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**#gentrification**  
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## Planetary gentrification and urban (re)development

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**Abstract**

Gentrification is no-longer, if it ever was, a small scale process of urban transformation. Gentrification globally is more often practised as large scale urban redevelopment. It is state-led or state-induced. The results are clear – the displacement and disenfranchisement of low income groups in favour of wealthier in-movers. So, why has gentrification come to dominate policy making worldwide and what can be done about it?

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## Introduction

In this paper I argue that gentrification is no-longer, if it ever was, a small scale process of urban transformation. Gentrification globally is more often than not practised as large scale urban redevelopment. Gentrification is not just gentrifier-led, it is now predominantly state-led or state-induced. And the results are clear – the displacement and disenfranchisement of low income groups in favour of wealthier in-movers. Ejection of the poor in favour of the wealthy. My key question is: Why has gentrification come to dominate policy making worldwide and what can be done about it? In what follows I outline what we mean by gentrification, arguing that definitions of gentrification have moved on from Ruth Glass's coinage. I show that gentrification has not simply gone global, but is a global process that has contextual inflections. I outline the new thesis on planetary gentrification before zooming in on the literature on gentrification in post-socialist cities. And, finally I ask what can be done about gentrification by reviewing successful examples of policies and practices I know of.

When the term 'gentrification' was coined by the British sociologist Ruth Glass in London in 1964 it was described as a small scale, neighbourhood based process. It was posited as an unusual process – middle/upper class people (a new gentry) moving into a solidly working class, inner city neighbourhood. The result being rehabilitation of properties, an increase in property values, and the displacement of the working classes. For a long time 'gentrification' was seen in these terms as a back to the city movement of the upper/middle classes. Yet as gentrification scholars began to think more deeply about what constitutes and indeed might have constituted gentrification historically (eg. before 1964) some posited that large scale urban redevelopments like, for example, Hausmannization in Paris (Clark 2005), were also examples of gentrification. This made a lot of sense given that scholars were also beginning to think that new urban development more generally could also be seen as an example of gentrification. Nevertheless, debates raged over whether new-build development could be seen as gentrification (Davidson & Lees 2005, 2010). The outcome is that these days most gentrification scholars would include new-build development as a type of gentrification.

But what does this mean for Ruth Glass's definition of gentrification? Well gentrification is no-longer a gentrifier-led process, it is predominantly state-led or at least state-enabled. Second, it is no-longer just about the rehabilitation of historic properties, it can be newly-built and even modernist in style. Third, the scale of

gentrification goes far beyond the neighbourhood, from small scale to large scale, and even to the mega scale (on mega gentrification and displacement, see Lees, Shin & López-Morales 2016). And fourth, although displacement is still core to any definition of gentrification it can play out quite differently.

As gentrification research developed authors described earlier examples of urban redevelopment as gentrification, for example, the joint redevelopment program in Seoul, South Korea, in the 1980s (see Shin 2009). What was striking in this was that gentrification had actually occurred in Seoul well before pronouncements of its going global (Lees, Shin & López-Morales 2016: 181–183). Gentrification then was happening in cities outside of Anglo-America and the Euro heartland well before N. Smith (2002) and R. Atkinson and G. Bridge (2005) opened up the gentrification envelope to globalization and globalism.

In the past 3 years or so debate has elevated over the global nature of gentrification. And a consensus seems to be emerging that gentrification is a global process but that it cannot be generalized (see Smith 2002, on gentrification generalized) as the same everywhere, context and timing are key. As L. Lees, H.B. Shin and E. López-Morales (2015) argue there are gentrifications around the world that have caused and are causing displacement. The idea that scholars should stick to Glass's original definition of gentrification (Maloutas 2012) and that gentrification is not happening in the global south (Ghertner 2015) have been heavily critiqued as uninformed. H.B. Shin and E. López-Morales (2018: 14), for example, argue that the former is 'an extreme perspective on gentrification, that treats it as a historic-cultural process associated primarily with inner-city London in the 1960s'. They are scathing of such a fossilization of the process of gentrification that disavows it of any applicability outside of a particular place/space and time. On the assertion that gentrification is not happening in the global South because it plays out in formal real estate markets only, H.B. Shin and E. López-Morales (2018: 14) argue that this treats cities in the global South as 'qualitatively different and isolated from more general processes of capitalist accumulation'; 'slums and informal settlements as distinct urban spaces where logics of capital accumulation cannot penetrate' and completely ignores 'how deeply market and non-market processes are entangled in the same way' and 'how formal and informal processes are fused together in the global economy' (cr. Lees 2014).

In this paper I discuss my own (see Lees, Shin & López-Morales 2015, 2016) and other research on gentrification in cities around the globe, in so doing

I discuss the state of the art in current debates. There are a wide variety of gentrification scholars working in cities around the world who are quite clear that gentrification is a global process (see also Slater 2017, 2018, on planetary rent gaps). Of course, there remains a political value to using the term ‘gentrification’ to label contemporary (and indeed historic) processes of gentrification as such, processes that prioritise the gentry over the working classes/workless poor, and seek to expel the latter from cities in favour of the former. Even the UN have woken up to the social injustices of gentrification, for in 2010 they said: ‘cities must prevent social segregation, *gentrification*, social apartheid... as well as the increasing “ghettoization” of urban spaces that is becoming widespread across the world’ (UN-Habitat 2010: 133). The irony of course is that gentrification causes ghettoization.

### Contemporary gentrification: a global process with generalizations but also contextual differences

In 2016 the British broadsheet newspaper *The Guardian* asserted ‘Gentrification is a global problem. It’s time we found a better solution’ (Wainwright 2016). It set out to examine the consequences of gentrification around the world and interrogate what was being done to tackle it. Of course its readership being the left-liberal gentrifier types that Ley (1996) identified as the new cultural (middle) class, such a focus made a lot of sense for the newspaper. The journalist, O. Wainwright, described the process in rather Anglo-American terms:

‘Gentrification is a slippery and divisive word, vilified by many for the displacement of the poor, the influx of speculative investors, the proliferation of chain stores, the destruction of neighbourhood authenticity; praised by others for the improvement in school standards and public safety, the fall in crime rates, and the arrival of bike lanes, street markets and better parks.’

The series did not look at the burgeoning body of work on global gentrifications. Gentrification scholarship still struggles to get into the public and policy realms, it is a difficult task given the predominantly negative evidence base most gentrification scholars have collated. O. Wainwright (2016) asserted a solution to gentrification could be a tax on the value of land, ‘which would capture the value of improvements for the local community, rather than lining the pockets of investors’. But this fails to recognise the role of the state in gentrification or different land ownership regimes worldwide.

Indeed, key to the vast majority of global gentrifications today is the fact that the state (national and/or local/city government, politicians, policy makers) is involved in some form or other. Indeed in L. Lees, H.B. Shin and E. López-Morales (2016) we argue, critically, that the role of the state has been under-conceptualised in gentrification studies to date (see also Bernt 2016). In *Planetary Gentrification* we show how the state is involved in gentrifying cities around the globe. In particular we focus on how urban governance in metropolises in the global south has entered what geographer S. Schindler (2015) calls ‘a territorial moment’ in which municipal governments are increasingly focused on transforming urban space rather than improving populations (even if the latter still happens to different degrees in different places and the latter is also used to ‘sell’ the former as upgrading for the population as a whole). This has led, I would argue to *institutionalized*, that is *state-led* forms of social and urban apartheid.

So what is fostering this shift or moment? S. Schindler (2015) makes some useful points – that elites, not always the ‘middle classes’, prefer to invest in real estate in the global south rather than in productive sectors of the economy because there is a disconnect between capital and labour. As he says:

‘residents of, say, Lagos, Jakarta or Istanbul, may reasonably assume that in cities of such size they will be able to find a buyer for a luxury apartment in the future, while producing commodities – for domestic consumption or for export – is perceived as risky in comparison. Finally, middle classes in developing countries are not only local beneficiaries of the global regime of open markets and internationalized production, but .... they enjoy “almost entirely positive and unproblematic connotations” among many development agencies and governments. Thus, the construction of infrastructure and the development of a regulatory framework that encourages urban renewal and investment in real estate can be interpreted as attempts to “reinforce the conditions for their further accumulation”...’ (Schindler 2015: 14).

In brief, governments in southern metropolises are excited at the possibility of accumulating capital while remaking their cities.

Key to this is reinvestment in the secondary circuit of capital (the built environment, real estate). As is shown in L. Lees, H.B. Shin and E. López-Morales (2016), in some parts of the global south this is happening at

the same time as investment in the primary circuit of capital (industrial production), for example, in China; whilst in other places (re)investment in the secondary circuit is trumping (re)investment in the primary circuit (for example, Dubai). Our thesis on planetary gentrification builds upon recent urban studies scholarship on *planetary urbanization* that has revisited the concept of the urban and the process of urbanization at multiple scales. By 2050 more than three quarters of the world's population is predicted to be urban, this is what A. Merrifield (2013) calls the final frontier – the complete urbanization of society, or what N. Brenner and C. Schmid (2012) call the totalization of capital. Importantly, with planetary urbanization 'rural places and suburban spaces have become integral moments of neoindustrial production and financial speculation, getting absorbed and reconfigured into new world-regional zones of exploitation, into megalopolitan regional systems...' (Merrifield 2013: 10). Some proponents of planetary urbanization have called for 'a reloaded urban studies' – that is 'the removal of centre-periphery binary thinking, acknowledging the emergence of multiple centralities across urbanizing spaces and 'dispens[ing] with all the old chestnuts between global North and global South, between developed and underdeveloped worlds, between urban and rural, between urban and regional, between city and suburb, just as we need to dispense with old distinctions between public and private, state and economy, and politics and technocracy' (Merrifield 2014: 4). If one follows this line of thinking it has critical impacts on some of the core defining features in gentrification studies, eg. gentrification being the opposite to suburbanization (so that gentrification cannot be a suburban process), separate fields of scholars working on urban and rural gentrification or what M. Phillips (2004) called gentrification's 'other', there being no such thing as gentrification in Southern Europe (Maloutas 2012) or the global south (Ghertner 2015). It also throws into question those who charge that gentrification is not occurring in post socialist cities from China to Poland.

A decade ago urbanist R. Florida (2008) predicted that in the most successful cities around the world a wealthy and highly mobile elite leading privileged lives would increasingly live in the core of cities and be serviced by an underclass living farther and farther away from the city centre. Unfortunately his thesis has become a self-fulfilling prophecy. It has become clear through my own extensive networks and discussions with scholars around the world that global society and space is moving towards a state of planetary gentrification that is leading to institutionalised apartheid,

creating new spaces of exclusion, justified as progress and development and even as helping the poor.

The result of planetary gentrification is I would argue *social apartheid* – the de facto segregation on the basis of class or economic status, in which an underclass is forced to exist separated from the rest of the population. Typically a component in social apartheid, urban apartheid refers to the spatial segregation of minorities to remote areas, usually the peripheries of cities. This is happening in cities around the world. But in the global north gentrification also produces forms of apartheid that are not necessarily about spatial physical separation but rather a form of mental, phenomenological separation when sharing the same neighbourhood, eg. in new, socially engineered, mixed communities.

Ironically as South Africa has turned away from racial apartheid a new form of social apartheid is emerging in its key cities. As M. T. Myambo (2017) says: 'in their rush to become "global", cities risk creating spatial apartheid', she describes Maboneng in Johannesburg as 'a distinctly hipster "cultural time zone" or microspace. Its upmarket bars, fashionable restaurants, creative work spaces and loft-style apartments have more in common with its equivalents in Euro-America than less developed local areas adjacent to it'. Like in L. Lees, H.B. Shin and E. López-Morales (2015, 2016) she discusses how the city's core areas are (re)occupied by the wealthy, how low-income residents are pushed to the urban peripheries in search of affordable housing. Critically this 'trend', as she calls it, is intensifying around the world, in New York, London, Sydney, Los Angeles and Vancouver, as well as in globalising or emerging cities like Johannesburg, Accra, Beijing, Cape Town, Jakarta, Mumbai and Shanghai. She says: 'We have seen this model before. It was called the apartheid city'. But what she calls a 'trend' is more than that, for contemporary gentrification is not led purely by trendsetters (as was the case with classic gentrification), it is led by the state. Politicians and policymakers seek to remake their cities (and society) by encouraging investment through real estate.

Increasingly the remaking of cities is undertaken less via rehabilitation (the preservation of historic properties and features) and more often by urban renewal and urban redevelopment. The larger the scale of this redevelopment the more money to be made and the bigger and quicker the social change in cities. I have mentioned Seoul in South Korea (see also Shin, Lees & López-Morales 2016), but we can also look at the state-led gentrification of *gecekondus* in Istanbul, Turkey (see İslam & Sakızlıoğlu 2015) or the Eko Atlantic development in Lagos, Nigeria (Lees, Shin & López-Morales 2016: 17).

### **Gentrification in post-socialist cities**

Discussions of gentrification in post-socialist cities began to emerge with the fall of repressive state-socialist regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the 1990s, as market forces began to transform cities. However, gentrification in post-socialist cities was usually seen as different, as ‘other’ (see also Phillips 2004, on rural gentrification) to Anglo/Euro-American norms. More recently, discussions of gentrification (or not) in post-socialist Chinese cities have entered these debates (see Ren 2015) too. Of course state socialism was not the same everywhere and there are distinctive differences, the commonality however was state control over land and property.

One of the first attempts to theorize gentrification in a post-socialist city was L. Sýkora’s (1993) notion of a ‘functional gap’ describing the mismatch between urban core land-uses under state-socialist conditions in Prague as market conditions created a land-market gradient in the early 1990s. With the collapse of centrally-planned systems for housing and land allocation, post-socialist cities began to change rapidly with the emergence of sharp land-value gradients. L. Sýkora (1993) examined the effects of market transition in Prague and was able to measure the average prices paid per square meter at a privatization auction. He drew a distinction between short-term adjustments in occupancy and use of existing structures - what he called a functional gap - and longer-term rent-gap pressures to reconfigure, rebuild, or redevelop:

‘Functional gaps are caused by the underutilization of available land and buildings relative to their current physical quality. When centrally planned allocation of resources is replaced by allocation ruled by market forces, freely set rents influence the distribution of functions in space. Thus, functions with an inefficient utilization of space may soon be outbid by more progressive functions with a highly intensive space utilization. In this way, the functional gaps can be closed in a very short time without making huge investments’ (Sýkora 1993: 287–288).

In the 1990s, however, gentrification was not really a concept or term that most citizens living in post-socialist East European cities had heard of, their main attention was on the revitalization of their cities. Class divisions did grow in the 1990s but not enough to signal processes of gentrification (but see Kovacs 1998, on Budapest).

Yet over a decade later A. Badyina and O. Golubchikov (2005) took debates about gentrification in post-socialist cities further by demonstrating not just the unlocking

of the market but also critically the role of the state in supporting the process. Moscow’s city government facilitated the gentrification of Ostozhenka in Moscow by assigning residential buildings in that neighbourhood for demolition, due to their ‘state of disrepair’, and thus the households in them for resettlement:

‘The city has either to rehouse the tenants in non-privatized (and therefore municipal) rooms in other apartments... or, in the case of privatized dwellings, to compensate the owners in kind or in cash. This resettlement mechanism has turned out to be an “effective” tool in authorizing an immediate displacement of a large number of residents’ (Badyina & Golubchikov 2005: 122).

But as A. Badyina and O. Golubchikov go on to reveal, as soon as corporate interest in the neighbourhood was established developers started to contribute to this compulsory rehousing through public-private partnerships in which they paid for the cost of resettlement in exchange for the sites. Most of the residents had not wanted to move. Like L. Sýkora on Prague they too were critical of gentrification and its impacts on people:

‘Whereas the physical improvement of the city centre signifies departing from the Soviet legacies of under-investments in the housing built environment, the growing socio-spatial polarization undermines the social achievements of the Soviet system and denotes the triumph of the neoliberal urban regime in Moscow’ (Badyina & Golubchikov 2005: 113).

A. Badyina and O. Golubchikov’s study is a revealing one, for like L. Sýkora and others before them they drew on Anglo-American gentrification theories for analysing what was going on, and indeed saw the process as a kind of ‘Europeanization’ of Ostozhenka: ‘By “Europeanization” they (the gentrifiers) imagine the ultimate manifestation of prosperity combined with a sort of disparagement of the rest of Russian society’ (Badyina & Golubchikov 2005: 124). Their gentrifiers shared an identity with the new upper classes colonizing elite districts in other world cities. However, as L. Lees, T. Slater and E. Wylie (2008) discuss - unlike in N. Smith’s (2002) thesis in which neoliberalism seems to have won lock, stock and barrel, A. Badyina and O. Golubchikov retain a politics of hope in the changing contours of Russian politics, a hope which seems quite out of reach now?

Despite the fact that scholars have been discussing gentrification in post-socialist (more especially

East European) cities for some time now (see Bernt, Marcińczak & Gentile 2015 for a review) it has become fashionable of late for new scholars to question the applicability of the concept of 'gentrification' for post-socialist cities. A. Holm, S. Marcińczak & A. Ogródowczyk (2015) discuss 'new build gentrification' in the contexts of Lodz and Leipzig, they find 'undeniable similarities' with the spatial patterns in previous (Western) studies, but point to different economic roots as well as specific social consequences. They also find that the new-build gentrification in Lodz and Leipzig appears to be economically independent from the former (other) forms of gentrification and its dynamics. Of course gentrification in Eastern Europe is not just evident in its key cities but also along, for example, the coastline of Croatia in Dubrovnik, Split, and Pula. Indeed, the relationship between tourism and gentrification (both on the coast and in cities) has become even more significant over time, as the case of the old Jewish quarter in Krakow shows. Interestingly, Polish scholars have been amongst those most sceptical of the presence of gentrification itself, and more recently the utility of 'Western' conceptualizations of gentrification for Polish cities. And this despite an influx of foreign businesses into the most desirable areas of Krakow, especially the historic centre Stare Miasto. But the consensus now it seems, if there is one, is that gentrification processes have occurred/are occurring in Polish cities, but 'in a different way and less intensively than in Western cities' (see Górczyńska 2017).

M. Bernt (2016), in his discussion of a number of scholarly contributions that have questioned the usefulness of the concept of gentrification for cases outside of London in 1964, investigates Prenzlauer Berg in East Berlin and the central city of Saint Petersburg. He finds that 'while the transformation from a planned economy to a market system generally made gentrification possible, the specific conditions of property transfer, the transformation of inherited social rights, as well as the different setup of planning institutions have produced very different patterns of neighborhood change' (Bernt 2016: 565). In so doing, like L. Lees, H.B. Shin & E. López-Morales (2016) he sees 'gentrification' as a broad and flexible term that covers disparate socio-spatial formations which result in different dynamics of regeneration and population change. More recently, others have asked (following Lees 2012) what 'Western' theories might learn from the specificities of gentrification in non-Western, post-socialist contexts. Bucharest sociologist, L. Chelcea (2018) has lectured recently, that 'using the concept of gentrification has the potential to expand the public agenda with conversations about shrinking

affordable housing, uneven development, and structural violence in urban Eastern Europe'. He has talked about the linkages between housing restitution in post socialist cities, evictions, and gentrification; but also, in the same vein as L. Lees, H.B. Shin & E. López-Morales (2016) the problematic assumption about temporality with respect to gentrification.

J. Ren (2015), despite the earlier work on gentrification in China (eg. He 2007, 2012; He & Liu 2010), voiced her concerns over 'gentrification' as an accurate or relevant concept to describe and explain the changes post-socialist Chinese cities were/are undergoing. But she concluded by sitting on the fence, arguing that it was impossible to weigh up its instrumental value against the need to develop global urban theory. D. Ley and S. Teo (2014) did not sit on the fence and found gentrification's ontological presence in Hong Kong. To some degree it has become more important, I think, to consider the timing and speed of gentrification. London has undergone processes of gentrification for some time now and it could be seen as hyper-gentrified (at least pre-Brexit), by way of contrast I. Helbrecht (2018) talks about the recent, 'rapid gentrification' of Berlin, and gentrification processes in Polish cities have occurred more slowly and perhaps less intensively than in Western cities. In Poland gentrification takes place mostly in the form of new-build development carried out by developers and state-led gentrification due to the significant input of the public sector (see Szybel-Boberek, Jakóbczyk-Gryszkiewicz & Wolaniuk 2017). The impacts, however, are clear – the displacement and disenfranchisement of low income groups in favour of wealthier in-movers in select places/spaces.

In a very recent addition to the literature on gentrification in post-socialist cities M. Gentile (2018) claims to research from the 'planetary elsewhere' of Tbilisi, Riga and Kiev, offering the more provincialized account that L. Lees, H.B. Shin and E. López-Morales (2016) also sought. He looks at three different processes: tele-urbanization, Schengtrification and colour-splashing, to challenge what he calls the central assumption of critical gentrification theory – the rent gap. He argues that looking at these processes through the 'lens of theories on urban identities, and on the relation between ideology, geopolitical imaginaries, urban space, and its residents, could provide fertile new terrain for the conceptualization of gentrification' (Gentile 2018: 1462). Yet I can't help but think that this really does little more than bring us back to old production versus consumption debates in gentrification studies. The focus instead should be on what we (as gentrification scholars) can do about gentrification.

## What can be done about gentrification?

It is clear that gentrification has come to dominate cities around the world as focus has been centred on the secondary circuit of capital (real estate) as an easier way of making money, and as urban policies have been developed globally with a pro-gentrification agenda (either implicitly or explicitly). The big question of course is what can we do about this socially unjust process, especially given there are no alternative models on the table. The 'we' here refers to academics as scholar-activists, indeed many gentrification scholars are 'scholar-activists' who seek to use their research to stop gentrification (see Holm & Schulz 2018; Hubbard & Lees 2018) and develop alternatives (Steele 2018).

Alternative models of inclusive urban development must include three key factors: affordability, accessibility and diversity. Affordability relates to cost of living, income, and economic opportunity. Accessibility refers to transport, public space, goods and services, political participation, freedom to move through space or hang out in space, and access for varying abilities plus opportunities. Diversity means the full scope of social classes, races/ethnicities, cultures, religions, sexualities, political views, choices etc. Inclusive growth can only be achieved by rejecting the planetary gentrification model and developing models of inclusive development.

Outside of, and in some cases related to, resistance to gentrification, various anti-gentrification policies and practices have emerged around the globe, and I want to conclude this paper by mentioning some of them here.

One of the first initiatives that gentrification scholars have discussed is the Displacement Free Zone (see Lees, Slater & Wyly 2008: 256). A leading example is the community-led Fifth Avenue Committee, Park Slope, Brooklyn, New York City, whose mission is 'to advance social and economic justice principally by developing and managing affordable housing, creating employment opportunities, organizing residents and workers, providing adult-centered education opportunities, and combating displacement caused by gentrification' (*Fifth Avenue Committee website*). Scholars have also long tabled community land trusts as an alternative to gentrification (see Steele 2018), a recent example is The Heart of Hastings Community Land Trust - Rock House, in Hastings, UK, which has taken land and property out of the speculative market (*Rock House website*). But there are also a myriad of other initiatives. The City of Atlanta has created an Anti-Displacement Tax Fund Program in an effort to prevent hardships on low-income property owners due to redevelopment. This is an initiative which will pay any property tax increases for qualifying homeowners. In Vancouver, Canada,

which is experiencing hyper-gentrification, the city now charges an extra 15% to any overseas investor buying property there. And in Berlin, Germany, the *Milieuschutz* or 'neighborhood protection' laws - ban luxury renovations, a ploy commonly used by landlords to get around rules limiting rent rises. The overall intent is to maintain social mix in gentrifying areas and to prevent swift transformations that can break up communities.

Tactics that stall (especially international) investment have emerged, including giving locals the first option to buy. The inner-city borough of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg in Berlin recently announced that it would not allow a privately-owned tenement to be sold to an international investor. Instead, officials directed the sale towards a state-owned independent housing association committed to affordable rents. The idea being to stop landlords from hiking up rents, this was drastic action blocking the sale of buildings and buying them up for the government. Paris instigated similar laws in 2017 designed to inhibit economic ghettoization in the inner city by demanding right of first refusal to properties in a number of wealthy districts where public housing levels are especially low. The London Mayor in the UK recently did the same, new developments are offered first to local buyers. And San Francisco's 'anti-displacement' policy 2016, which was supported by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, gives first refusal on affordable housing units in the city's Mission district to those heavily affected by gentrification.

Other policies and practices have focused on the right to return and protections from displacement. In the US - Portland, Oregon, the Housing Bureau's Preference Policy, or 'Right to Return' as it has been called, is the first of its kind in the US. The program gives down payment assistance to first-time homeowners who have been displaced, or are at risk of displacement, from the city's north and north-east neighborhoods because of urban renewal. The City has allocated \$20m to be spent on affordable housing, in an effort to 'atone for the sins of gentrification'. Milwaukee's Department of City Development has published an 'Anti-Displacement Plan' to prevent Milwaukee residents around the city's developing downtown from being displaced. The Mayor of London in the UK has also recently announced estate ballots for those council estates threatened with redevelopment and gentrification.

These examples are all from the global north, but I am in the process of collating examples from the global south too. The planet is waking up to the impacts of gentrification and beginning to think hard about what to do about it. No mean feat, but it has to be done.

Of course there are many active political struggles against gentrification in post-socialist cities across Eastern Europe and East Asia. For example, in Warsaw the fight against the scandal of authorities using even the most fictitious property claims as instruments of getting rid of the poor through property restitution, especially in its downtown, and rent de-regulation, can be considered as anti-gentrification resistance. This is predominantly a fight against the re-privatisation of socially owned properties, including squats in buildings renovated by grass roots groups (see The City is

Ours [Miasto jest Nasze], a Warsaw-based urban movement). But to date it seems that no anti-gentrification policies have been constructed, as such it would be interesting to find out if there are institutional structures which are inherited (from socialism) which might make resistance possible without political struggles. Indeed, it is here in relation to anti-gentrification practices and policies that contextual differences between cities globally may come into full view, for the politics and cultures of some may allow what will be blocked in others.

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