Paper 3 Presenter(s):	Charlotte Lemanski (University College London)
Paper 3 Author(s) email address:	c.lemanski@ucl.ac.uk
Paper 4 Title:	Social segregation in Japanese cities: Gentrification, obsolescence and dilapidation
Paper 4 Abstract:	<p>Japanese cities, contrary to a dominant discourse emanating from US sociologists, do have some degree of spatial segregation of social groups. This segregation is, however, far less than that found in western cities e.g. in the UK. More specifically, gentrification is almost absent. This paper attempts to explain these strange features (strange, that is, to western observers), and to discover the forms of segregation that *are* specific to Japanese cities. It is argued that the same processes that lead to a low degree, and different form, of social segregation in Japanese cities, would also be likely to result in very low degrees of area-wide obsolescence and dilapidation.</p>
Paper 4 Author(s):	Anthony J. Fielding (University of Sussex)
Paper 4 Presenter(s):	Anthony J. Fielding (University of Sussex)
Paper 4 Author(s) email address:	a.j.fielding@sussex.ac.uk
Paper 5 Title:	Exploration of gentrification in inner-city Santiago de Chile: Built-form, use and division of land
Paper 5 Abstract:	<p>The production of gentrification can be described by necessary previous conditions which lead to the devaluation of land, either through dilapidation and/or obsolescence which in turn provoke a return of the flow of investment and re-exploitation of the land. In Chile this plays out in the context of a competitive market economy where building controls are limited and the physical expression of the realisation of the land value is dictated by the maximising of profit.</p> <p>However we are witnessing a particular spontaneous 'back-to-the-city' gentrification of</p>

	<p>inner-city neighbourhoods in Santiago which do not seem to conform with dominant scales of value and profit. Yet this small scale transformation seems to be thriving and establishing profitable functions with a change of land-use, from residential and light-industrial to commerce, such as restaurants/bars and high-end retail.</p> <p>Through the study of changes in land-use through commercial licenses, the physical form and land subdivision in inner-city neighbourhoods we explore local conditions which serve as indicators for gentrification. We ask: What kind of place and built environment is attractive for this gentrification?, What form does it take and what qualities does it have?</p> <p>As we chart the progression of the production of gentrification what becomes clear is that while starting out modestly overwhelming market forces are set in motion which threaten the built-form, use, and division of land in the inner-city.</p>
Paper 5 Author(s):	Neil Turnbull (Universidad Andrés Bello); Elke Schlack (Universidad Andrés Bello)
Paper 5 Presenter(s):	Neil Turnbull (Universidad Andrés Bello); Elke Schlack (Universidad Andrés Bello)
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Session details	
Session 2	Gentrification in the South – Country Cases
Session 2 Chair	Dr Ernesto Lopez-Morales University of Chile
Session 2 Chair email	elopez@uchilefau.cl
Paper 6 Title:	Neoliberalism, en bloc redevelopment: The case of housing in Singapore
Paper 6 Abstract:	<p>The case of Singapore is instructive for the prevailing liberal principle in the market and the authoritative state that governs all sectors. As an island-nation that relies economically on its integration into the global market, Singapore marches towards neoliberalism when its authoritative state proactively explores paths to adapt to the global transformation to post-Fordist economy. Re-appreciation of land value is promoted through En Bloc Redevelopment in both public and private housing sectors, using different technologies. At a first sight, gentrification seems to occur in private sector only whilst sitting tenants of public housing are provided with new home in nearby areas. The inner city is becoming places where private and public housing neighborhoods stand side by side. Analyses of this phenomenon, as argued by the author, has to take into consideration the historical path Singapore has gone through to accommodate its population. Public housing, which houses 85% of the whole nation, has been long adopted by the ruling party as the major tool for a balance between economic growth and political legitimacy. Efforts are being put into upper end products on the catalogue of public housing for those “better-educated, better-informed, well-travelled and with higher earning power”. These projects are paving the way for a heterogeneous public housing landscape, which, assisted with institutional deregulation and financial liberation, opens door to speculative capital in the resale market and implies social displacement after the required initial occupancy period. While market mechanism is proactively sought in consumption of space, the usual monetary benefits flowing to land-interest elites is limited in Singapore. By comparing the en bloc redevelopment and consequent displacement in public and private sectors, this paper attempts to unveil a picture in which reassertion of class power is more a hidden process and may not lead to an obvious and immediate social displacement. This is an application of modified neoliberalism to sustain its political legitimacy and forge a human-capital friendly environment required by the neoliberal way of production.</p>
Paper 6 Author(s):	Jun Wang (National University of Singapore)
Paper 6 Presenter(s):	Jun Wang (National University of Singapore)
Paper 6 Author(s) email address:	salie.wang@gmail.com

Paper 7 Title:	Gentrification in Buenos Aires City: A drip strategy
Paper 7 Abstract:	<p>Since the 1970s, downtown areas in the cities of some central countries have gone through urban renewal. This issue has been widely analyzed mainly in larger cities of United State, Canada and European countries but has rarely been addressed in Latin American cities. Beyond that, gentrification is a reality also in Latin American cities in general, and in Buenos Aires city, in particular. In Buenos Aires, gentrification principally involves different movements -- recovery of residential areas in the cities' central quarters and their occupation by middle and upper middle-income households and/or a reinvigoration of commerce – and stages of development in different locations and neighbourhoods.</p> <p>Our work summarises the main findings of a longitudinal study which began in 1998 in La Boca, San Telmo and Barracas quarters in Buenos Aires, Argentina. It examines gentrification through an analysis of the affected households' characteristics – socio-economic level, living standards and employment – in order to determine which aspects of their life styles make them vulnerable to displacement. It also scrutinises the residents' perception of change as well as the local and national governments' interventions that encourage such developments. Data collection involves household surveys in southern neighbourhoods of Buenos Aires city, in-depth interviews to policymakers and community leaders and documental analysis of public programs.</p> <p>Our analysis shows that, since the beginning of the renewal process, working class households have seen their existence threatened by the increasing value of the properties where they live, and the added vulnerability for the families that this entails. Thereby, renewal, at different scales and scopes, implies strain on lower-income population permanence in the studied quarters and important problems related to habitats.</p>
Paper 7 Author(s):	Hilda Herzer (Buenos Aires University); Mercedes Di Virgilio (Buenos Aires University); Carla Rodríguez (Buenos Aires University)
Paper 7 Presenter(s):	Hilda Herzer (Buenos Aires University); Mercedes Di Virgilio (Buenos Aires University); Carla Rodríguez (Buenos Aires University)
Paper 7 Author(s) email address:	hherzer@gmail.com; trebol1968@gmail.com; mdivirgilio@fibertel.com.ar
Paper 8 Title:	Revisiting the role of art galleries in gentrification of Seoul: Focusing on Samcheong-dong and Garosu-gil
Paper 8 Abstract:	<p>This paper investigates the process of gentrification in Seoul focusing on Samcheong-dong and Garosugil. The art galleries play a critical role in creating new identity out of derelict and de-valued urban centre and turning the area into an emerging and attractive cultural consumption space. Gentrification in Seoul seems to be expedited by recent contemporary art boom and urban regeneration strategy of Seoul. The locational characteristics of art galleries in Samcheong-dong and Garosu-gil reflect the importance of several factors including, an agglomeration effect, urban cultural policy, art market trends and accessibility to the media and art-related organizations. Art galleries, the frontier of such urban regenerations, seem to face severe challenges due to rapid commercialization and succeeding high rents. As a result, small galleries have no choice of being priced out or being transformed into multi-consumption spaces such as cafés, restaurants, crafts or fashion shops.</p>
Paper 8 Author(s):	Eje Kim (Gyeongin National University of Education)
Paper 8 Presenter(s):	Eje Kim (Gyeongin National University of Education)
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Paper 9 Title:	Quartering the city in discourse and bricks: The case of De Waterkant
Paper 9 Abstract:	<p>Focusing on the urban quarter of Cape Town, South Africa known as De Waterkant, this paper examines the product and process of 'quartering' urban space—shaping urban space as the locus for the symbolic framing of culture. By examining human, narrative</p>

	and visual texts which describe the production and consumption of space, this paper complicates debates on gentrification through engagement with the discursive and material strategies that have enacted urban change in De Waterkant. The findings show that De Waterkant has undergone a series of quarterings including: an ethnic quartering which was dismantled under <i>apartheid</i> ; a Bohemian quartering that changed racial dynamics and improved housing stock; a 'gay village' quartering that engaged sexual identity performance as a strategy for place-making; and most recently a consumer lifestyle quartering that exhibited new notions of citizenship and consumption. This paper will demonstrate how quartering acts to discursively represent the city while also directly shaping the city's materiality.
Paper 9 Author(s):	Bradley Rink (University of Cape Town)
Paper 9 Presenter(s):	Bradley Rink (University of Cape Town)
Paper 9 Author(s) email address:	bradley.rink@gmail.com
Paper 10 Title:	Forced displacement and resettlement as part of gentrification? A case study of the railway project in Metro Manila, the Philippines
Paper 10 Abstract:	<p>This paper aims to explore the complex ways in which the land and housing status of the urban poor is changed by forced displacement and resettlement. A case for investigation is the North Rail-South Rail Linkage Project in Metro Manila, the Philippines, which led to the forced eviction of more than 35,000 families who used to live in the informal settlements along the railway. The majority of them were relocated in 11 different sites predominantly outside Metro Manila. Unlike most post-eviction studies focusing on relocation sites, this research draws attention to the aftermath of eviction in the railway area where a large population was forcefully removed.</p> <p>Extensive field research reveals that land and housing statuses of the people along the railway are so complex that simply labelling them as 'informal settlers' does not capture diverse ways in which they access land and housing. Likewise, depending on their previous land and housing status, people experience different types of housing loss following the clearance of the area, namely, no loss, a complete loss and a partial loss of housing. It is those with a more insecure land and housing status that were forcefully displaced while others with a better security of tenure remained relatively intact. Furthermore, there is a strong tendency among the relocated to return to their place of origin along the railway even though they no longer have a "sweet home" there. This paper examines whether this process of eviction-return constitutes an unintended but a form of urban gentrification.</p>
Paper 10 Author(s):	Narae Choi (University of Oxford)
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