

Urban Renewal and Controlled Gentrification

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Introduction

The renewal of a neighbourhood can happen by the recognition of the potential of its essence; its physical structure and its current inhabitants. It can also unleash the forces of change letting the fabric evolve by allowing a diversification of uses and residents.

Renewal is a process in which the derelict situation of a neighbourhood is reversed to generate dynamics that allow the betterment of the quality of life of its inhabitants.

The phenomenon called gentrification has usually been considered as the result of the speculation that, after a successful renewal, makes attractive the zone for richer population, creating a dynamic in which the prices of land and built context rise and therefore becomes unaffordable to the current residents, who have the risk to be expelled by the new condition.

Where is the boundary between gentrification and a modernist conception of urban renewal? Is every situation of renewal a situation of gentrification? Is there a possibility of renewal introducing new population and maintaining the existing

residents? Is this process reshaping the conception of urban growth and re-directing the transformation of cities? Could the spatiality of gentrification be more than an illustration and perform as generator of the process of change?

In the first part of this research an analysis of particular trends of the gentrification theory will be exposed, a brief historical review of the term is included as introductory review of the debate, trying to briefly contextualize the situations that originated the creation of the term.

Is presented an outward but critical overview of the gentrification theory with a selection of different edges debated. Two specific explanations for gentrification are confronted, and even though they have an agreement in some of the principles, the different positions are contrasted in order to present the debate as polarized as possible, looking to achieve hints to develop the concept of controlled gentrification.

The term Controlled Gentrification is proposed as the result of an inner contradiction. After the the gentrification theory is analyzed, it is stressed to add another factor that can derive in a process of renewal and urban change that happens based on the permanence of the residents and at the same time encouraging the introduction of wealthier population.

In the second part, a brief analysis of how a bond process of growth-decay-change has affected the cities in general and specifically to the centre fringe, that has been identified as the specific zone of the inner city due the potentials and opportunities that present to allow the appearance of forces of change of its current existing situation.

The role of the centre fringe in the context of the actual metropolis changed as the city evolved. This is the zone that is neither the centre nor the suburbs; a now transitional space that once had an important role in the economic and social functions of the city but that with time and with the change of the productive system lost importance and remained as an interstitial zone. A contextualisation of why

gentrification is occurring here is presented, summarizing the potentials that have allowed particularly beneficial transformation cases.

To illustrate how renewal has worked as a balanced process that allows the accommodation of both the existing residents and new inhabitants, as well as the accommodation of other programmes and functions, three examples of neighbourhoods in the centre fringe have been chosen to be analyzed; in order to make these cases in different contexts comparable, the focus is centred in the process of inner generation of controlled gentrification, its spatiality understood as generative and not only illustrative, and the mechanisms and tools that have been implemented to encourage or allow it.

Finally, in the third part, I will expose how the spatial –physical- design is implemented as a generator of the controlled gentrification process, at the same time that is a natural illustration of the theoretical, social and economical changes that are being suffered in the zone.

Change is finally materialized in build form. The building elected to be analyzed and its physical, tangible transformation offers the opportunity to monitor how the change that is happening in social, economical and theoretical levels is at the same time shaping the current urban fabric of the city.

The spatial performance of these processes, tools and mechanisms can give us an approach to the problematic in less abstract manner, with the specificity and materiality of tangible build projects, offering the opportunity to test in a pragmatic way a theorization and a proposal that otherwise could remain in a speculative description.

First part.

Gentrification debate.

What is and what is not gentrification.

Gentrification is a process of urban change that involves the betterment of a neighbourhood and has commonly included the displacement of a group of people by other with greater resources. Besides its specificity, relies on the dynamism and flexibility of its repercussions and is also intrinsically linked with other processes.

This does not mean that it can become synonym of different urban phenomena like displacement plus urban renewal, from which fundamental differences exist, even though is tightly associated with them.

A highly dynamic process[Gentrification], it is not amenable to overly restrictive definitions; rather that risk constraining our understanding of this developing process by imposing definitional order, we should strive to consider the broad range of practices that contribute to this restructuring, and to understand the links between seemingly separate processes.¹

¹ Smith Neil *Gentrification of the city*. Edited by Neil Smith and Peter Williams. Allen & Unwin.. 1986. Boston. London. Sydney. P. 3

An exploration of the terminological origins of the term, a review of the different approaches that has received in the recent debate about regeneration, urban renewal and city transformation, will be useful to do a later analysis of the different conceptions that this specific term can have; its causes, effects, tools employed and possible outcomes.

The term gentrification is originated from the word "Gentry"², this first one developed in the 1960s by Ruth Glass (Glass, 1989) explaining basically how rich people from the countryside came to the city looking for central locations, and being unable to settle down in the already wealthy areas, took working class neighbourhoods and, slowly in the beginning but accelerated once the process is started, refurbished the existing buildings and changed the dynamics of the area. An implicit coexistence in the beginning with working classes that lived there was not intended, and resisted until most of the services and commerce supporting the newcomers were unaffordable to them, being forced to leave many times to outer-city locations.

Even if the phenomena have not acquired importance until recently due its strength and impact on the city, gentrification processes have been detected as such in London since the end of the ninetieth century (Glass in Smith, 1996) where old Victorian houses in Islington, that in the beginning where transformed by working class families into lodging houses when the rich families that owned abandoned them, where adapted back to accommodate middle class families, spreading the process to other houses and neighbourhoods reshaping rapidly the social composition of the inner city.

One by one, many of the working-class quarters of London have been invaded by middle-classes – upper and lower. Shabby, modest mews and cottages –two rooms up and two down- have been taken over, when their leases have expired, and have become elegant, expensive residences.³

² "The class immediate below nobility" or "From the gentleman". Oxford Dictionary of English. 1996. p. 455.

³ Glass, Ruth. *Cliches of urban Doom*. Basil Blackwell. 1989. London. P.138

Adopted by theoreticians of the city, the word became not only very popular in North America, but also acquired different connotations than the ones that had in Britain, situation caused by the nature and development of the phenomena and the contextual differences between the decayed North American central cities and the dense populated urban settlements in Europe.

A fundamental difference takes place with other urban renewal programs. In many cities, this “renewals” were synonymous of the destruction of a whole area of impoverished inhabitants or decayed buildings, generally to be replaced with modern office or residential buildings, along hotels, gyms and other facilities related for higher income population; therefore, the poor people that lived there had to be relocated or many times just expelled, creating great social discontent with the allowance of these kind of actions.

Gentrification was soon associated directly with unfair displacement processes. The generalization of the social discontent with the practice is the reason why the term took so much importance in the North American context, where it has been widely discussed by a specialized and popular media.

For Neil Smith(1986, 1992, 1996), gentrification is understood as the process in which a neighbourhood is upgraded by the replacement of an impoverished population –working class- by other with greater economical resources, in his words, middle-class, and he suggest that the very terminology connotes a process which operates in the residential housing market.

“From the mid of the last century but mainly in the last thirty years, mostly in big urban conglomerations of developed countries and responding to a revalorization of centrality”, Robert Beauregard (in Smith, 1996) says, “a change in housing values and the increase of time and money requirements of commuting systems, created a process of private investment and reinsertion of wealthier classes in central neighbourhoods, with it consequent displacement of the population that couldn't afford the speculative new prices of what used to be their homes.”

The difference with other renewal projects is perceptible here. Gentrification is a process of change where the existing build fabric of the city is transformed but not fundamentally traumatized, and although many times did involve situations of displacement of population, generalized destruction of valuable buildings or *tabula rasa* are not practices of this phenomena.

In Smith's approach (1996), analysing the cases of Philadelphia and New York, the process has many times also connotations of race, gender and social injustices, clearly making emphasis on the process suffered in badly decayed neighbourhoods left for minorities, where these groups, without the option to fly to the suburbs or support a physical conservation of their area, stayed in the devalorised central city after de World War II.

Due to many factors, decades later, the city life-style became attractive again: rich white people, many of them the second generation of those who escaped to the suburbs, displaced from central locations groups of people that had no economical or political resources to confront and defend themselves from the pressure that the newcomers imposed in their neighbourhood.

Along this examples, the phenomena of wealthy population looking for inner-city locations in run down neighbourhoods mostly in North American, British and Australian cities but also in Germany, France and more slowly in other big European cities increased dramatically in the eighties and nineties, where old housing and even warehouses were rehabilitated and once undesired zones were rapidly of the interest of the voracious real state companies.

I would like to make a demarcation in the definition of gentrification commonly adopted by theorist, "the rehabilitation of working-class and derelict housing and the consequent transformation of an area into a middle-class neighbourhood". (Smith in Jones and Varley, 1990), and the "consequent displacement of the population" (Beauregard, 1986) because gentrification is understood here as a phenomena of

renewal by population displacement; I'm interested in the process of urban transformation without assuming displacement as an inevitable condition. I also think restrictive the vision of a neighbourhood labelled as middle class; I rather explore if a neighbourhood has enough flexibility to accommodate the new demand of inhabitants, uses and programs that the actual metropolis are demanding.

Is gentrification transforming the city?

The recovered attractive of the central neighbourhoods and its re inhabitation by diverse social classes looking for better locations or new life styles, even though is highly traumatic and reshapes the dynamic of the neighbourhood affected, should not be understood as the beginning of a complete change in the configuration of the city or the end of phenomena such as suburbanization that had lead the growth of western cities in the twentieth century.

Although gentrification rarely accounts for more than a fraction of new housing, starts to be compared with new construction, and the process is very important in those neighbourhoods where it occurs.⁴

Even though the reinhabitation of central neighbourhoods is growing and taking more sophisticated shapes, the city is still growing at the edge. (Beauregard, 1986) There are people that are still looking for housing with a suburban quality, greenery, more space and smaller communities, and probably will continue to do so.

Getting closer to the debate, there is a disagreement about who are the actors that are participating in the gentrification process. Based in quantitative data, Smith (1996) says that the new inhabitants that will take over the gentrified neighbourhoods will not be mainly renegade suburbanites that are looking for a more exiting way of life; until now, as exposed by him, the big part of these new inhabitants are persons that are already living in the city and are looking for a improvement in their quality of

⁴ Smith, Neil. *The new urban frontier*. Routledge. London and New York. 1996p. 51

life; also, but in less quantity, there will be a new generation formed by the descendants of those who flew to the suburbs fifty years ago, which have as reason of their new migration a different conception of a professional life more than a rejection of green spaces, big spaces or closed communities.

Popular among gentrification theorist is the notion that young, usually professional, middle –class people have changed their life style. With the trend toward fewer children, postponed marriages and a fast rising divorce rate, younger home buyers and vendors are trading in the tarnished dream of their parents for a dream defined in urban rather than suburban terms. ⁵

Oriol Nel.lo (2001) agrees by saying that migrations will be more intra urban than suburban-urban. The suburb, every time more with the form of an old consolidated town more or less near a main city, will stay there as an option for new housing, and the central city will grow as the centre of financial and political power, and as the leisure and cultural centre of the region. The dichotomy between the central city and the suburb, without being near from an end, is narrowing in the discourse of urban transformation. On the other hand, there is an every time more accentuated shift from the megalopolis system into a complex network of regions of cities.

The phenomena of gentrification, then, should be understood as a component of a complex evolution of cities, relevant since it presents an alternative for the reutilization and restoration of inner-city neighbourhoods with the potential of offering desirable quality of life, but not as the dominant trend that will shape the cities in the future.

The debate

The theorization of gentrification has moved from several trends; from the search of the causes, to the analysis of its factors and the problematization of its effects. Even

⁵ ibid p.52

though the phenomena is occurring in many cities around the world and has received different names, not oddly, where is identified properly as gentrification is where is more written about it. In my perception this doesn't mean that the phenomena is more important in those places that in others, but certainly is more publicized, therefore, more debated and visible.

In this first part I will face two theories that I found especially useful to understand how gentrification works. The one explains the phenomena as the result of the forces of the providers; this theory goes from a land market value theorization of the phenomena till anti-consumerist statements. Confronted to that are the ones that place their thought in the side of the acquirers; this argument introduces the notion of the shift of cities to post industrial productive structures prior abandonment as a result of its decline, and tries to make a profile of who are the ones that drive the forces of transformation.

Is gentrification a direct result of the real state market forces that, as a consequence of the rise in the cost of the development in the every time more distanced outer locations of the city, along the depreciated land value in inner neighbourhoods, present the possibility to developers who find profitable invest in the inner city?

Is the effect of a change in the preferences of the people that is attracted again to the city and is looking to have an urban life-style? Is this demand of locations in the inner city making more vulnerable to be vacated the neighbourhoods inhabited by impoverished population?

The debate exposed is neither trying to cover the whole argument about gentrification, nor explain all cases from the two theorizations chosen, but it will place the grounds for a further development of an equilibrated phenomena opening the possibility of a controlled urban change process.

Provision based explanations.

Neil Smith (1982, 1986, 1996) bases his argument in the statement that the reinhabitation of central neighbourhoods of the city is not only responding to the demand of consumers looking for a different lifestyle: "The values of production rather than consumption guide central city land use decisions". (Smith 1996) Gentrification is explained, instead, with two main reasons: Firstly, as a consequence for new social regime of consumption which involves several factors that have changed in the cities in recent years and that allow this process to take place, such as the over expansion of the city, the price of combustibles and public transport, tax incentives and new consciousness of society toward environmental issues, and secondly, derived from the conjunction of these last, is that promoters, speculators and businessman have found in the old, rundown city a profitable business to do.

A broader theory of gentrification must take the role of the producers as well as the consumers into account, and when this is done it appears that the needs of production, -in particular the need to earn profit- are more decisive initiative behind gentrification than consumer preference.⁶

In his argument based in provision explanations, Smith says "Disinvestment in central areas of cities, paralleling massive suburban asset exacerbad by the financial dynamics of construction and land interests" (Smith 1979 quoted from Beauregard 1984) This has resulted in residential areas whose capitalized ground rent is below their potential ground rent.

The development and drop of the cost of commuting devices are factors that contributed to the phenomena of the abandonment of the central areas of cities. In some situations more than others, becomes an opportunity to multiply production and therefore consumption of housing, automobiles, land, appliances, furniture, and public schools at the time when the cities have become less desirable. (Beauregard, 1988).

⁶ Ibid p.57

Peter Marcuse (quoted in Smith, 1984) argues that decay and investment in the suburbs are far from being separate processes; abandonment and gentrification are part of a single economic transformation in the urban land market. "The result of working class displacements is the same whether displacement is inspired by abandonment or by gentrification." (Smith, 1984)

Even though central locations are transformed into attractive places to settle down, these will not bring back important amounts of people that are already living in the suburbs or in seemingly outer zones of the city, but it will indeed offer other alternatives for those that are looking for housing and are unhappy in their inner city locations. Middle and upper middle-class housing can be intensively developed in the inner city. (Smith 1996) This makes a difference in the sense that a quality of life improvement is not only possible in outer city locations, but in different neighbourhoods that have been spotted, firstly by newcomers that have committed themselves to improve its conditions and later by organizations, in the form of speculators, promoters, investors or even social based groups that are able to promote and attract newcomers by inner city characteristics.

Is not that consumer choice is unimportant, in one scenario, it is possible that some gentrification involves younger people that moved to the city for education and professional training in the decades after the 1950s, but who did not follow their parents' migration to the suburbs, becoming instead a social reservoir from which the gentrifier demand grew.⁷

Smith (1996 in Gomez 2003) argues that inner-city neighbourhoods enter a cycle of capital de-valorisation, and that both physical and economic de-valorisation are the logical outcome of the operation of the land and housing markets. The cycle starts with the new construction and the first cycle of use when the ground rent increases along the sale price. This stage may eventually be followed by sustained de-valorisation. (Gomez 2003) After this first cycle of use, the tendency is for a neighbourhood to convert toward a higher level of rental tenancy, unless repairs are made on the housing stock. Under-maintenance comes from financial constraints,

⁷ Ibid P.55

but also frees capital to be invested elsewhere. Disinvestment by landlords is followed by a generalised institutional oblivion in the area and finally, when the rent collected no longer covers the cost comes abandonment, when buildings are vacated because they are no longer profitable.

Cheap locations, many times in the form of old buildings, old properties and housing plots can be purchased and rehabilitated for less than the cost of a comparable new house. (Smith, 1996) This is mainly happening due the existence of rundown or conflictive neighbourhoods along a growing expense to build in green fields in the outside of the city which become factors that could go independent to the consumer preferences.

Provision-side explanations minimise a number of factors including life-style changes, preference patterns, and simple descriptions of demographic change. "... there is a series of closely related economic arguments. As the cost of newly constructed housing has risen rapidly in the post-war city and its distance from the city centre has increased, the rehabilitation of inner-and central city structures is seen to be more viable economically" (Smith 1984) The implicit assumption behind these explanations is the land and housing markets and the role of institutional agents and of capital, rather than consumers, in sculpting the urban landscape.

According to the theories, of the consumer sovereignty, suburbanization reflects a preference for space and the increased ability to pay for it due to the reduction of transportation alternation of preferences and/or a change in the constraints determining which preferences will or can be implemented.⁸

Gentrification, according to this perspective, results from the private and public investment of capital in certain land uses, its devaluation through use and disinvestment, and the resulting opportunity for profitable reinvestment that is thereby created, (Smith, 1984) acknowledging but minimising in this way, the role of the consumers, and even more the potential performance of the existing residents.

⁸ Ibid P.52

The forces of acquisition.

The city is of night, perchance of death, but certainly of night; for never there can come the lucid morning's fragrant breath after the dewy morning's cold grey air.

Thomson. The City of the Dreadful Night

Gentrification is a phenomenon where a section of the population reevaluates and accepts the conditions and physical structure of the existing city. Starting from here, to understand why this is so particular, is helpful to keep in mind why, the old, central, dense city became a synonym of malevolence and precarious living conditions, especially in England and North America, and later in other more consolidated European and American cities.

A desperate search for work places and cheap living space combined with industrial capitalism massive induced migration to the big urban centres since the earlier stages of industrialization. (Beauregard 1988) This transformed the central areas of late nineteenth century cities, already dense, in overcrowded settlements, unable to supply sanitary infrastructure, police control, and services, which derived in congestion, pollution and conflict.

As part of the experience of suburbanization, the 20th-century American city became to be seen by the white middle class as an urban wilderness; it was, and for many still is, the habitat of disease and crime, danger and disorder⁹

Inner city neighbourhoods soon were transformed in the slums that gave the city connotations of a sick body with the need to be cured. Vast, central areas showed signs of continuous impoverishment, inhabited by a working population that, having no options, had to subdivide dwellings and could not attend the conservation of buildings, not only making look the area in bad conditions to the middle classes that

⁹Warner 1972 op cit Smith and Williams 1986

rapidly escaped, but with crime and health risks to its inhabitants, accentuated by environmental degradation, municipal corruption and “moral dangers”. (Beauregard 1988)

In Beauregard’s vision (1984), urban decline might reffer simultaneously to a drop of the number of city residents and an increase in crime in the schools, and then suddenly shift to become a convincing explanation for the closing of manufacturing plants or governmental budget in fiscal disarray.

Decay was responding to a situation of loss of economical activity in the inner city, due to the move of industries to the outer locations and the abandonment of the central areas. However this, the evolution of the productive system of the city restored in the centre tertiary activity, in the form of financial and highly specialized services, bringing back once again commuters but not residents.

The postmodern city a city of advanced services arranged around banking, finance, and administrative control. Its workers are affluent professionals who occupy gentrified neighbourhoods and consume urbanity. At its apogee, the postmodern city becomes a global city, with Los Angeles, New York City, Tokyo, and London serving as models. In this context, urban decline loses visibility.¹⁰

Consequently, after an intensification of these situations, the decayed central neighbourhoods start to represent a problem also to the local authorities. They were inhabited by a population with high services demands, such as elderly or poor people that contributed too little to the tax income, creating an unsustainable situation that pushed many city governments to the edge of the bankruptcy.

In the speculative increase in the desirability of the city centre the root causes were economic. On the one hand, the charging of excessive rents led to the intensification of land use and high residential densities. On the other hand, blighted districts, in

¹⁰ Beauregard, Robert. *Voices of Decline*. Blackwell UK-USA 1988 P. 13

which property values were stable or falling, often turned into slums: “areas of mixed land uses, overcrowded dwellings and worsening social conditions”. (Beauregard 1984) This facilitated the possibility for the acquisition of run down buildings in central locations to be converted and into affordable central locations for a growing section of the population interested in their reinhabitation.

The decline of industrial production and employment and the rapid growth of the so-called service sector along with information-oriented employment are only one aspect of this larger transformation. ¹¹

Habitually, the neighbourhoods to be gentrified are residential or former industrial areas located close to the central business district. This corresponds with this trend that explains gentrification as a result of the desire of the newcomers. These new inhabitants of the city commonly labelled the gentrifiers (Beauregard 1986) have to find attractive the neighbourhoods that are going to receive them, those who serve as the proximate investors in the gentrified housing. The concern is to explain how they came to be located in central cities with reproduction and consumption needs and desires compatible with gentrification process.

Often these gentrifiers find attractive from the neighbourhoods subject to gentrification particular amenities such as access to parks, historical and architectonical significance. “Moderate rehabilitation, for the most part, will make most housing suitable for “gentry”, and façade improvements will enhance the architectural qualities and contribute to mayor increases in the market value.” (Beauregard, 1984)

Buildings are purchased by affluent households or by intermediaries such as speculators or developers, starting with a process that follows with the upgrading of the housing stock, governmental investment in the surrounding environment, the concomitant changeover in local retail facilities, the stabilization of the neighbourhood and the enhancement of the tax base.

¹¹ Beauregard, Robert op cit Smith and Williams 1986 P. 5

With the development of post-industrial society, the rationale being the allocation of urban land to different uses is altered. Priorities are reversed; whatever the importance of production- based land use allocation in the industrial city, its consumption factors, taste and a certain aesthetic, as well as political forces, which come to dominate today.¹²

Acquisition based theories have given to the so called “new middle-class”, typified by the anecdotic “yuppie”, or by a classis conception of urban migration such as the “urban pioneers”, the explanation of gentrification. In my perception, is important the search of who are the “gentrifiers” but to base the understanding of the phenomena in a class division has the risk to reduce dynamism to it.

The “urban pioneers” are risking themselves and their savings to turn deteriorated and undesirable neighbourhood into a place for “good living.” A new urban life-style is touted; one which represents the consumerism and affluence of those unburdened by familiar responsibilities and economic stringencies.¹³

Try base assumptions with the effort of homogenize a group of population that by nature is so diverse such as young urban professionals is adding a difficulty and instability to a phenomena of urban change that can lead its analysis into a theoretical paralysis with little chances of productive success. These kind of groups have a few but not overwhelming common characteristics, and besides that, those will probably change rapidly in their common features such as “unburdened by familiar responsibilities and economic stringencies” (Beauregard in Smith 1986) and that change doesn’t have to mean that they will also do in the place that they have chosen to live.

The ostensible prototypical gentrifier is a single-person or two person household comprised of affluent professionals without children. These “gentry” are willing to take on the risk of investing in an initially deteriorated neighbourhood and the task of infusing a building with their sweat

¹² ibid P. 5

¹³ ibid.P.36

equity. Presumably, they desire to live in the city close to their jobs, where they can establish urbane life-style and capture financially secure position in the housing market. Their lack of demand for schools, commitment to preserving the neighbourhoods, support of local retail outlets and services, and contribution to the tax base are all view as beneficial for the city.¹⁴

“The new middle class are outward looking rather than inward looking. They have opened up their homes to visitors, and exposed them to the public gaze. They have removed the net curtains from their windows, and taken the shutters from their shops”. (Samuel 1982 quoted in Smith 1986). The impact of the gentrifiers should not be underrated to understand the phenomenon of gentrification. However, I disagree with those who are setting the explanations in the phenomena diminishing the relevance of other factors, specially in this case the one of the local communities participation.

The potential “Controlled Gentrification”.

In both of the previous explanations revised, gentrification is undesired by the actual inhabitants of the affected neighbourhoods due an implied displacement of the existing population as a natural outcome of renewal. The circumstances in which many times gentrification happened have made the very word highly unpopular. Immediately reminds to social conflicts and unfair urban situations, displacement of unprotected population or destruction of the valuable built fabric to accommodate the requirements of the new population.

In some contexts, this disliked condition is suspected to have its origins beyond economic or even social reasons, such as gender, racial and minority's rights, situation that, besides the confrontations that have created, starts to show the potential of the “gentrified” as an generative element of the process of gentrification. “Although residential displacement is recognized and empirically documented by researchers operating at this level, its extent and existence as problem have been debated”. (Beauregard 1984)

¹⁴ Ibid P.37

Can gentrification be used as a tool that offers a new possibility for run down areas in the inner city, brings new inhabitants and job opportunities, increases the quality of life of the existing population and restore or encourage the creation of a desired urban inclusion with a wider context?

The trends previously analysed are basing their explanations to understand gentrification in either in the factors of provision, this is, in the economical actors, in the form of developers, speculators or other foreign forces; in the side of the acquisition explanations the actors are the gentrifiers, attracted by the restoration of a desirability in the city, a process that is also coming from outside the zone that is going to suffer the transformation.

In this analysis of the gentrification phenomenon I'll focus on the factor of the gentrified. A process induced from the inside of the zone where gentrification will potentially occur. Generated and directed from the ones that traditionally are not considered as actors, but factors.

Taking in an orthodox way the term, this proposal has a potential inner contradiction due the exclusion of displacement as a condition, but, based on the factors of the trends previously analyzed, and illustrated in the sites elected for the next section, the possibility of a further debate could be open.

If gentrification is made from the inside, is not longer important if the inhabitants are neither rich nor poor, or if they a part of a minority group whatsoever; the factor that matters is the commitment of these to increase the quality of life offered by the neighbourhood. For this purpose a decline image is not helping. "... a declining city is one that has become less desirable as a place of residence and less attractive as a location for capital investment in commercial and industrial activities". (Beauregard 1984)

A change directed from the inside increases the possibilities of a commitment and involvement of the ones that are going to be affected, simply because is in their hands the decisions that will reshape the neighbourhood. If the residents take a role in the process of change, organize and develop tools and mechanisms, their interest can be promoted in a better, more efficient way.

There must be an understanding of the need of both the forces of acquisition and the ones of provision. Controlled gentrification can not dispense of these. The difference is that, if they are shaped by the interests of the existing residents, the outcomes have better chances of be in their benefit. After the process is made, some of the inhabitants might even take the decision to leave the neighbourhood, but it will be after receiving the profit of the transformation, not being just the victims of an uneven intervention.

The current social status and value of those refurbished dwellings are frequently in inverse relation to their size, and in any case enormously inflated by comparison with previous levels in their neighbourhoods. ¹⁵

If the existing population is not self sufficient in financial terms, the introduction of a wealthier population can be managed as a tool to cross-subsidize communal projects, to increase the desirability of their own homes and get revenues from this; this will also provide a greater source of taxes incomes to the local authority, condition that should be transformed in support and even protection if its needed, and more importantly it can reactivate their participation in their neighbourhood in the context of the city.

The spatial design takes particular relevancy in this inner-controlled process of gentrification. The physical transformation of the context is a generator by itself. Is also the visible result of an economical a social process of change, which also makes is tangible and gives the opportunity to evaluate the consequences.

¹⁵Op cit. Glass 1989. P.138

The touchable betterment of a once decayed environment, will encourage the local residents to continue with the programme and has the potential to increase their commitment and participation, and can also demonstrate that a mixture of residents, uses, incomes is not a synonym of unproductive confrontations, situation that, on the other hand, will also increase the participation of the gentrifiers and promoters, which again are necessary to generalize and support the transformation processes.

The gentrification phenomenon is proved to be of a complexity and difficulty beyond a predictable urban regeneration program. Involves too many factors, too many urban agents, is too conditioned to the context and situation of the site to be gentrified. It can be considered so dynamic that becomes unstable and therefore potentially uncontrollable. This when a contradictory term as controlled gentrification appears as an challenging tool to explore, analyze, experiment and try, with a encouraging chaos and unpredictability.

Yet, control doesn't have to mean to predict every result; is required to develop tools that can unleash dynamics powerful enough to provide new options to confront situations that were not anticipated.

Regardless of the apparent ungraspable universe of factors, carefully designed structures of decision making, achievable scaled goals, clarity in the directions and strategic and promptly transformations can be enough to release forces that will ensure that the change that is about to occur take the desired direction, letting free most of the possible results but anticipating and materializing pieces of certain key spatial, tangible goals that will allow greater commitment to achieve a desired balance.

Is the question looking to respond if gentrification should be done or not? Is gentrification implying undesired displacements? Perhaps the question has to be redirect and answer more specific factors as how, when, by whom and with what purpose gentrification should be done.

Second Part.

DECAY -Gentrification-

-Tools for the transformation of the centre fringe.

Is a process of change such as gentrification offering a new possibility of inclusion in the dynamics of the city to the decayed neighbourhoods of the centre fringe?

Can a process of decay-gentrification be translated into opportunity for better quality of life for both the actual inhabitants of these neighbourhoods and for a new population to come?

Are these neighbourhoods in the centre fringe flexible enough to offer accommodation to the diverse activities and programs that the transformation of the city is demanding?

As the debate in the first part summarised, gentrification is not a single-faced easy to explain phenomena of change in the contemporary city. There are diverse factors

that, in one way or another, are always present in the process of neighbourhood transformation, and that have to be considered to rebalance their potency in order to achieve a desired direction. To make a better understanding of the phenomena, I'll try to illustrate in three different examples of gentrification some of the tools, strategies and mechanism applied.

The examples chosen are illustrations of how gentrification have been made including the existing residents not as passive receivers of the effects but as participants, creating a balanced process in different contexts. How a change operated from the inside, attending at the same time a logic required to ensure a provision and to promote an acquisition has resulted in successful interventions.

Even though in the three samples the tools, strategies and even outcomes are different, to make them comparable I took the ones that are sharing the characteristics in the existing composition of the neighbourhood. Among the many zones of the city where gentrification can take place, I am particularly interested in those that were once inner-city industrial districts and due the changes of productive activities of the city have gradually lost their participation in the productive dynamics, experiencing processes of decay and population loss. These neighbourhoods are in most of the former industrial cities, and usually have things in common:

Firstly, an inner-city location makes them highly attractive to the "gentrifiers", individuals or families that, regardless their economical or family situation, are looking for central locations due several reasons, going from the desire to be close to their work places till the will to have a urban life-style. (Beauregard in Smith and Williams 1986) Investors and developers who are looking to put money in housing developments will find possibilities to make profitable investments here. And, most importantly, the existing residents have decided to stay after having the option to move, due the convenience to stay in their central location.

Secondly, their condition of former industrial districts makes them zones with vast empty spaces in the form of old housing, warehouses, dilapidated factories and

obsolete infrastructure; brown fields with a great potential of transformation, with a devaluated land value, which makes them a very attractive land to redevelop. The condition of the occupied housing is likely to be suitable to improve, which will increase the will of their inhabitants to be included in opportunities of change.

Thirdly, these neighbourhoods have gradually lost population. Currently, their population is either low density or in precarious conditions. Some of these districts were never meant to be residential, but have adapted through the years with a provision of services that now are in a need of improvement. This condition can both give to the new comers plenty of space to settle down and an opportunity to restore or improve the conditions of the ones that are already there. The need of provision is high, which again, have the potential to attract investors looking for profitable locations.

Composition of the centre fringe.

The industrialisation process in the ninetieth century lead western cities into a unrestrained growth in population and wealth, expanding their economic dynamism and with this their size, population and territory.

Many times beyond any possible control or planning, the development of new and every time bigger infrastructures, the provision of housing stock and the integration of the new comers to the structure of the city over passed the capacity of the planners, whose responses attended the emergency and eventually could not satisfy the unpredictable and voracious demands of the new situation.

The transformation of the city was accelerated and soon the roles of the neighbourhoods were distorted. The centre of the city, densely inhabited and usually retaining the power and economical institutions, lost its capability to accommodate

all the work places created by the new industries, and the ones that did it polluted air and water and congested life, reaching the point that who could escape from these centres did it, leaving there either the ones who couldn't afford to live in a cleaner and more desirable environment or the ones who could afford to force the old fabric at great expense, generating spaces generally by a ruling class wanting to symbolise political and economical power.

This self exclusion from the centre, very visible in the case of English and North American cities but slightly different in central European cities, encouraged a territorial expansion, a constant suburbanization to the surroundings, an exodus of the middle classes from the central city that placed the dwellings every time at greater distances from the centre and work places, and accentuated the conception of the city as a place not suitable for living.

Eventually, the big companies that once dominated the core of industrialized cities, either in their need to grow or due a tertiarisation of space in central areas (Von Herren 2002), moved to outer locations in a wider metropolitan or even regional scheme, abandoning the old industrial districts that once attracted hundreds of commuters every day which lost their role in the city context and have laid almost functionless for decades.

More recently, the over-comodification of central locations has brought these areas back to the city planning debate. The pattern of population movement is more intra urban than suburban-urban. And also intrametropolitan migrations are not longer related with the job places, now they are more related with the housing offers and conditions. (Nel.lo, 2001) The following cases are examples of how the transformation of the centre fringe has been done by different processes of gentrification that were generated from the inside of the neighbourhood, with the direct participation of the potential gentrified.

The role of cooperatives

The south Bank. London.

The derelict state of the South Bank in London is not responding to a complete abandonment but to disequilibrium in the uses. This is a neighbourhood that until World War II was used primarily to riverside warehousing, industrial and some residential use and by 1970 was already largely derelict, but ironically not due a lack of activity.

The area between Waterloo Bridge and Blackfriars Bridge on the south bank of the River Thames, suffered a process of change responding to the situation that was immersed the whole city in the years of the reconstruction after the Second World War.

Although the construction of massive cultural infrastructures like the Royal Festival Hall and years later the location of the headquarters of big companies such as IBM ensured that activity and economical resources stayed in the area, the neighbourhood remained in derelict conditions until recently, moment when an innovative process of renewal and directed gentrification took place.

Fully mutual Housing Co-operatives joined forces to achieve a long term basis development of mixed uses with the innovative and effective system that allowed



The area was highly developed in the 1970s and 1980 with big office complex with workers that commuted every day from other zones of the city. (Coin street Community builders, 2003)

subsidised cast-rent and market housing, affordable homes, shops, restaurants and flats. (Coin street Community builders, 2003)

The central location of the area permitted the construction of large new office buildings in the 1970s, that included shops restaurants and minor services. The developers, clearly focusing the facilities provided to a population that do not habited here, placed the retail and other activities in inner streets or inside the buildings. The street frontages outside remained dead since the majority of the people that wander in the area where commuters that work by day but not lived here. Even with this day time activity, "the population decreased from 50.000 to 4.000 people. Schools and shops closed and increasingly those who lived in, worked in or visited the area described it as bleak". (Coin street Community builders, 2003)

Pollution, congestion and crowded housing have all eased a bit as industry and residents have moved to areas beyond the urban cores. Much urban governmental aids had become tied to population size and any diminution in number of people meant a loss of intergovernmental revenue.¹⁶

A serious interest of the local council in the repopulation of the area can be deduced. If the area is being used only for offices and the commuters use the facilities but don't pay for them, sooner or later there is going to be a mismatch in the balance of the government incomes, where they spend more than they receive.

A strong growth of the services in the central cites, renewal capital of investment, and the retention and even return of the middle class had strengthened the city "Newly emerging factors of strength are reversing the tide which ran against job opportunities and the attractiveness of living in our large cities" A basic cause of urban decline, -the lack of an economic function- was being removed.¹⁷

There is not a will to make a *tabula rasa*, a clearance. The local government is in the opposite position, they want to increase the population to get more revenues, and

¹⁶ Beauregard, Robert. *Voices of Decline*. Blackwell UK-USA 1988. P. 238

¹⁷ Ibid p. 228

there is where the local communities can direct how this encouragement is going to change their conditions of living.

Mixed development was the emblem of an organization that had as main objective the construction of affordable housing for the actual residents. At the same time, they allowed, encouraged and controlled the introduction of large investments of private capital coming from new, wealthier inhabitants that were attracted by the favourable process of change and renewal activated in this central district of London.

The city was being rediscovered because it offered something different and better than the suburbs: a range of opportunities and amenities that appealed to young, urban professionals and affluent households of all ages.¹⁸

The new inhabitants were going to bring not only fresh resources to the area, but a whole new dynamism that, in order to make it compatible with the interest of the existing community had to be directed by some kind of mechanism.

The system works with a cross-subsidising scheme in which the social enterprise in charge does not distribute the profits from its commercial activities but uses them to reinvest them in activities and works that otherwise could not be viable. (Coin street Community builders, 2003) There is a committee that decides who is permitted to enter the cooperative. They make a special training to these families or individuals, ensuring their commitment with the social project. After this, they are allowed to own only half of the total value of the dwelling, affordable high quality flats or homes, and the other half is retained by this cooperative. The inhabitants are authorized to sell their part of the property at anytime they want, but only to the mutual organization, which will ensure that speculation is controlled and will fix the price based in their social principles, not in the desirability of the renewed location.

¹⁸ Ibid P. 252

A network of independent cooperatives has control over a big part of the neighbourhood, which ensures that the revenues are reinvested in the betterment of the services and infrastructure needed.

The transformation of the neighbourhood became evident after several years of efforts of the cooperative. First they needed to acquire a several properties in derelict conditions in the area, and slowly started to implement the change. In the moment that the change became tangible, the desirability of the neighbourhood increased, and speculation started to happen.

The refurbishment and betterment of the public areas made very tangible in spatial terms what were the objectives that the organization was looking to achieve, creating a process in which visitors from other areas of the city were attracted, first to spend leisure time in the area, and latter to invest and even to move in, adding this once industrial neighbourhood to a catalogue of desired living options in the inner city, without the need to expel the current residents.

Even though the mechanisms implemented by the cooperatives in this area seems to be intricate, fragile and inflexible, is remarkable how these kinds of measurements can make affordable housing compatible with high rise office buildings containing very expensive floor rents, that, in words of the cooperative, now depend upon the decisions of these group of not wealthy population that by means of self organization and correct administration gained enough legal power to ensure that their homes and neighbourhood could be defended against speculation of big capitals.

The cooperative has played a crucial role in the development of this project. They have the support of the inhabitants and local authorities, and have complex organizational hierarchies that, among other things, have successfully controlled speculation and have directed the gentrification process in the direction that they think is useful. They have achieve so much power that they administratively control some of the neighbouring office building (www.open.org.uk)



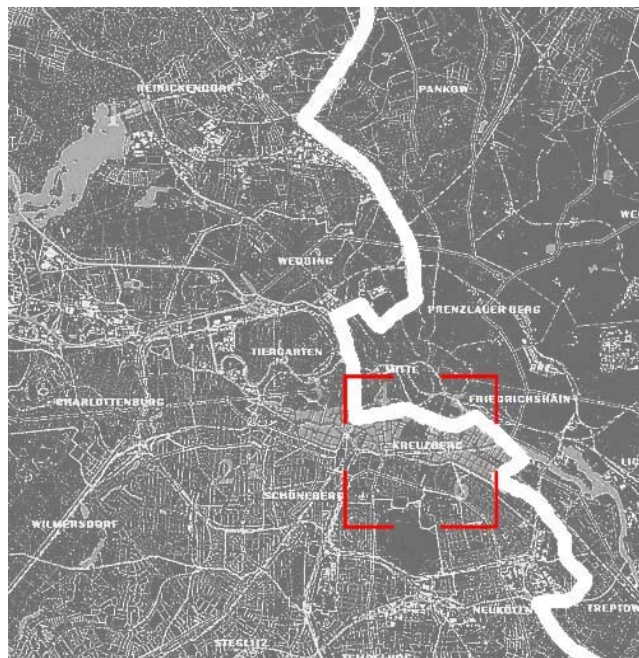
Cautious progressive gentrification by self-building.

Kreuzberg, Berlin.

This neighbourhood is profoundly affected by the political-historical conditions that surround it. Seriously damaged during the Second World War, remained semi abandoned for years; later centrifuged from its physical central location to the periphery by the adjacent Berlin wall, it was filled with Turkish families that came as visiting workers and finally stayed there.

The eastern German working-class that once inhabited completely disappeared; the neighbourhood also lost the western inhabitants that could afford to move after the wall was erected. This situation continued and latter it was transformed by the regained condition of centrality in its position in the middle of the new capital of the reunited Germany.

Despite the new condition created by the German reunification that has changed again its role in the city's context, an interesting process of transformation started in the mid 1980s, and event though seriously traumatised by the new political conditions, it has continued until now, changing the participation of the neighbourhood in the system of the city.



Even though Kreuzberg is in a central location of Berlin, the political conditions –represented with the Wall- centrifuged it into a peripheral location, postponing its desirability for many years and allowing a process of decay that nevertheless didn't prevent a vibrant inner life. (Internationale Baustellung Berlin 1987)

The centrality condition of the neighbourhood started to be recovered even before the fall of the wall; by the beginning of the eighties the neighbourhood was identified by diverse groups as very desirable, being the presence of the wall not only less apprehensive but also a challenging element to have as a particular amenity in the neighbourhood.

A process of insertion of new population was carried on without displacement of the existing population, at the same time that the reinhabitation of old industrial buildings to accommodate intra-neighbourhood relocations and newcomers.

With a population of old people and Turkish immigrants, the economical resources in the decades after the Second World War were very limited in the neighbourhood, situation that led it to deficient conservation of its fabric. Old buildings were in derelict conditions, semi destroyed factories laid abandoned in the same block that housing, light industry and facilities and the dwellings were many times overcrowded by the illegal immigrants that had no other affordable options to settle down. However this, the neighbourhood had a vibrant life in the streets and its position in one of the more conflictive boundaries of the world was displaced to a second term.

Evaluating the situation where the permanence of the existing families and urban structure was endangered by a lack of conservation, the International Building Exhibition IBE congress of 1984 proposed a way to develop the neighbourhood.

Having to fix attainable goals, it was suggested to maintain and improve the living conditions of their habitants, aiming to a renewal that could be sustained without great sums of money or massive destructions of buildings.

The high level of debt of Berlin, the shortcomings in economic growth expected from Reunification and the slow but regular demographic haemorrhage do not offer much room for manoeuvre to Berlin public decision-makers in redressing local finances,

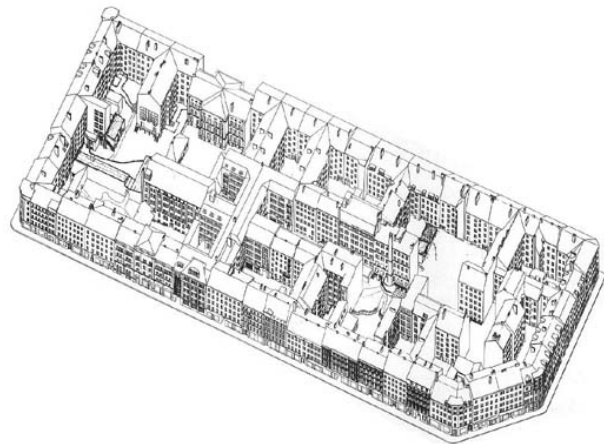
furthering economic development and helping distressed urban areas within the city.

19

This intervention was called Careful Urban Renewal, and was a complex, long term basis plan that started from the inside to the outside not only of the community, but from the buildings, from very specific conditions to general parameters of intervention.

Being a not tertiarised zone, small industries, sweatshops, familiar workshops and other kind of job places remained in this area as the income for many families that instinctively applied the concept of work-live units. In the moment of the intervention by the authorities, was agreed that if noise and other pollution is not too great, light industry and craft projects are retained and encouraged. This meant that most of the small industries stayed here after the renovation, only a couple of big complexes were expelled due its nature²⁰, not longer compatible with the predominant living activity.

The success of this process is owed to the great level of commitment attain by the population that lived here that were sensitively encouraged to perform by themselves the transformation process. The self refurbish of their dwellings, was in many cases the only possibility that many families had to stay in the area and improve their living conditions.



The existing population –old people or Turkish families- didn't had the economical resources to keep the build stock in good conditions. However, the area remained with a consolidated urban fabric. (Internationale Baustellung Berlin 1987)

¹⁹ Public Governance and territorial development directorate *Urban Renaissance study of Berlin..* Territorial development policy committee. Paris. 2003, P. 84

²⁰ Internationale Baustellung Berlin 1987. *Careful urban renewal in Kreuzberg, Berlin.* S.T.E.R.N. Gesellschaft der behutsamen Staderneuerung Berlin mbH. Berlin. 1989

In other zones an alternative to this would be a demolition of the highly built blocks to insert new, less dense housing; an intervention in this way will be too expensive and would have meant the expulsion of the residents, opting for the decision that is preferable to have densely built-up areas than the loss of cheap flats.

The slow yet successful improvement, increased the spatial quality of the area, situation that encouraged a progressive insertion of new population with greater resources, increasing the desirability of the area by its physical qualities and social diversity, and allowed a mixture that renamed the zone.

The west of the Kreuzberg District, the home of punks, Turks and activist and a rich assortment of Europe's "others". Turks (known as *gestarbeiter* or guest-workers) were actively encouraged to settle in the West Berlin to replace the thousands of east Berlin workers lost when the wall was erected. It was entirely run down during the Cold War years, but attempts are now being made to gentrify the area, although this programme seems to be moving rather slow.²¹

The combination of new and old fabric was central in the objectives of the intervention. The change performed inside the flats, self build by its inhabitants but aided by an inner organised common funds, was discreet in the façades of the buildings, creating a process in which the immediate spatial benefits of the increase on the quality of life were perceived firstly by the ones already living there, who affirmed their commitment and will to stay in the neighbourhood, situation that facilitated the effort done later to change the public spaces.

The residual spaces happening in between buildings, in abandoned locations, in poorly visible areas were treated with the potential to supply the lack of quality public spaces and recreational areas for children and elderly that the zone had.

Once more, an strategy based in voluntary personal work and a self administrated aid to prioritize the interventions, ensured a systematic betterment in the visible realm

²¹ Massey, Anne. *Blue Guide Berlin and Eastern Germany*. A&C Black London. 1984 P. 85

of the area, inviting more newcomers to settle down there, and other investors that got interested in the booming intervention made.

These system continued until was possible to achieve the improvement of spaces such as schools, community centres and even pavements, that consolidated the process as an alternative of gentrification with the active participation and permanence of the existing residents.



Very eloquent spatial transformations ensured that the small amount of financial resources available was combined with the local voluntary help, achieving spaces that encouraged and engaged the participation in the debate. (Internationale Baustellung Berlin, 1987)

The Local authority in charge.

The case of Poble Nou, Barcelona.

Contrary to what happened in northern cities of Europe or anglo-saxon experiences, Barcelona has always been densely populated, very intense in mixed in uses and the quintessential of a compact settlement. Gentrification in Mediterranean cities, could be argued, is not a comparable phenomena with the one happening in these other cities.

However this, the district of Poble Nou, with its background of industrial uses and perceived as the periphery of the city, could be considered as a Mediterranean version of what the industrial cities of the ninetieth century were.

The Poblenou had its origins in the expansion of the city in the 18th and 19th centuries. It was at one time spoken of as the “Catalan Manchester” and was an industrial zone based on textile manufacture that subsequently diversified into other industries such as machinery, chemicals and foodstuffs. In 1965 it entered a phase of de-industrialization leading to its present situation.²²

To understand the process experienced here, as many other neighbourhood transformations in recent years in Barcelona, is significant to emphasize the role of the local authority. Since the election of the city as host of the Olympic Games, more than ten years ago, the *Ajuntament* has participated in the renewal of big portions of the city with diverse tools and mechanisms, obtaining different grades of success in the outcomes, some of which,



Gentrification has not been widely discussed outside Britain, Australia, Canada and North America. Even though there is not a precise translation of the word in Spanish, Barcelona, among other cities, is living a similar process.

²² Zhai, Tao. *Unscrambling the Knowledge City. City of Knowledge Project in Barcelona* Dissertation MA in Urban Design, University of Greenwich. London 2003

mostly in the recent interventions, had turned into polemics due the radicalization of the process (Haselmayer, 2003) resulting in a loss of credibility by sections of the population (Von Herren 2001).

In the project of renewal of Poble Nou the participation of the *Ajuntament* as an actor is even more important than in other projects; concerned by the fact that the productive structure of the city is changing rapidly, which caused that between 1963 and 1990 the neighbourhood lost 1,326 industrial enterprises.,(*Ajuntament de Barcelona* in Zhai, 2003) they ideated a plan to offer the possibility of a shift in the nature of the industrial activities, idea that are using as justification to revert the derelict condition of the neighbourhood.

This ambitious plan is basically consisting in the introduction of “Knowledge based industries” in the area, and a big amount of office floor space, along housing and mixed use developments. This has transformed the participation of the powerful local authority in a combination of business promoter and urban planner, without diminishing their commitment as the catalyst for fair social interest.

Given that, the election of Poble Nou to be gentrified was neither based in a speculative rampage nor purely in social benefit; Barcelona has a strong tradition of neighbourhood organizations that usually derive in conflictive social upraise. The existing population living in the whole district is something like 5,000 families (*Ajuntament de Barcelona*), -very few in the scale of the Barcelonan context-. Most of them are living in old derelict six stories high buildings, very dispersed in the territory, which makes them not solidly organized. This vulnerability increased the responsibility of the local Council to control the speculation process that will occur after the conditions are provided.

The aim of the project 22@ is a renewal of Poble Now to create an urban district where housing is compatible with the new kind of industries and services, oriented towards the activities of “knowledge” such as training, research and publication of

new technologies. At the same time, it will solve the needs of facilities of the neighbourhood. Apart of the rehabilitation of old housing, its programmed to construct four thousand new units, a quarter of them to rent.²³

The *Ajuntament* takes here one more role. It has to take part as the gentrified. As a previous experience of this kind of participation, we can see the case of the Barceloneta neighbourhood, which was protected from the speculators and with this able to keep a considerable amount of the existing population, and at the same time they manage to introduce a significant but subtle resident diversification, maintaining the identity of the neighbourhood and simultaneously increasing the quality of life of its inhabitants.

In ten years, the population changed, but in a gradual manner; the strategy employed was the generational renovation, this means that old people living here simply passed away and freed some space, or that other residents decided to sell their apartments due the increase of its value, and this way they could afford another place that suits better to their needs, many times inside the same neighbourhood.

However this, the *Ajuntament* has also performed cases of displacement that have had not the same positive results, like the case of the Raval, where a big part of the “undesirable” population was removed to give place to more “decent” citizens and activities.

The open displacement of poor families and their commerce and activities from the area, along the discontent created, affected the traditional conformation of the neighbourhood, and the intervention was quickly translated into a social fight against the undesired practices of renewal. This has lead into a constant



The neighbourhood has an attractive and flexible architectonical heritage that is helping to prevent *tabula Rasa* interventions. www.bcn.es

²³ Ajuntament d' Barcelona. Show Room in sant Jaume Square, July 2003

opposition to other projects of the local council that do not involve uneven displacement or social substitution, generated a discontent that led to a situation in which the processes take longer and are made in a more difficult way than before.

As a result of these experiences, the role of the local authority has been almost institutionalised as the voice of the residents. They have promulgated their commitment openly. Pere Serra, in a promotional publication, said:

The renewal programs have to follow three main characteristics. Firstly, the actual population of the neighbourhood has to stay. If their dwellings are going to be demolished, not only new housing has to be provided but also provisional housing. To ensure that this kind of permanence is definitive, broader social programs should go with these urban measures, such as the creation of jobs and social support structures.

Secondly, the management of the works should be done *in situ*. Groups of neighbours should be involved in the process along the specialists that will participate, trying to keep the parts as communicated as possible. Thirdly, if the goal is to benefit the actual inhabitants of the neighbourhood, it makes no sense to take actions if the neighbours have not agreed. Discontent in the inhabitants will not only slow down the works, but also compromise the legitimacy of the project.²⁴

Despite this governmental, highly social protective disposition shown, according to the studies made recently (Nel.lo, 2001), the majority of the population that is thinking in changing residence in the next five years in Barcelona is young population, between 18 and 29 years old; they have higher education and have medium or high incomes. This



Most of the industries are gone and left the area full of empty buildings in derelict conditions. The population in the area is very small for the compact Barcelonan context.

²⁴ Serra i Amengual, Pere, Barris on remodelació a Barcelona, in 1999 *urbanisme a Barcelona*. Ajuntament de Barcelona. 1999. P 168

profile does not match with the one of the existing population; 4000 of the people that is living in the area is depending on the few industries that remain there.

Although these industries are allowed to stay, to keep their facilities and continue operating, with the new regulations, they are not allowed to expand (Haselmayer, 2003), this means, on the one hand, that the revenues that are making now is practically the top they will make. On the other hand, the increase of the land value that will happen is going to make the selling of these once cheap, old warehouses in a tempting way to make big profit. This is going to “gentrificate” the industries there. They will find more revenues moving outside the city that staying there.

The local community, depending in these industries, is going to be directly affected by this displacement for the reason that what is going to happen immediately after these industries go, is that the so protected dwellings will be populated by people that will have to either commute to their old jobs located in new locations or leave to other zones closer to them.

On the other hand, the central metropolitan location and attractive physical environment equipped with modern infrastructure of Poblenou will be driving forces for the investors from all over the world. With these precondition, the new industry amalgamation will return to the city, to the new knowledge-based city.²⁵

The developers claim that they are creating a lot more job opportunities with higher wages than before, which could be absolutely true, but recent experience shows that the local community can't access to this jobs, simply because they are not qualified.

The current inhabitants are not going to be directly expelled, but they will not increase their quality of life, if they decide to commute every day, or to find a minor work place in the new offers.

Even though the results have to be seen, it can be expected that sooner or later displacement is going to happen, the *Ajuntament* knows it, and also knows that, if

²⁵ Op cit Zhai 2003

they play their cards wisely, the outcome of this actions could be certainly beneficial for the region, the city, and the neighbourhood, in economical and promotional terms.

The performance of the gentrified.

The intervention of the potential gentrified is a crucial factor in the three processes of urban change previously revised. The participation of this population is of a very diverse nature, yet is continuously present as a generator of a gentrification phenomena, whit the contradictory introduction of wealthier population without the expelling of the existing residents.

The tools employed can be examined and tested in a phenomenological way by the spatial realization of the proposals. This kind of interaction has also the potential to encourage the actors to involve further in the actions taken, ensuring with this a dynamism that later could be enriched by their participation as evaluators of the results, making possible an argument beyond theoretical terms, engaging a wider public that could be valuable with their commitment in spite of their possible lack of specialized knowledge.

This tangible materialization is also helping to attract other possible “gentrifiers” by the increased desirability of and area, situation that, again, will unleash dynamics that can derive in beneficial outcomes.

However, the inner generated process present in the three cases analyzed is facilitated by a population that significantly reduced. This has various sides. One, the governability in small communities where the sharing of goals are more direct to

visualize is probably easier than in neighbourhoods with very numerous and diverse individuals with dissimilar aspirations. Two, there is an implicit vulnerability of these small groups against the forces of big, organized capitals or even against the agenda of the local authority. Three, in the side of the local government, artificial solutions can be proposed if the social discontent turns out to risky, such as subsidized housing inside the same area, specific facilities or compensatory amenities.

Third Part.

Spatiality of gentrification.

The disposition of the physical elements resulting from and for the transformation of a building or neighbourhood, based in a careful design, is an important element upon which the materialization of any gentrification process –in this case the controlled gentrification- has the potential to act as a generator by itself and also as an illustration of theories and strategies.

Therefore, the physical transformation of the city is not only the outcome of the process undertaken to control or direct the changes that gentrification is creating in the area; the change in a specific building is both the result and the process. The spatial effects that have, not only in its permanent but also ephemeral inhabitants, - and in a wider perspective for the whole city- does not act as a finished process; a constant evolution of the actions required to generate the change that is occurring can be witnessed in the daily performance of the building.

A phenomenological approach based in a spatial analysis gives also the possibility of a more direct understanding of the actual effects that this continuous process is

unleashing by the actors that participate in the controlled gentrification process: the current inhabitants, the planners, the investors and the potential newcomers; is a more direct way to analyze the evolution of the factors and the outcome of theoretical, many times abstract proposals.

Is an extension of the change -social, economical and physical- based in the spatial effects of the building by itself? Is a constant experimentation-evaluation-adjustment a valuable process to improve and monitor proposals of this kind? Is the transformation of the domestic realm reshaping the dynamics of the area? Is it useful to evaluate the process of controlled gentrification with a spatial analysis?

The intricacy of the domestic space.

As in any other project of urban transformation, is worth to consider in the gentrification process, -even though could be difficult not only to theorize but to complete understand- the personal decision that the potential gentrified and also the gentrifiers, as an individual –or group of individuals in the form of a couple of family- chooses, implicitly discarding other options: these transformed, inner city neighbourhoods are elected as the place where they believe they will better spend their lives.

A complex series of interconnected reasons combined with desires, expectations, and preferences is what lead a certain population to decide among different ways to materialize what they think will be the best form of the space in which they will settle down.



The housing model elected is a strong factor to define the shape of the city.

The domestic space, locked in its shape by a defended individuality, in its role of the container of the most important space for its inhabitants, is, at the end, what forms the main body of the city. The materialization and collectivization of its form is determinant to configure a specific urban composition.

As whole, the city is formed by a great diversity of materialization of domestic variations which combines and interacts to perform as the complex system that the cities are; the nature of these diversity of domestic unities is to evolve and transform to respond to the plurality of answers that are requested.

British reasons.

The English home represents the ideal of overcoming to the time forces; to leave a lasting trace to their descendants, to construct a history in the context of the home. "Here is the reign of the man and he controls what happens in it" (Marcus 1999). The possession of a house is what closed a circle around the family.

In the house's physical qualities mattered as a bulwark against the losses effected by the passage of time and as a embodiment of a persistent, unchanging version of the past that could be transmitted to future generations.²⁶

Pretend to be surrounded by greenery is one of the common aspirations of the English home. In the imaginarium of the ideal home it is supposed to be drowned in nature, simulating the countryside, but knowing the impossibility of being there due the lack of space, the commuting distance and the price of the land, the possible green is no more than a



London has a housing stock predominantly with suburban characteristics and a long tradition of rejection to inner city living.

²⁶ Marcus, Sharon. *Apartment Stories*. University of California Press. Los Angeles. 1999. P.92

symbolism of what is ought to be. It is a filter of nature between the outside world and the sacred interior of the house. The home was to be a “physically enclosed refuge that isolated its inhabitants from contact with other house holds, the street, and the city’s public spaces and institutions”. (Marcus 1999).

The city desirable?

The previously exposed gives to a phenomenon such as gentrification a particular special meaning in London: The city has become an attractive place to live.

Already during the nineteenth century, the main status symbol of the aspiring middle classes was some version of the aristocratic country side (or better still the acquisition of the genuine article); later white collar and manual workers in steady employment asserted their position in suburban villa- or in a substitute for a suburban villa. It was mainly the poorer sections of the metropolitan working class-specially the people of the East End and of the southern riverside boroughs- who wanted to stay behind de “good old London” and who have throughout retained their loyalties to their own districts. But even they have had to participate increasingly in the suburban exodus.²⁷

Many things could be said about British anti-urbanism; the aim of this research is not in this direction, but is helpful to underline the importance of gentrification in anglo-saxon societies. The fact that the gentry, the “class just bellow the nobility”²⁸ have chosen the city instead of the country side –in opposition of a history of romance with the no-city- as the place where they will risk their savings and move in to live, is talking about a shift in the conception of the city as a undesired need, a place to work, make business and politics to a place where good quality of life can be achieved.

Deep in the mind of every Roman, as in the mind of every Greek, was the unquestioned conviction which Aristotle put into words: Man’s body and animal

²⁷ Op cit Glass, Ruth.1989. P 153

²⁸ Oxford Dictionary of English, 1996 p.455

existence might be satisfied by the country; his spiritual needs could only be satisfied by the town. But for the northern peoples, public life needs no town... the towns as a mere economic fact, a place where man only makes a live hood and finding room for the development of his higher faculties only in the country.²⁹

The causes of gentrification are probably closer to economic and political motivations than symbolic or spiritual, and even though recently the gentrification phenomena is conformed more of intra-urban migrations than people from the country side, is remarkable that the places that fashionable people are gentrifying are precisely those who belonged to the ones that could not escape to the suburbs, -the symbol of the merge of the countryside with the urban- and now they are looking forward to move to those old industrial rundown buildings in neighbourhoods that no more than a generation ago were seen as the places to escape from.

This is why gentrification represents a complete different trend of the way to see housing. Is not fortuitous that in the whole last century London's suburbs growth exponentially but have remained with the same structure, which is presumably their eloquent expression of anti urbanism. The eager to have a flat in the city was materialized in the successful renovation of an old warehouse with a very hard urban context which is talking of a shift in the way housing priorities for English are perceived.

Besides that, one of the factors that can ensure the permanence of a specific type is its capacity to mutate, to evolve and adjust to an ever changing expectations of what should the living space be. This flexibility, paradoxically, is what allows the city to remain apparently the same without the need of dramatic structural



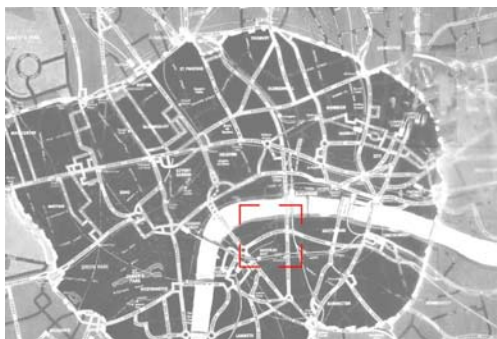
The bank of England rotunda appear as ruins. Even before it was build, the architect, Sir John Soane, wanted to se his masterpiece surrounded by nature instead of an urban context. The idea of the future ruin blended picturesque visual pleasure with the subilime frisson of temporal doom consoled by architectural immortality. (Richardson and Stevens 1999)

²⁹ Glass, Ruth. *Cliches of urban Doom*. Basil Blackwell. 1989. London. **P.41**

changes in the configuration of the dwelling type; the interior space evolves and adapts itself to the new needs required; the new aggregations successfully placed try to dialog with the majority of the existing stock and the outline essence of the city is allowed to remain without endangering the adequacy that it will have for the new, probably very different inhabitants to come.

The OXO Tower housing development.

Not only has the fact that inner city housing has become desirable made the project of the OXO tower paradigmatic. A complex combination of mixed uses in the same building along its focalization to different social groups started to put an end to the common belief that the only outcome of a successful renewal is a process of gentrification in which the poor residents are irremediably expelled.



Localization of the OXO Tower in the South Bank. The proximity to the Thames, its closeness to the City of London -the financial area- and the West End, along its high connectivity makes it, only for its location, a very desirable place. (www.open.co.uk)

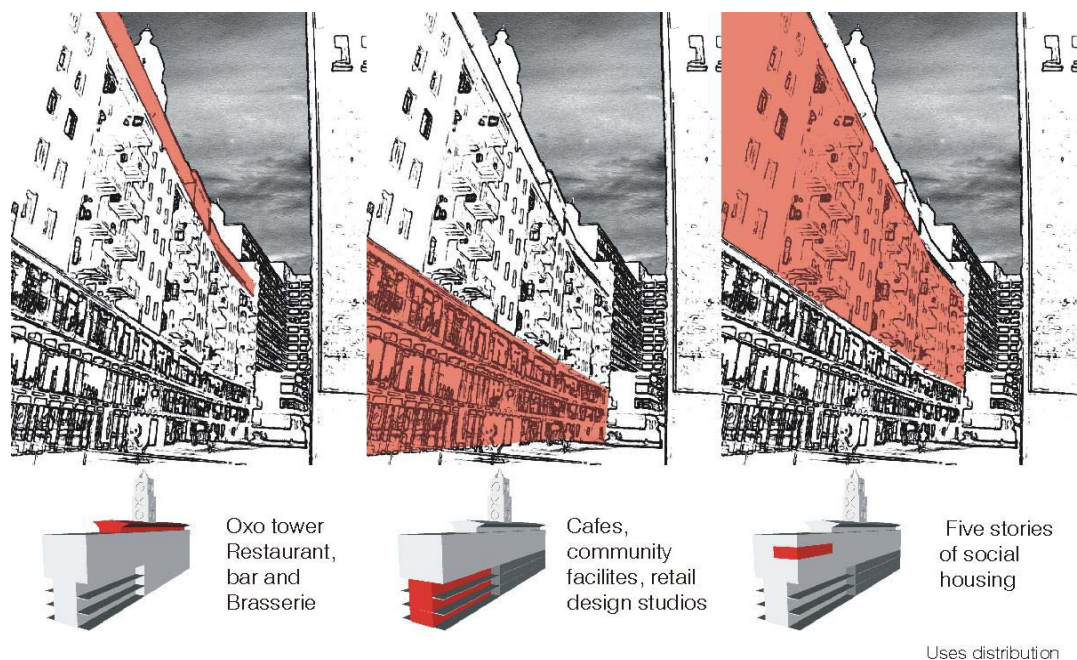
This makes this a model of cross subsidizing intervention that has worked not only as an example of mixed use development and preservation of historic buildings, but also as a case of controlled gentrification, in which the monies of the newcomers looking for central location in highly visible points has worked as an effective way to improve the quality of life of the existing residents by the investment of the revenues in the betterment of the dwellings and public spaces; but more important than that is the fact that demonstrated that a process of gentrification, -understood as the introduction of middle classes into a rundown neighbourhood- does not have to necessarily imply the expelling of the working class inhabitants of the area, that, in this case, are still coexisting with different social classes and even getting profit from their presence.

In addition to this, there was shift to count on the success of the project in the beneficial effects of a quality spatial design instead of quantitative achievements, situation that is very tangible for the residents, for the occasional visitors, and for potential gentrifiers. This widening of the recognition of the essential actors is a very important part of a strategy that integrates other phenomenon beyond the established ones.

High mixability in uses and users.

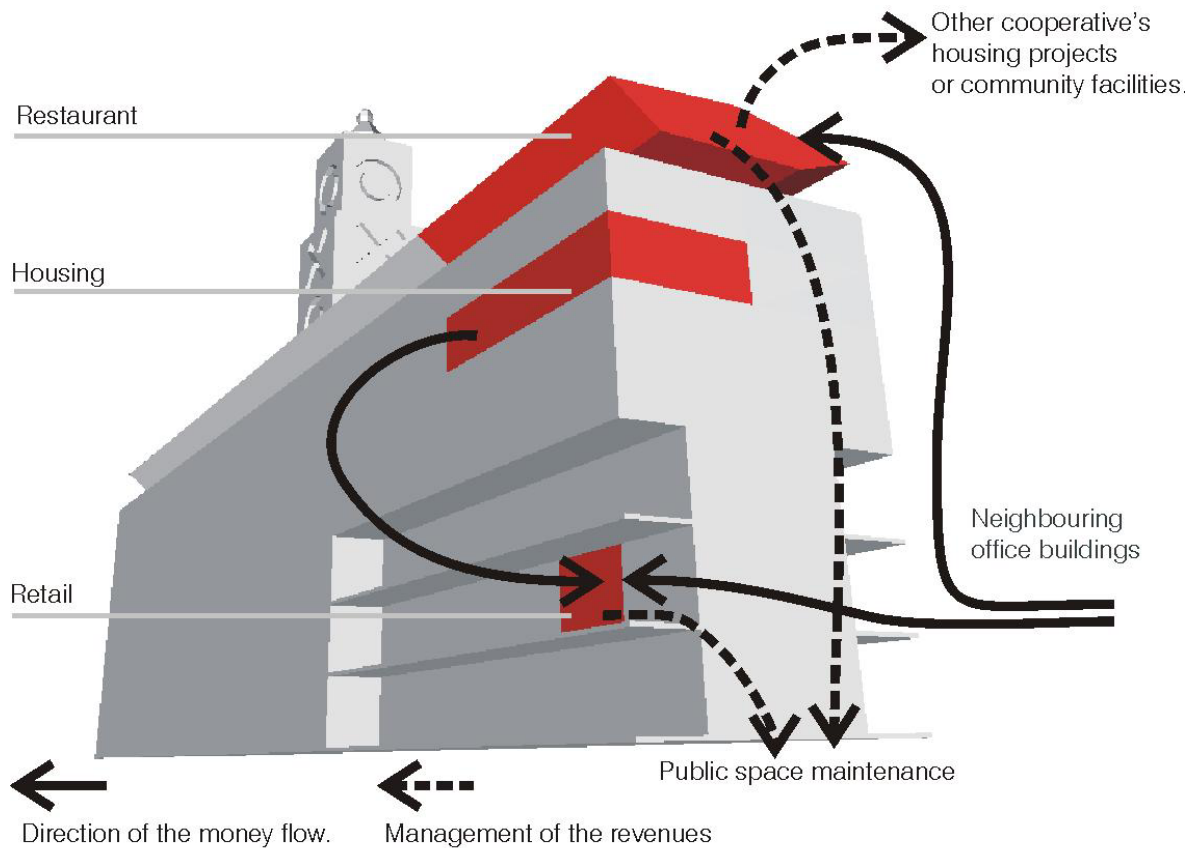
The building includes a wide range of uses: specialized workshops on design and jewellery, restaurants cafés and galleries in the first three floors including the ground floor; protected and highly controlled affordable housing in the next five stories and a restaurant with great views over the Thames in the upper floor.

Is of special interest to observe how the organizational power of a community can be translated into a legible architectural form. Even though the first floors could be read as tourist based retail, -that makes perfect sense due the position of the building in the river walk that connects potent tourist attractions such as the London eye and Tate Modern- the reality is that these first three floors of commercial use respond to three different markets. Firstly to the community that is living there with uses such as barbershops and hair-dressing that are clearly employed by them, or local community facilities such as the childcare centre. Secondly, the eventual visitors like tourist with cafés and memorabilia shops. And thirdly, to the workers in the neighbouring offices with fast food cafes and some accessories shops, besides de restaurant, very attractive to these wealthy tertiary workers that gather there to have lunch and enjoy the extraordinary views over the Thames.



The OXO building contains a wide range of uses that function independently and are clearly differentiated in the facades, but that act as an interconnected system of dependences. (JLdeO 2003)

In this way the same building is a system that gives revenues to the local residents and offers high quality services to the office workers. Is a system where the rich, spending people does not represent a threat to the wellbeing of the working class community and where this last ones are not put aside or marginalised by higher income people. Its certainly a model that, even though is depending on these seemingly fragile and vulnerable organizational structure, has materialized in a solid architectural form.



Monies flow system

A complex but so far successful system of cross – subsidies among parts of the building itself and other actors in the surroundings allows the affordability of the housing units. (JLdeO 2003)

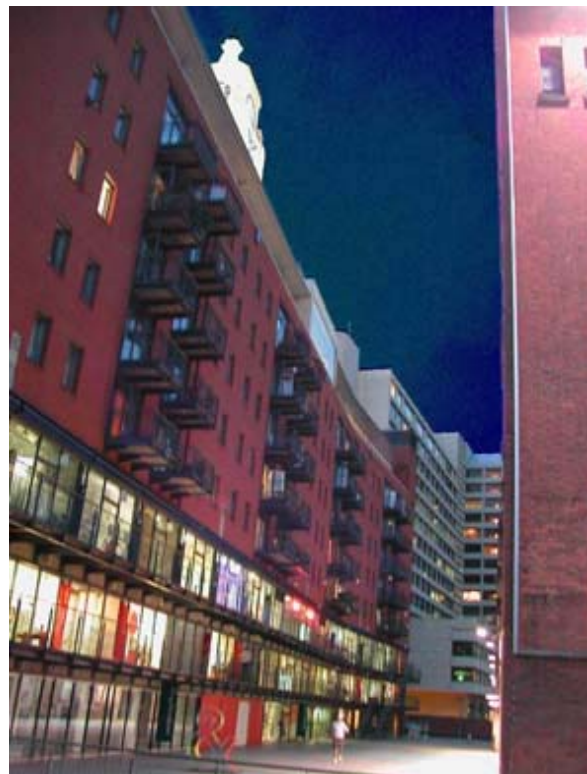
Induced Permeability.

A very tangible feature in spatial terms is that the building is intended to be highly permeable. The interior courtyard is been opened to the west, making possible to be observed by the public riverside walk even if the access is diverted. This gives the building presence over the public space at the same time this fashionable walk can in a way interact with the dwellings.

The gallery is another permeability helper; it welcomes the visitor in the front side - connected to the public- and once inside invites the wanderer to enter to the back courtyard, positioning the visitor in a position that seemed to be the private space of the housing above, even though this last one is separated from the ground by three stories of retail.

The success of the retail is still to be examined. The row of shops and services located in the ground floor in the front side are evidently the most successful ones. The other five sixths of retail remaining, even supposing that are easily reached by several stairs and lifts, are not as accessible as the previous explained. As a response to this, jewellery workshops were promoted, but they are not consolidated yet.

Nevertheless, along these retail spaces provided, the access to the eighth floor -the restaurant- is easy and attractive, making the whole building a very permeable structure that invites visitors to be there as



The back courtyard of the OXO mixed development is accessible not only for the residents, but also for the users of the shops and for the workers of the offices nearby. (JLdeO 2003)

much as possible. Is perceivable that this diversity of uses is not disturbing the housing activities. Simple measurements such as restricted access to the different floors by the lifts or separate entrances for the residents ensure that the combination is done in the less problematic manner.

Spatial Evaluations

The successful intervention by a process of controlled gentrification experienced in the OXO tower has also weak points that are worth to highlight; even if the building achieved a provision of high quality dwellings that not only ensured that the local residents stayed but also increased considerably their quality of life and it also worked to attract investors who installed their business here and increased the economical resources needed for the provision of more social housing in the area, the project cannot be considered at its full potential.

Firstly, the housing installed in the building is only social housing. There has not been a mixture of people of different incomes inside the same building, which could cut the options available for the project, making it depend upon a permanent correct administration of the cooperative, instead of a more flexible, and maybe more sustainable system that can rely in not potentially temporary organizations.

Even if a residential mixture is indeed happening in the surroundings, where wealthier population are getting apartments or transforming them to later move in, the fact that the OXO tower is being used as an emblem, and that it does not contains diversity in housing types, could lead to a misapprehension of the agenda of the social organization.

Even though there is a mixture in groups of people that goes to the building,- the ones that lives there with a moderate income, the offices commuters that uses its

restaurants and services, the tourist and specialized public that visits the gallery and design workshops-, it is only happening in the uses, not in the dwellings. This means that the mixture is basically scheduled, and therefore, what could happen here is that for unexpected conditions this people cease to visit the building, transforming it into a more or less common social housing development.

There is an lost opportunity of a spatial experimentation by an interaction among different groups; not only because it endangers a long term financial auto-maintenance, but also because the experimentation remains in a mixture of uses and not in a quotidian friction; this kind of spatial dwelling experimentation, even though could derive in uncertain success, is crucial to give further clues necessary to tackle unidentified confrontations that would happen if the process of controlled gentrification successfully takes place.

The mechanisms and strategies employed by the cooperative, as explained in the previous chapter, have been effective to avoid a speculation problem. However, they are still vulnerable in the sense that the owner of the flat, breaking the rules but with enough secrecy to get away with it, can sublet the flat and obtain profit. Even though these kind of situations are likely to appear in any other controlled project, the stiffness of the rules in this case can compel the owners to act outside the legislation.

The mixture that happens in the retail is maybe too focalized; the residents have access to some of the services that are offered, not all of them, situation that by itself is not problematic. However, basic services such as grocery provision are not controlled by the cooperative. There are sufficient stores in the area but their permanence is crucial to ensure the convenience of the housing installed there. This does not mean that the a mixed uses building has to work as a self sufficient building, and probably these risks are acknowledged by the planners, letting some factors loose to increase the dynamics of the surroundings.

Despite all these blunders, the OXO Tower represents a very potent example of the spatialisation of a controlled gentrification process. It gives enough material to observe how an architectural design product can involve and commit the current residents with a process of change that is tangibly improving their quality of life.

Furthermore, if a renewal program moves from a theoretical level to a promptly materialization of proposals, it acquires the possibility to find new empathy from distrustful residents towards their own neighbourhood, allowing also a process that could be evolving at the same time that is evaluated, enriching the dynamics of the urban change.

Even if could be argued that this case is more exceptional than representative, the truth is that, despite the attention that has received due the historical rescue of the old building, the project turns out to be paradigmatic since its representing the visible materialization of a successful communitarian organization with the objective to improve their living conditions and defend their decision to stay in what has been their desired, original location. The gentrification forces are still present and acting, yet engaged in a way that its effects are neither creating a dynamic of exclusion nor preventing their possibilities to achieve a better quality of life.

Conclusion

Gentrification is potent phenomena that have the potential to give a new role to neighbourhoods in the inner city that had lost their participation in the urban dynamics. It is also an effective tool to improve the conditions of the existing residents of these neighbourhoods and to offer central setting to a population that is willing to have an urban housing location.

After putting side by side the two different positions analyzed in the debate about gentrification, the one that explains it from the provision forces and the one that bases its reasons in the acquisition factor, have proved to be very blended into each other; both are intrinsically depending in similar factors and achieving comparable outcomes, even though each one stresses different origins. However this, the role of the gentrified is left aside, and is there where I see the opportunity to analyse the process of change directed from the inside of the neighbourhood.

If is induced from the interior, gentrification transforms from being a side effect of a renewal process of a neighbourhood to a tool that can be directed to unleash powerful forces that, even if their results cannot be predicted, some trends can be anticipated; with proper design of mechanisms can be ensured the control over specific factors which will create a dynamic able to develop and redevelop strategies to tackle new, unexpected situations.

The role of the existing inhabitants of a neighbourhood in the process of transformation of their area takes crucial importance to achieve these kinds of mechanisms. Along participation of the –paradoxically- gentrified, is important the understanding of other factors -the forces of provision and acquisition, in this case- and with this the actors that represent them, who cannot be isolated from a process of controlled gentrification.

From the analysis of the three neighbourhoods chosen, is evident that not all the neighbourhoods can follow the same pattern of gentrification. Neither can be considered a set of formulas or steps to follow to achieve a controlled gentrification; However this, and although the results are different, a balance in the outcome is what is achieved or at least programmed; There are factors that, in some of the cases more than in others, match among the different situations and could be considered as encouragers of the phenomena:

Firstly, being in a central setting in the city and close to business districts offers the possibility to attract the interest of new inhabitants looking to improve their location at the time that their quality of life. This makes the area potentially interesting for investors that will provide their resources to activate the transformation. The existing population is attached to the location and is of their interest to remain there.

Secondly, a condition of decay due their former situation of industrial district is an opportunity to explore since the attractiveness that represents to have interesting buildings with historical or architectural heritage, amenities such as renewable parks or even shattered facilities as schools or hospitals. The presence of cheap

land to develop and structures that can be substituted is highly valuable in economical terms.

And finally, the low population densities that are present in this kind of neighbourhoods is an opportunity to offer a relocation to the existing residents inside the area a better housing conditions and improve with this their life quality. This will attract new population and investors and is also important in the point of view of the local authorities, who will be interested in increasing their population to get more revenues for their tax base.

The spatial analysis made in the third chapter to the paradigmatic building of the OXO tower in London suggest a powerful tool in several ways: to adjust a proposal by the actual experimentation of the real users, local residents and the new comers and also an effective way to evaluate the changes and to presence the performance of theories and proposals.

The spatiality of gentrification has the potential to redirect the trend the process is taking. It has the capacity to involve and commit the current residents with a process of change that is tangibly improving their quality of life. Furthermore, if a renewal program moves from a theoretical level to a promptly materialization of proposals, it acquires the possibility to find new empathy from disappointed residents towards their own neighbourhood.

Gentrification has special relevance in the moment that offers a real opportunity to those who are looking to increase their quality of life and want to be in the city. However this, is important to know the right dimension of the phenomena: Gentrification is not reshaping the growth city; Even though the neighbourhoods affected are deeply changed this do not represent a massive back to the city movement, which, according to the actual trends, will continue to expand to the outer locations.

If a controlled gentrification process is based in its generation from the inside of the neighbourhood, and the phenomenological experimentation of the theory has the potential to encourage this resident participation, the spatial analysis becomes an essential tool to explore and develop further.

Gentrification is a dynamic phenomenon that offers the possibility of high quality of life in inner locations. Is truth that many times has lead to unjust social situations as displacement, speculation or segregation, however, it has also the potential to revitalize neighbourhoods that, without a tool like this, could hardly escape from their lethargy, and against pessimistic theorist predictions, have show that old, decayed neighbourhoods in the central cities still have a role in their future.

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