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Aleksandra Wrona

Wroclaw University of Economics and Business

e-mail: aleksandra.wrona@ue.wroc.pl

ORCID: 0000-0001-6064-5669

GENTRIFICATION AS PART OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT

GENTRYFIKACJA JAKO ELEMENT ROZWOJU MIAST

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Abstract: The main purpose of the research was to present gentrification as a diverse phenomenon that cannot be explicitly qualified as negative or positive. In order to illustrate the problem, literature studies were carried out regarding urban regeneration, urban revitalization, gentrification and urban development. Then a case study was presented indicating two extremely different examples. The Walnut Hills Estate in Cincinnati in the United States, was the first to be described. The second example is Sayingmen, which used to be a settlement in Beijing. Due to the controversial decision of the authorities, it was demolished. A discovery resulting from this analysis was to show the diametrically different approach to city management, the perception of civil rights and the scope of competences of local authorities. The case study presented in the article can help institutions related to the development and participatory spatial planning to create urban policies.

Keywords: gentrification, sustainable development, urban development, unsustainable development, urban regeneration, urban revitalization.

Streszczenie: Głównym celem badań było przedstawienie gentryfikacji – zjawiska różnorodnego, trudnego do jednoznacznego określenia jako negatywne bądź pozytywne. W celu przybliżenia problemu przeprowadzone zostały studia literaturowe dotyczące *urban regeneration*, *urban revitalization*, gentryfikacji oraz rozwoju miast. Następnie przedstawiono studium przypadku wskazujące dwa skrajnie od siebie odbiegające przykłady (ukazujące wzorzec współpracy pomiędzy lokalną społecznością,

inwestorami oraz władzami osiedle Walnut Hills w Cincinnati w Stanach Zjednoczonych oraz Salingmen, będące niegdyś osiedlem Pekinu, zburzone w wyniku kontrowersyjnej decyzji władz). Odkryciem wynikającym z tej analizy jest pokazanie diametralnej różnicy w podejściu do zarządzania miastem, postrzegania praw obywatelskich czy zakresu kompetencji władz lokalnych. Przedstawione w artykule studium przypadku może pomóc instytucjom związanym z rozwojem i partycypacyjnym planowaniem przestrzennym.

Słowa kluczowe: gentryfikacja, zrównoważony rozwój, rozwój miast, niezrównoważony rozwój, *urban regeneration, urban revitalization*.

1. Current urban development processes

It is nothing new that scientists question and research different phenomena and their effects. The quantity and variety of changes resulted in a new paradigm of spatial development created in the beginning of this century (Wrona, 2019, p. 4).

Characteristic points of the paradigm are the holistic, ecological and systemic framework. The most important is understanding development not as a set of several elements but as a network (Miszczak, 2008, p. 217). This knowledge shows the importance of the dynamics of development and its processes.

One phenomenon that may be observed nowadays is gentrification. It is really wide-spread in cities, areas or neighbourhoods where any rapid changes (related to the increase of the value) can be seen. Usually, academic papers relate to its negative effects (social and business exclusions, homelessness, poverty, health issues). However, it may be also a sign of dynamic development that can also bring positive results. Probably the area may change its character or the living standards, but if the local government considers using sustainable, social-friendly and community-building methods there should be a possibility to avoid unwanted outcomes. In this light it is possible to see gentrification not only as a difficulty for urban environment, but also as a part of development. Yet high priority should be given to rational and responsible urban policy-making.

The literature studies carried out allowed for the selection of two examples of the implications. This study is dedicated to an analysis of a case study of two different neighbourhoods, which are presented as opposing examples (because of the context, methods and results).

2. A problem of the gentrification effect

There are various cases connected with the growth of cities. One of them is suburbanization that first appeared in the United States in the 1950s when the middle classes started to move en masse to the suburbs (Mieszkowski and Mills, 1993, p. 135). This resulted in the decentralization of cities that became a worldwide phenomenon (Mieszkowski and Mills, 1993, p. 136). A city centre was just the

business district (CBD) and the further the distance from the place of residence to CBD, the higher the economic status of the resident (Fig. 1).

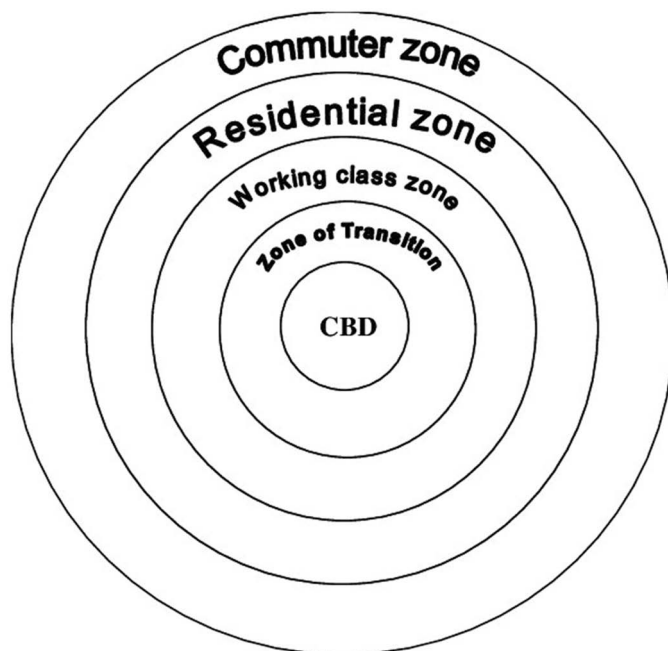


Fig. 1. Monocentric city

Source: (Park and Burgess, 1925 as cited in Shearmur, 2011, p. 24).

Another process is globalization which can be understood as *a process encompassing the causes, course, and consequences of transnational and transcultural integration of human and non-human activities* (Geneva Centre for Security Policy, 2006). This means that different elements of space, customs, and trends may be not only similar but just the same for many locations. The effect can be seen in the phenomenon of adopting the big-city lifestyle by residents of towns and villages, which is connected with the need to increase their living standards. The big-city lifestyle is thought of as a high standard of living.

However, raising the level is not just the matter for residents, it is also a task and challenge for local government. Urban regeneration and revitalization is one of the ways to achieve this goal. This stage is wide-spread and concerns mainly cities, but not only.

Urban regeneration is a complex and integrated idea that impacts on different actions with the aim of solving urban problems. The effect should be the improvement of such areas as environment, social status and community and economics (Granger, Roberts, and Sykes, 2017, p.18). Urban revitalization may be confused with urban

regeneration but it applies to the revival of the old buildings and space by changing their functions into new ones (Bregger, n.d.). This may become a problem if the area becomes monotype. An example of this could be the effect of gentrification connected with the appearance of well-off and wealthy citizens instead of poorer ones (Table 1).

Table 1. Main differences between revitalization and gentrification

Revitalization	Gentrification
Mixed income housing development, displacement avoided.	Widespread displacement of traditional low income residents by affluent households.
Wealth building strategies for existing residents implemented, residents stabilized from displacement pressure.	Residents unable to accrue wealth, remain highly susceptible to displacement.
Social networks, neighbourhood services and businesses reinforced in the community. Additional new business and services expand options for all residents.	Existing social networks, neighbourhood services and local businesses disrupted in the community.
Community transitions to a mixed income, mixed wealth and diverse community.	Community transitions to an exclusive community, inaccessible to low income households.

Source: (Reece, 2004, p. 2).

The gentrification effect is usually thought of as a negative phenomenon. According to Reece, gentrification is a situation when those with low income and poor inhabitants are replaced by high income earners and wealthier inhabitants (Reece, 2004, p. 1). Depending on the point of view of the stakeholder, the effect can be seen in a different way. Undeniably, the real estate owners would be grateful for this phenomenon because of the possibility of the increase in income. Unfortunately the renting and low-income inhabitants are the victims of this process – the rising prices of rental and cost of living force them to change their neighbourhood (Pineda, 2007, p. 1).

Table 2 lists various advantages and disadvantages of gentrifying the space.

Table 2. Advantages and disadvantages of gentrification

Advantages	Disadvantages
1	2
Intergenerational interaction and collective socialization	Discrimination of people who cannot accept the new rising prices and living standards and neighbourhood segregation
Positive impact on youth and children	In some communities it can induce the problem of racism
Higher and rising level of education in schools	Factors causing stress

Table 2, cont.

1	2
Increased numbers of young professionals	Displacement
Care by the local government (higher index of safety)	Social exclusion
The potential of social exchange	Increasing taxes, real estate and rent
The deconcentration of poverty	Aggravating the problem of poverty

Source: own elaboration based on (Arniella, Makoba, Mirto, and Wilder, n.d.).

It can be seen from the table that it is really difficult to say whether the issue of gentrification is negative or positive. The best answer would be “it depends”. There will always be people who will benefit from this process and those who will lose out. The question is what is the policy of the local government, it is supportive and encourages participation, or not.

3. Gentrification of a city and the policy of local government

As seen in the previous section, the gentrification effect can have different aspects. The most significant is the point of view. Therefore, there is a strict connection between the phenomenon itself and urban living standards. It can be valuable and therefore increase the living standards of stakeholders for whom gentrification is not a danger. They will increase their incomes or level up living standards (Pineda, 2007, p. 1). The neighbourhood becomes more luxurious and exclusive with the situation, various fashionable services and investments appear that make the area attractive and as a result the area it can appreciate in value and become accessible only for high income residents.

The effect is not so beneficial for low income stakeholders and those who rent. This means higher bills and can result in displacement in the society and lower living standards.

Many local governments look for solutions to negative effects of gentrification as a matter of principle for the sustainable development strategies.

One such example is the Walnut Hills neighbourhood located in Cincinnati in the USA, one of historical midtown neighbourhoods of Cincinnati, located close to its core, in the north. This area is special because of local government policy. In 1977 the Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation was created with the aim of improving the quality of life in the Walnut Hills development based on the idea of an inclusive city (Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation, n.d.).

In 2016 the grocery shop closed down, which was an important spot for the locals. The Foundation announced a mixed-use project costing \$50 million, which also included elements like renovation of Paramount Building, opening a brewery and new flats available for local residents of every income (Copsey, n.d.).

The foundation also responded to community needs. A few years ago beer gardens opened, which attracted many people who were not connected with the neighborhood and even became fashionable. As a result, real estate developers became also interested. The Walnut Hills community knew the history of nearby neighbourhoods that experienced a similar situation. This brought about the gentrification effect. The local people did not want to share this fate so they complained to the Foundation. A decision was made really quickly and the beer gardens were closed (Copsey, n.d.).

The Foundation also runs many programs supporting low-income inhabitants and entrepreneurship, but their most important aim is to create and maintain a strong, active and participatory community.

In 2016 a reinvestment plan was published, focused on the motto “move in, not out”. It is a complex strategy designed to protect every citizen of Walnut Hills from the negative effects of gentrification, despite the growing living standards of the area (Fig. 2).

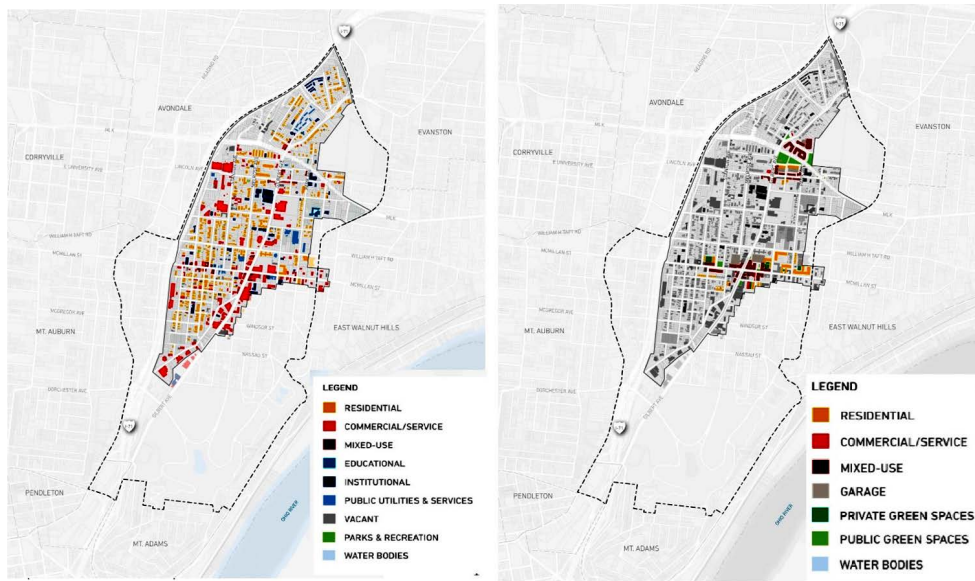


Fig. 2. Changes of land use in Walnut Hills

Source: (Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation, n.d.).

Walnut Hills is a perfect case of the cooperation of local government, non-governmental organizations and inhabitants based on teamwork, participation, public-private partnership and a true idea of an inclusive city. Following these rules and aspects the area was able to avoid problems that would result from the gentrification process.



Fig. 3. The announcement for Sanyingmen inhabitants with the information about abandoning the neighborhood (photograph: Tom Phillips)

Source: (Phillips, n.d.).



Fig. 4. Sanyingmen neighbourhood after demolition (photograph: Tom Phillips)

Source: (Phillips, n.d.).



Fig. 5. The destroyed Sanyingmen neighbourhood (photograph: Tom Phillips)

Source: (Phillips, n.d.).

Another example that addresses this issue is Sanyingmen neighbourhood in Beijing in China. In 2017 the local government decided to demolish Sanyingmen because of an airport extension and exclusive services dedicated to higher income levels (Phillips, n.d.). The neighbourhood was known as that inhabited by low-income workers (and their families) working in the surrounding factories. The residents were told to move out from their homes in 24 hours, which was announced just in information notices affixed in the public space (Fig. 3) (Phillips, n.d.). Next day at 7 a.m. the area ceased to exist. Sanyingmen was razed to the ground (Henslowe, n.d.) (Fig. 4, Fig. 5). Some of the poorest ex-inhabitants still lived in the rubble illegally for a long time as they had no place to go to. The government did not provide any shelters or help for those who had lost their home.

Unfortunately, this case shows the extremely bad results of the gentrification effect. This appalling situation demonstrates how far investors and developers can go if local government does not support the citizens. It may be seen there is no cooperation and no dialogue between local government and communities. Methods of urban planning like participation are not taken into consideration.

4. Conclusion

The case study, based on two opposing examples, helps to understand different urban policies with their advantages and disadvantages.

The American example (which could be seen as the Western model of urban planning and management) shows how the local government, investors and local community can cooperate. The success of Walnut Hills is related to the really strong community and the fact that local municipality officers belong to it.

Another reason of neighbourhood prosperity is the mentality of the people. They see themselves as a community, a family that respects individuality, which is unique (different governmental programs supporting the individual development and using it as an advantage of the society). Those observations may bring about some applications. It seems that successful urban governance and planning may be achieved by keeping up the dialogue between all stakeholders, especially if there is an emphasis on high dynamics of social and urban processes.

Unfortunately, it is not always possible to meet such an empowered case. China adopts absolutely different point of view compared to the previous one, as collectivism is the most important part of everyday life there. Consequently, if something could be referred to as being for the greater good then nothing can get in its way. This may result in actions as those seen in Sanyingmen and other neighbourhoods and villages around Beijing. The presented case indicates that not everybody wants to follow Chinese collectivism. A huge amount of people who lived in those areas just lost their homes without any help nor hope for the future.

Beijing may be ultra-modern compared to Walnut Hills, and it is perhaps possible that more valuable, variable and interesting services exist there. However, the majority of trends linked with urbanism and its ideas and concepts are based on the social aspects of cities. They are those one dreams about.

In conclusion, the question should be asked whether cities should be created with or without communities? Should local government respect and take care of their citizens?

According to the opinion of the author and the research material, urban development has to provide sustainable development which is connected with responsible governance. This policy may neutralize the negative effects of gentrification which remains part of urban development.

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