



Study on Urban Renewal from the Perspective of Planetary Gentrification

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ABSTRACT

Urban renewal is often accompanied by changes in social groups and is an unstoppable economic law. Gentrification, as a development trend of urban renewal that appears along social classes, presents complexity, dynamism, and scale-shifting characteristics, and has become a global issue. Starting from gentrification at the planetary scale, this paper focuses on the geographical spatial imbalance caused by capital flows in the gentrification phenomenon. Through cross-scale comparison, it verifies that gentrification in urban renewal has global commonality and local characteristics, and comprehensively compares the differences between traditional gentrification and planetary gentrification. On the basis of looking forward to the development context of planetary gentrification theory, the characteristics of gentrification in the north and south, and the mechanism of action, it is believed that China's urban renewal should be combined with the political system and the special land property rights system, and pay attention to thinking about how to better avoid the negative effects of gentrification from the multi-dimensional geographical scales of global, national, regional, urban and rural areas.

KEYWORDS

Planetary Gentrification; Urban Renewal; Middle Class; Globality.

1. INTRODUCTION

As urbanization deepens around the world, the speed and scale of urban development are increasing and expanding in an uneven manner. As part of the implosion and explosion of urbanization, contemporary gentrification has long broken through and surpassed the traditional dichotomy of urban-rural and urban-regional, and has gradually spread to the world. At the same time, its spatiotemporal heterogeneity, polymorphism and multi-scale superposition effects have become increasingly prominent. Gentrification takes place at the urban scale, and at the same time uses the financial system and the geographical expansion of global capital as a medium. After the continuous accumulation of capital and the transfer of added value to a wider scale space, the combination of different national roles and capital in the world constitutes a "double-wheel drive" for gentrification, which ultimately produces social and spatial effects.

We must admit that there are regional differences around the world, but there are also increasingly close socio-spatial change trajectories, just as the two basic geographical concepts advocated by Marxist geographer Neil Smith: uneven development and local characteristics, check and balance each other and explain each other. The gentrification process is an inherent component of uneven development at the urban scale, and is the expression of the cyclical movement of capital in the production and reproduction of urban residential space[3]. This process is mainly influenced by the rent-gap theory. As capital expands in the search for new profit space, accompanied by powerful private economic forces and institutional arrangements, funds are even invested in the global land



and real estate sector in a transnational manner to maximize the "highest value and best use" of land. After the theory was proposed, it became a key economic driver of gentrification and a key proof of gentrification going global.

The expansion of capital provides support for gentrification, and diversified gentrification derivatives have emerged around the world, which has blurred the boundaries of its concept. Given the differences in property rights systems, land development history, urban planning and legal systems, social structure and cultural background among different countries around the world, the applicability of the gentrification concept with a Eurocentric tendency to other countries needs to be taken into consideration[4]. Especially for China, which has a special land system, the gentry group and the indigenous people have a multi-faceted symbiotic relationship different from that in the West. Comprehensively grasping the differences in the temporal and spatial contexts of the occurrence and theoretical development of the planetary gentrification phenomenon has both theoretical significance and practical value.

This article combs the development of planetary gentrification theory, comprehensively compares the differences between traditional gentrification and planetary gentrification, and discusses the commonalities and uniqueness of gentrification in the north and south based on case studies. Finally, based on China's actual situation, this article explores the application enlightenment of planetary gentrification in the Chinese context to urban renewal, providing reference for China's urban and rural governance practice.

2. RESEARCH PROGRESS ON PLANETARY GENTRIFICATION

2.1. Theoretical context of planetary gentrification

In 1964, British sociologist Ruth Glass first proposed the concept of gentrification in her book *London: The Many Faces of Change*, which was used to describe the displacement of working-class residents and the change of social attributes after the invasion of the middle class into working-class residential areas. Like many other Western scholars, her works show a certain tendency towards Euro-Americanism, that is, focusing on the dominance of Western thought and experience over non-Western research. The result of the hegemony of European and American urban theory is the over-extension of the concept of "gentrification".

In order to avoid the Western-centric "convergence theory", Brenner and others chose the word "planetary" to represent the widespread urban and rural spatial reorganization on a global scale in their revolution in urban epistemology[5]. Different from the centrism of "global" or "globalism" that carries the outward expansion of European and American hegemony, planetarization shows integrity and inclusiveness.

Inspired by the theory of "planetary urbanization", L. Lees and others analyzed and questioned the concept of "global gentrification" based on the new comparative urbanism, and proposed "planetary gentrification" that emphasizes diversity and localism, focusing on the dominance of the secondary cycle of real estate, expounding the concept of planetary gentrification and its formation path, and developing it from a global perspective to prove the localism of globalization, opening up and transcending the dichotomy of traditional urban research. As L. Lees said: Planetary gentrification should be an ongoing dialogue between cities around the world, a dialogue whose ultimate goal is to achieve social justice for all, which is of great significance to the comparative study of gentrification on a global scale.

2.2. Multi-dimensional Review of Planetary Gentrification

As the field of gentrification with the highest influence in cited literature, the field of planetary gentrification shows great differences from the traditional broad gentrification in the three-dimensional examination of ontology, epistemology and methodology:

Table 1 Multidimensional review of traditional gentrification theory and planetary gentrification theory

		Traditional gentrification	Planet gentrification
Ontology	Spatial range	The basic unit is the block	Urban and rural global situation
	Scale relationship	Neighborhood scale is directly related to city scale	Neighborhood, city, regional, and global scales are cross-scalar and political
	Gentlemen Group	The new middle class	A diverse group of people with different incomes, political views, lifestyles, etc.
	Core Role	Pioneer gentrification group	State - Neoliberal or Authoritarian
Epistemology	Urban cognition	Cities are bounded and defined	Cities are borderless and are constituted through their relationships with other places.
	Research Thinking	“Center-periphery” binary thinking	Global Urban-Rural Holistic Thinking
Methodology	Driving mechanism	Either the consumer side or the supply side	The “dual factors” driving capital supply and cultural demand
	Theoretical research	Theorizing with a single case	Theorizing/conceptualizing beyond a single case

2.2.1. Ontology

Ontologically, in the 1970s, the block was the basic unit of traditional gentrification. The study of gentrification in a larger geographical area was not even recognized, and it was mostly focused on small-scale urban studies in North American and Western European cities. Planetary gentrification, on the other hand, is more holistic and scale-oriented, emphasizing the expansion of spatial scope. The multidimensional geographical scales of neighborhood, city, region and global are directly cross-scale and are influenced and acted upon by each other's economic, political and cultural forces. In terms of the gentrification groups and core roles of the two types of gentrification, traditional gentrification mainly uses the new middle class as the pioneer gentrification group to replace the working class to form social class succession. The gentrification groups of planetary gentrification are mostly diversified people with higher economic levels and cultural capital than the indigenous people, and are differentiated in terms of income, political views, lifestyle, etc. In the process of gentrification, it is dominated by the state, especially in the global South and the East. As the core element, the state uses the policy effects of gentrification to reconfigure the social spatial reproduction of cities and countries.

2.2.2. Epistemology and Methodology

Traditional gentrification and planetary gentrification present completely opposite trends at the epistemological level. Broad gentrification advocates that cities have boundaries and forms a mindset of traditional urban research dichotomies such as city-suburbs and city-countryside. Planetary gentrification emphasizes that global urban and rural areas are a whole, and can abandon the dichotomy between city and suburbs, city and countryside, and recognize the emergence of multi-centers of urban space, thereby enriching the theory and concept of gentrification.

The difference at the methodological level is also about the two major camps of gentrification "supply-demand". Traditional gentrification uses economic motivation to make urban redevelopment or the spiritual and cultural needs of people from higher social classes, and advocates that gentrification is driven by one of the two; while planetary gentrification is a predictable result of capitalism. Under the two-way drive of capital pursuit and the spiritual and cultural needs of gentrifying groups, namely neo-Marxism (capital supply) and liberal humanism (cultural demand), regions of different scales interact with each other to construct new unbalanced development, making the gentrification capital supply theory and cultural demand theory complementary (rural gentrification research framework from a geographical perspective).

2.3. Gentrification in the context of globalization and neoliberalism

L. Lees proposed that gentrification is a phenomenon that cities around the world have experienced or are currently experiencing, and that it is being reconstructed through different types of cities in both the North and South. Adjustments in the world's political and economic structures have gradually expanded the geographical scope of gentrification to a larger scale, no longer limited to core cities in the North. Large-scale migration of residents and reconstruction of the built environment in the Global South have caused more intense gentrification than in the United States and Western Europe [6].

Under the global influence of gentrification, planetary gentrification in the context of neoliberalism in the 21st century often occurs in the form of "accumulation by dispossession". In the underlying logic of capital accumulation, cities are linked to rural areas, regions, and even other countries. Capital actively deprives collective consumption budgets, and cities are no longer spatial units for labor reproduction, but become spaces for capital productive plunder[7].

2.3.1. Gentrification in the Global South and North

With the accumulation of capital and spatial renewal, urban concentration has emerged in cities, suburbs and villages. The phenomenon of planetary gentrification around the world has taken on diversified forms. Especially for countries in the North and South, the differences in economic, policy and cultural backgrounds will inevitably lead to differences in the evolution process, driving mechanism and effect regulation of their gentrification processes.

For the countries in the Global South, developing countries will sacrifice the productive use of land in pursuit of speculative real estate to drive up the value of land. In the process of pursuing profits, capital often shifts its target to the real estate sector and is unwilling to invest in the production sector. For investors, building infrastructure, developing and encouraging urban renewal and real estate investment are much less risky than producing goods for domestic consumption and international export. There is a disconnect between capital and labor. The development of gentrification in the South depends to a large extent on national policies and economic investment. This is particularly evident in China. There is a strong tradition of "gentry governing villages" in rural areas, but this has also weakened the critical meaning of gentrification to a certain extent[8].

The gentrification process in the global North shows a reverse trend from that in the global South. It can be seen as a bottom-up process, which can be explored from the perspective of historical protection. The protection and renewal of historical sites in the global South also has a propaganda meaning. In pursuit of modernization, it is led by the state or developers, and urban renewal adopts a large-scale transformation method of demolishing the old and building the new. This is mainly caused by the prevalence of new consumerism. The historical protection in the global North is mostly initiated by the pioneer gentrification as a whole, from small scale to large scale, from historical protection to state-led demolition and construction. In addition, after the suburbanization of the northern countries, the urban center has long lacked productive capital investment, the inner city rent has declined, and finally there is a rent gap, which makes the urban center solidify with capital for a long time. It is the result of the rational choice of the middle class. The gentrification areas of the

northern gentrification are mostly concentrated between the city and the suburbs. This rarely happens in the global South, such as the slums in India, the gentrification of Chinese villages, and even the transnational redevelopment of the old city in Panama, which mostly act on villages, small towns, and blocks. Therefore, there are also differences in the gentrification areas between the north and the south.

Table 2 Comparison of gentrification characteristics in the North and South

	Northern Gentrification	Southern Gentrification
Gentrification	bottom up Large to small scale	Top-down Small to large scale
Gentrification Initiator	Pioneer gentrification group	State-led
Gentrification	Inner city, suburban area, inner city community public housing	Old town, village, historic district, slum

Although there are great differences in the phenomenon of gentrification between the North and South of the world, there are some commonalities in some aspects. Gentrification around the world is under the dual guidance of urban policy support and real estate development investment choices. For example, the government and investors form a community of interests and adopt a spatial investment strategy to convert spatial capital into economic benefits. For example, public policies such as land upgrading, real estate privatization, and convenient transportation use spatial capital to drive the surge in real estate value, thereby accelerating the circulation of real estate. In this process, public policies play the role of seeking reinvestment space for capital. The state plays the most core role in the gentrification of the planet, which is particularly prominent in the southern countries. It is promoted by the government with support from international developers and multinational institutions, mostly in a cross-national manner, which also makes gentrification seem to become a "global urban strategy." The common phenomenon of gentrification around the world - the alliance between government and capital, will inevitably lead to negative changes in structural factors: loss of quality of life, pressure on replacement and relocation, uneven accumulation of land rent, and higher-level replacement problems. In the process of population replacement, social and cultural homogeneity gradually replaces diversity, and indigenous people are forced to relocate to make way for large-scale reconstruction of high-end buildings and facilities. The population replacement caused by gentrification is the product of inherent unequal power relations within society, which ultimately exacerbates social polarization. Therefore, resistance to the gentrification of the planet has begun to emerge in the North and South of the world, and many scholars have criticized it.

The resistance of southern countries to gentrification is sometimes even more successful than that of the north, shifting from the community and city scale to the national level, forming a bottom-up spontaneous rights protection movement. For example, in the 1980s, South Korea launched a resistance to gentrification with the support of social activists; my country launched an economic struggle around geographical location, resettlement housing or monetary compensation. However, whether in the West or the non-West, the South or the North, the population replacement caused by gentrification is considered a negative process, which deserves the attention of scholars around the world and research on what means to use to solve it.

3. ENLIGHTENMENT OF PLANETARY GENTRIFICATION IN THE CHINESE CONTEXT ON URBAN RENEWAL

3.1. Applicability of Planetary Gentrification in the Chinese Context

Gentrification takes different forms in different countries. Compared with other countries, the scale, speed and stage of China's urbanization are unique and transitional, pointing to a completely different type of gentrification research (trends, debates and inspirations of gentrification research at home and abroad). For China, in the context of urbanization, the middle class and the transformation of farmers into working class, local government, as the core element, has entrepreneurial and authoritative characteristics, and highly intervenes in real estate investment, turning land into commercial space for exchange value and forming national fixed assets. This also leads to uneven development in various regions within the country. All of these have accumulated spatial and social tensions for larger-scale and more localized gentrification[9]. Compared with the West, China's special land property rights system and the uneven development of geographical space caused by capital flow can better reveal the way in which the flow of people, capital and ideas is generated by cross-scale comparison using the planetary gentrification theory.

3.2. Enlightenment of Planetary Gentrification on Urban Renewal

3.2.1. Global Dimension

The process of planetary gentrification not only involves the imbalance of urban production, but also the complexity of social polarization, and is intertwined with various institutional systems of highly globalized capitalism. From a global scale, gentrification research urgently needs to think about the process and mechanism of action. Despite different social and cultural backgrounds, speculative developers have roughly the same way to gain benefits, which can be said to be a capital-led urban space colonization. We need to pay attention to the subject of planetary gentrification and the composition of the middle class, examine the characteristics of the gentrification group, the role of private economic forces in combining the state and the local, and the state and the state, as producers in the gentrification process, while the middle class is more of a consumer.

Global gentrification is like public policy. In the face of different social system environments, its effects have spatial heterogeneity. However, regardless of the North or South, its core effect is also the main reason why scholars around the world resist gentrification - the forced migration of low-income groups. People in gentrification areas often have limited education and are low-income and relatively disadvantaged groups without social discourse power. It is difficult for them to realize their legitimate demands through legal means. The situation of "gentrification groups" is completely opposite. Therefore, countries around the world should pay attention to the social equity issues caused by gentrification and intervene in the social spatial effects caused by gentrification through a combination of public policies and planning methods.

3.2.2. National Dimension

Gentrification and urban renewal mainly depend on the level of urban development and the penetration of global forces, the maturity of the local real estate market and economy, and the degree of connection between the local market and global investment. Real estate development has become the economic pillar of global cities. As Hart said, we need to recognize the social and spatial change trajectories that are constantly differentiated but increasingly closely related in different regions of the world. Therefore, for my country, the state needs to play a leading role, actively create conditions for the flow of transnational capital, and strengthen academic exchanges and dialogues with the international community. With the help of the scale shift of planetary gentrification, national policies should be used to support the close flow of financial capital on an international scale, cater to the cultural interests of real estate and the transnational middle class, so that reconstruction capital is no

longer limited to a single city, but along a transnational path to create profits for housing reinvestment. In this process, attention should also be paid to the threat of displacement to indigenous peoples, and targeted protection policies should be formulated.

During the critical period of China's social and economic transformation and upgrading and rural revitalization, the interests of relevant subjects in the gentrification process and the sustainable development of the natural ecological environment should be comprehensively and systematically considered, and multi-party dialogue and interaction should be enhanced. The government should not only pay attention to the transformation of urban space, but also pay attention to population improvement, avoid the various negative effects of Western gentrification, unite all forces, scientifically plan production space, living space, and ecological space [错误!未找到引用源。](#), and reasonably and limitedly participate in the land capital reproduction and accumulation cycle, and avoid excessive population replacement and various replacement and relocation pressures.

3.2.3. Urban-rural dimension

The flow pattern of urban and rural elements such as "people, land, and money" is constantly changing. The country is committed to promoting the trend of balanced urban and rural development. It is necessary to establish a more integrated urban and rural system to strengthen the connection while avoiding urban resource deprivation. It can be said that gentrification is close to a social reconstruction process in which national policies, class foundations, and power interact with each other. The population replacement caused by it is the product of the mutual integration of local power and the promotion of capital relations. In the new wave of "planetary" gentrification, the giant gentrification in southern countries is accompanied by large-scale replacement and relocation. The process implements specific policies and large-scale projects to transform the existing space in a highly compressed time. In addition to residential replacement, the gentrification process has further increased "chain replacement", "exclusive replacement" and "potential replacement". Residents will feel the pressure of passive relocation due to changes in neighborhood relations, the fragmentation of original social relations and changes in material space.

To this end, my country's urban and rural governance renewal needs to fully consider the impact of gentrification on the differentiation of residential space, improve my country's multi-level housing supply system, pay attention to the interests of the original residents, and ensure that the residents participate in the renewal and transformation process. The original residents are the vulnerable group in the renewal and transformation process. Implement the channels and methods of public participation, and play a role in balancing the developers in the process of block protection and renovation. Taking the improvement of the living conditions of the original residents as the basic premise of protection, explore a variety of revitalization policies and protection methods based on the causes of decline of different blocks and the social composition of residents, so that residents can participate in the renewal and transformation process.

4. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Today, gentrification is considered a global phenomenon . Different institutional backgrounds and mechanisms in the North and South promote the formation of localized gentrification. Its endogenous process is heterogeneous in urban and rural areas. With the rise of neoliberalism in Western cities, the importance of the market and the status of financial capitalism continue to rise, which further leads to real estate-oriented urban renewal. This approach is contagious. The global phenomenon of changing urban landscapes to cater to transnational capital is also a manifestation of the scale shift of planetary gentrification. Planetary gentrification theory can use new comparative urbanism and postcolonialism to study global gentrification, emphasizing the de-European and American centering and localization of gentrification theory, and further understand the complexity of the global urbanization process.

The multi-scale and cross-scale comparative urbanism theory is basically consistent with my country's national conditions. Planetary gentrification can provide theoretical and practical path values for China's gentrification and urban renewal process at multiple levels:

Break the binary mindset of "center-periphery" and "city-rural", and enrich China's gentrification theory system from the perspectives of global integration, regional governance integration, and urban-rural development integration;

The spatial heterogeneity of its impact effect is conducive to my country's attention to its own politics, social culture and ideology, giving rise to more localized and diversified urban transformation experiences;

The spatial hierarchy and connectivity of planetary gentrification can help us understand the macro process of unbalanced development at multiple scales, such as local, regional, national and transnational, and transform the multi-scale urban change process into a perceptible experience at the local level. We can observe the urban competition process from the northern world to the southern world with a more flexible and open perspective, and understand the social and spatial mechanisms of gentrification at a broader scale.

Western theories may not be applicable to my country's national conditions. Therefore, we should build a local gentrification theory system for the gentrification process that occurs in my country's urban renewal, explore the uniqueness and universality of Chinese gentrification from an international comparative perspective, and respond to the global gentrification challenge of how to connect China's experience with global knowledge.

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