14. Slum gentrification

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14.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I define 'slum gentrification' (Lees 2014a) as the process of capital or material investment in poor and informal built environments, which can be associated with a new (or renewed) interest in the cultures of such places by mainstream urban cultures (in a particular city or globally), followed by changes in the built environment related to upgrade or renewal projects in those areas, and finally resulting in the partial or total substitution of incumbent populations from the sites of investment. Other gentrification scholars (e.g. Lees et al 2016; Lees 2014a,b) include formal built environments that have become stigmatized and disinvested as slums, like public housing estates in Euro-American cities.

As such, slum gentrification here encompasses both (1) the cultural and social re-appreciation of informal housing areas (which includes activities such as slum tours, other forms of cultural consumption known as favela chic or the more straightforward fact of a poor urban area becoming a de-stigmatized residential option), which, frequently in tandem with public urban upgrade programs, leads to a new appeal for slightly more affluent populations to move in, resulting in rises in rent prices and ultimately in the pushing out of the more vulnerable and lowest-income sections of the existing population, who may have lived on the site for decades; and (2) a different process, closer to classic slum clearance, where public- or private-led urban renewal projects lead to the displacement of incumbent slum populations to social housing in more peripheral and less valued locations, thus entailing a complete substitution of populations. Both processes are relationally porous, in the sense that elements usually associated with the first process can also appear on the second, and vice versa. Moreover, each sub-set takes slightly different forms across the world, with heterogeneous local variations placed within a continuum between one and the other. The one common element across different geographies and across the different segments of such continuum is that local variations of the gentrifying process tend to be mistaken for simple overflows coming from a general dynamics of urban improvement, with the problems associated with the gentrification of slum areas often depreciated as collateral damage by local governments, the real estate sector and other actors.

In abstract terms, the first process can be associated with consumption-related theories of gentrification (e.g. Ley 1996), only applied to informal, illegal or squatter settlements. This is because the typical subjects of this type of slum gentrification are middle-class individuals or households who visit or move to neighbourhoods considered 'authentic', 'dangerous' or 'popular' in order to 'consume' an urban experience that does not exist elsewhere in their city, with the resulting effects easily filed under a demand-driven urban economics. In reverse, the second process can be associated with production of space-related theories of gentrification (e.g. Smith 1979, 1996), in the sense that it often

describes the unmistakable effects at a local scale of broader processes of national and transnational capital investment in cities as well as of the role that public policies and housing programs have in shaping the production of space of particular urban regimes. However, empirical evidence also suggests, as with other forms of gentrification, that the two explanations are not mutually exclusive (see Slater 2011) and sometimes co-exist in the same site, if not necessarily at the same time and usually in reference to different sections of the same settlement.

14.2 SLUM GENTRIFICATION I. TRICKLE OUT OF SITE: DYNAMICS OF GENTRIFICATION IN INFORMAL AREAS

The first process is relatively uncontested in the various literatures focusing on slums or on gentrification. It is easily identifiable by the existence of a social atmosphere where one or a series of informal settlements becomes culturally relevant to the larger metropolitan area they are a part of (to which they could originally be more or less disconnected) – via films, television programs, music, and so on – and subsequently the land and housing stocks which were outside the formal mechanisms of urban capitalism (but could already be regulated by local customs and resident associations) become commodified.

14.2.1 Tourism and State Intervention in the Celebrity Slum

Among those settlements are a number of 'celebrity slums' in different cities across the world. Names such as Rocinha, Vidigal or Santa Marta in Rio de Janeiro (Freire-Medeiros 2009; Cummings 2015; Ost and Fleury 2013); Dharavi in Mumbai (Mukhija 2003; McFarlane 2012), Kibera in Nairobi (Gulyani and Talukdar 2008) and Makoko or Ajegunle in Lagos, among others, have all undergone long processes of insertion into the touristic circuits of their respective cities (Freire-Medeiros 2009; Rolfes 2010; Frenzel 2014). They have also seen the set-up of more or less experimental interventions involving infrastructural upgrade and neighbourhood image re-branding in the area.¹ In addition, these settlements have seen their name and image used as metonyms for the 'slum' typology across the world, whether in globally distributed fiction films such as 'Slumdog Millionaire' (featuring both real and staged parts of Dharavi) or 'The Constant Gardener' (with scenes shot in Kibera); television documentaries such as the BBC's 'Welcome to Lagos' (with its episode 2 centered in Makoko); or popular academic books (Koolhaas et al 2001; Neuwirth 2006). All have helped to institute a common grammar on informal settlements in mega- or world-class cities, based on such paradigmatic slums.² These settlements are perfect illustrations of 'the slum as spectacle', a process whereby

¹ The latter includes using specific parts of their urban morphology as visual motifs for the 're-branding' process, something which can be illustrated by the painting of Favela Santa Marta's main square (Praça Cantão) by the Dutch group Favela Painting in association with the Brazilian paint company Coral, owned by the AkzoNobel chemical corporation (Figure 14.1).

² The celebrity slum is not exclusive to megacities in the Global South. Real Cañada Galiana in Madrid (Aguilera 2016); Le Samaritain in La Courneuve, Paris (idem); Cova da Moura in Lisbon (Beja-Horta 2006; Ascensão 2016); or the Ponte Mammolo refugee camp in Rome (Agostini 2011) are, albeit much smaller in population size, well-known cases of informal settlements in Europe.

'visualisations of [poverty and] stigma can become commodified' (Jones and Sanyal 2015: 432). In becoming subject to intangible commodification, they have also attracted (variable) capital investments into their local economies, resulting in more tangible forms of commodification. This is where slum gentrification begins.

One of the cities where the process is more advanced is Rio de Janeiro – also because favelas have been integral to the city since the early 20th century (Valladares 2006) – so to follow some examples located there illustrates the way the process can typically unfold. The first investments tend to be public programs aimed at the redevelopment of the areas. Initiatives such as the late 1990s Favela Bairro program (Riley et al. 2001), which rightly aim to upgrade settlements through the provision of sanitation infrastructure, collective services and housing upgrades, prepare the specific settlements where they are implemented for future capital investment. Alongside, public or private utility companies tend to use such initiatives as enablers to provide stable electric power, clean drinkable water or access to telecommunications to hitherto neglected populations; in other words, to open up new markets for their businesses (Ost and Fleury 2013). This is one of the main drivers of slum gentrification: relatively independent and informal economies suddenly become formalized, with untapped capital conducted to the formal economy. Living costs tend to go up, paving the way for gross inequalities in access to services, which previously were informally arranged and accessed. The question Ost and Fleury (2013) ask is if 'the market goes up the morro [the hill], does citizenship come down?' (idem: 635). The answer is often that, despite the different initiatives' benevolent intentions, it does not necessarily happen according to plan, with gentrification pressures appearing as a by-product of these investments.

Another type of state intervention in informal settlements that works as an indication of gentrification pressures, one complementary to that of infrastructural and housing amelioration, is bespoke or innovative community policing. It is a common feature around the world, from Pacifying Police Units in Rio (Yutzy 2012; Leite 2014; Menezes 2015) to panchayats in Indian slums (Roy et al. 2004). While they are frequently introduced by the conjoined desires of local governments and private companies to pacify and manage hitherto insurgent urban spaces, they often do respond to the real desires of inhabitants to defend themselves against the arbitrary violence of different actors in informal settlements – for instance in Rio's favelas, against the dual violence perpetrated against residents by the very corrupt military police, as well as by organized drug gangs (Machado da Silva 2008). Again, Ost and Fleury (2013: 660) have shown for the case of the Santa Marta favela in Rio de Janeiro how the installation of a police pacification unit (UPP-*Unidade de Polícia Pacificadora*) has meant a 200 percent increase in rents in the top areas of the neighbourhood and a 75 percent increase in the bottom ones.

At the end of this process of infrastructure upgrade and security normalization, it is common to witness the opening up of hotels and hostels inside or in the vicinities of the settlement (see Cummings 2015 for the case of Vidigal, in Rio). At this point, too, slum tours are typically instituted in the area.³ Due to all these intersecting dynamics,

³ Slum tours range from activities set up by middle-class individuals from outside the settlements which may not produce a great deal of investment in the area, such as those at Rocinha in Rio (Freire-Medeiros 2011: 28); to tours and activities set up by residents themselves, who despite having to navigate the same media landscape and touristic system to canvass for clients are still able, for example, to provide decent salaries for tour

Source: Photo by author.

Figure 14.1 *Visual intervention at Favela Santa Marta's main square (Praça Cantão) and tourists, 2015*

settlements undergo relatively abrupt increases in rent prices that change the rent structure in the settlement (which becomes re-directed to tourism, the nearby-living lower middle classes or cultural avant-gardes, the latter much like the pioneer gentrifiers of US and UK cities in the 1950s–1960s [Moran 2007]), often displacing the most vulnerable of

guides from the neighbourhood and overall play a part in improving the settlement's social image for the rest of the city (research observation, Favela Santa Marta, 2015, author).

the (already vulnerable) existing populations. Growing tourism is by no means the only indicator of slum gentrification, but it is its most visible.

14.2.2 Slum Landlordism and the Disjuncture in the Investment Cycle

Still in high-profile settlements, but where the tourism tail-end of the process does not exist (not in the same way, at least), a slightly more intricate and invisible type of gentrification is usually constituted by some sort of disjuncture in the investment-improvement-gentrification cycle, one that nonetheless ends up again pushing the most vulnerable slum residents out of site. This is especially the case where instead of self-built settlements with some form of owner-occupancy in place the prevalent type of access to housing is made through informal rental systems – slum real estate, as Gulyani and Talukdar (2008) designate it. In the example they provide, Nairobi, they note how the city's slums constitute low-quality but high-cost shelter for the urban poor in the city, and see very little of the earnings from this informal housing economy re-invested (by a politically connected slum landlord class, often government employees) to upgrade housing conditions, thus end up in a continuous 'sub-optimal equilibrium' (idem: 1917), one which provides housing for around 30 percent of the city's population. The disjuncture here is the absence of re-investment. In such situations, 'slum upgrade programs that create assets – such as housing with legal title – for slum residents that the better-off [also] lack are likely to be the subject of gentrification' (idem: 1921). It is poor eats very poor: once housing conditions or tenure are improved, home or deeds are quickly commodified and either grabbed by a slightly more affluent household or re-appropriated by the slum landlord class able to enforce evictions and passed on to those more affluent households.

14.2.3 Upgrade and Entrepreneurship in Ordinary Slums

Not dependent on the existence of slum landlordism but rather more exclusively related to the effects of slum upgrade projects, a comparable process exists in many, less renowned informal settlements around the world. For instance in Maputo, Mozambique, slum upgrade projects conducted under the aegis of UN Habitat in informal areas near the city centre, such as Mafalala, Polana Caniço A or Maxaquene, have meant that those on the lowest incomes and tenure status security have been pushed further out, to areas such as Zimpeto or Magoanine B and C (Jorge and Melo 2014). In Polana Caniço A (adjacent to the Sommerschield wealthy district), upgrade projects were immediately followed by the creation of a market to sell plots, which were informally transacted but sanctioned by municipal authorities. This means that those more vulnerable economically tend to sell and move away, substituted by lower middle-class individuals looking to build a detached, gated house. In addition, the PROMAPUTO plan in the area also meant the demolition of some of the settlement's sections to make way for new roads, so the atmosphere among residents was that 'the neighbourhood is not for us anymore' (idem: 65). Slowly, trickle out slum gentrification, not in the way of cultural appreciation or through slum landlordism but rather related to the settlements' proximity to the city centre, has seen the restructuring of these settlements' populations. Likewise, in Jakarta, Indonesia, Budiarto (2005) states that gentrification in upgraded *kampungs* can

be explained in two layers.⁴ The first is that land prices increase and 'dwellers quickly spot a financial profit which increases the chance of out-migration and the growth of *kampung*s in other areas' (idem: 5). This is 'trickle out slum gentrification' in its simplest form. The second is more complex and is that as the *kampung* morphological structure is messed about in upgrade projects, so are kinship and work relationships; leading to a type of social and mental displacement even whilst remaining immobile. In short, slum upgrade projects (modelled after the UN-Habitat intervention paradigm or not) tend to be followed by the rapid increase of land and house values in the upgraded settlements, often resulting in the peripherization of significant sections of the target populations.

Such prevailing universes of displacement can nonetheless, as McFarlane (2012) has shown, be recast within broader urban entrepreneurialism agendas and become internalized as such by residents and activists. In such a situation, much-needed capital, symbolic and associational investment into activities to improve the lives of slum dwellers (such as collective toilet blocks, micro-finance projects and individual or collective squatter tenure) become framed within a particular 'conception of poverty as socioeconomic potential and the poor as entrepreneurial subjects' (idem: 2796). Such projects' overriding ideology aims to 'transform spaces of poverty from an exploited proletariat to emerging markets that will be embraced by financially disciplined subjects' (idem: 2800); that is, slum dwellers themselves need to embrace these tenets in order to benefit from the projects. An instructive consequence is the way paid toilet blocks in informal settlements – for instance in Dharavi, Mumbai, which authors such as Appadurai (2001) at a certain point seemed to validate – commodify personal hygiene to such an extreme (Davis 2006: 141; McFarlane 2012: 2804) that people's bodily needs have to be relocated elsewhere; i.e. out in the open (Datta 2012: 130; Desai et al. 2015). The Finnish documentary film 'For Kibera!' (2015, directed by Kati Juurus) is a tongue-in-cheek illustration of the perversions of such situations. Following a radio DJ from the settlement, it shows a place where 200 NGOs work, yet are unable to significantly improve people's everyday lives; where EU-financed toilet blocks require the user to pay and are thus beyond the means of most residents, who then defecate in the open, contaminating water flows; where benign projects featuring automatic laundrettes encroach on the livelihoods of people whose job is precisely to wash clothes for other residents; and finally where UN Habitat-sponsored medium-rise apartment blocks in construction 150 metres away will clearly not be for Kibera's poor residents but for lower middle-class (by Kenyan standards) new arrivals. The film shows that at the end of insistent cycles of philanthropic investment in the settlement – which as in other places is centered on the project-based temporalities that define the work of large humanitarian or development NGOs worldwide, leaping from site to site in search of the good project (Krause 2014) – gentrification looms.

These seemingly unrelated dimensions of life in informal settlements show that many such settlements have become spaces of social experimentation for forms of governing the precarious lives of the urban poor – much like colonial cities were in the early 20th century (Rabinow 1989). Desai and Loftus (2012) argue that at the core of the problem is

⁴ Jakarta experienced a mode of urban expansion locally designated as *desakota* (expressing a continuum between the village and urban lifestyles), which hinges on the different uses of the vernacular *kampung* urban form. In its poorest versions, the *kampung* (traditional village) is no longer associated with rural settings but with slums. Several such settlements in the city have been upgraded and gentrification ensued.

the way infrastructure investments in slum areas have become conduits through which a 'landlord class' switches capital from a primary to a secondary circuit. Thus they prescribe a specific research agenda for the near future:

Without a clearer understanding of the circulation of capital through land in slum areas there is a serious risk that benevolent investments in infrastructure will merely strengthen powerful stakeholders operating within and across slum areas, while increasing the already precarious nature of slum dwellers' lives. (idem: 790)

14.3 SLUM GENTRIFICATION II. WHOLESALE GET OUT!: THE GENTRIFICATION OF ENTIRE INFORMAL AREAS

The need to understand the circulation of capital in slum areas directs us to the second sub-process of slum gentrification. It is one of a more direct and violent nature, and consists of wholesale clearance of slum areas as part of urban redevelopment plans that stretch beyond each given settlement. Such redevelopment plans tend to be driven in four different sub-modalities.

14.3.1 World-city Visioning and the 'Nuisance' of Slums

The first one involves city visioning projects aiming to attain world or global city status which earmark slum areas for reinvestment in processes of major spatial, economic and social restructuring of the city. The emblematic cases here are both Indian, Mumbai's Slum Rehabilitation Scheme, which introduced market incentives and developer participation in order to resettle slum dwellers and retrieve the entire, or parts of the cleared, space for middle-class developments (Mukhija 2003; Doshi 2013); and Delhi's urban middle classes' reclaiming of urban spaces from slums and slum dwellers with recourse to Public Interest Litigation, which sought to evict 'illegal settlements' on the grounds that they were/are environmental and societal nuisances (Ghertner 2010; Datta 2012: 67–83). They involve public-private partnerships in which the seduction of private developers to invest in slum areas is complemented with the guarantee that the state will enforce the rules towards off-site resettlement, i.e. displacement. However, this sub-modality is not an Indian particularity; it is replicated in other locations. In Lagos, Nigeria, Nwanna (2015) briefly mentions how, amidst a backdrop of massive demolition of houses in informal settlements in the rest of the city, some sections of the emblematic Makoko were razed with the justification of being 'environmental nuisances that undermined the mega-city status of Lagos' (idem: 313).

Forms of dispossession by the state which have parallels with cities' world-class aspirations but are compounded by other elements include those such as Luanda, Angola, where the re-privatization of land has often presupposed the clearance of long-standing informal settlements. The Luanda Sul/Talatona urban plan has overseen the forced and violent eviction of some of the oldest musseques (as informal settlements are called) in the city. Throughout the civil war, urban expansion in Luanda was fuelled by internal migration from conflict areas, with poor people settling in previously existing informal settlements (some of which were dated to colonial times) and expanding them. At the end of the war, all land was nationalized. Then, during the past decade renewal plans under the

rubric of 'public good projects' justified that previously public land could be seized from squatter settlers living on it or from small farmers in the outer peripheries (on the latter, see Waldorff 2016). So for instance the plan that municipal company Edurb developed in collaboration with Brazilian private construction conglomerate Odebrecht (which has close ties to the Angolan regime), meant that settlements such as the Chicala neighbourhood and others were, or are to be, razed.⁵ In this case, slum gentrification in bulk is the result of a previously Marxist, presently entrepreneurial contested political regime.

14.3.2 The Gated Highrise Template

The second sub-modality is constituted by slightly different national or transnational investments in urban space made in very particular prime locations, often catering to national and foreign wealthy populations; that is, condominiums and luxury highrises on the cleared land where informal settlements once existed. An illustration is Rio's Vila Autódromo (Silvestre and Oliveira 2012; Comité Popular da Copa 2015: 27; Villegas et al. 2016), a former fishing village with informal housing near the Olympic Park and the Bus Rapid Transit west line, which has been obstinately demolished and will make way for luxury highrise towers taking advantage of the lagoon environment, to be commercialized by the 'leasing company' involved in the construction of the Olympic Park. To an extent, it must be noted, these precisely located investments come on the back of previous citywide investments: for instance the Dharavi Redevelopment Plan in Mumbai (Weinstein 2014), pushed by millionaire Mukesh Mehta and other transnational real estate investors before the global recession of 2008 (it has since been abandoned), was clearly a culmination of the Slum Rehabilitation Scheme mentioned above. In Accra, Ghana, Gillespie (2016) identifies the Old Fadama informal squatter settlement near the city centre, an area reclaimed from swamp land by squatters which still provides an informal rental market to low-income populations, as being at risk of a similar process. Plans to redevelop it include passing the occupied public land to private investors to build high-rise mixed-use developments, and with it will come the eviction and displacement of the existing low-income squatters. One quote from a planning official involved in the redevelopment plan is illuminating regarding the plan's nature: '[It will be] a form of upgrading, but not the type of upgrading where we are going to legalise people staying here' (idem: 72). Evictions will obviously follow, is the message. The quote also illustrates a method that extends well beyond Accra or this sub-modality, one by which the terminologies coming from the diverse portfolio of possible state intervention in informal settlements (slum upgrade or rehabilitation programs, infrastructure provision, land titling schemes, and so on) are discursively re-worked by municipal authorities to mean much more blunt plans to simply demolish and remove low-income populations, all the while presenting them to potential investors or, unashamedly, to current residents, as benevolent 'upgrade' or 'redevelopment' plans. Finally, on the recurrence of the residential high-rise building type in these cases, it is historically ironic that the most common architectural template (the residential highrise) for this type of neoliberal urban restructuring is precisely the one

⁵ Social architect Paulo Moreira has established the Chicala Observatory (www.chicala.org), an online archive of the neighbourhood pending demolition, before people are displaced to mass housing 20 km away from Luanda's centre.

Source: Courtesy of Paulo Moreira.

Figure 14.2 Demolition 'for public good', Chicala, Luanda, 2015

which was pathologized for decades in Anglo-American urban studies (Newman 1972; Jencks 1977; Coleman 1985; cf. Jacobs 2006; Jacobs and Lees 2013). Over the past three decades, it has only needed to add the prefix 'luxury' or 'gated' to become the preferred housing type for affluent populations.

14.3.3 The Mega-event Urban Complex

Third, the zenith of slum gentrification in bulk occurs when it is connected to mega-events which require, or are the excuse for, substantive investment in public infrastructure, such as the Olympic Games, the football World Cup, the Commonwealth Games, International Fairs, and so on. For instance in Delhi, the 2010 Commonwealth Games led to as many as 200,000 people being forcibly evicted from their homes (HLRN Housing and Land Rights Network 2011); in South Africa, the 2010 football World Cup also involved dozens of thousands of evictions (Ngonyama 2010); and in Rio, sum totals are not yet finalized but preliminary official counts register 20,000 evicted families for the 2009–2013 period alone (Faulhaber and Azevedo 2015: 16). Significant shares of these people were slum/shack/favela dwellers, and to use HLRN's apt description, such processes tend to amount to 'planned displacement'. They take place during periods of strong economic growth that see the emergence of new middle classes, urban restructuring from industrial to service economies and when the mega-event 'fix' is too tempting to pass. In such circumstances, city administrations backed by national governments institute a state of exception regarding due procedure for evictions in areas where the urban poor reside, often cynically bending existing legislation and housing programs to the ulterior aims of beautification or of reserving prime urban space for future development for elites. For instance in Rio, the Minha Casa Minha Vida (MCMV) federal housing program was the preferential instrument to clear entire favelas or some of their sections near the Olympic venues while rehousing their inhabitants in MCMV estates 20 or 30 km away (idem: 67; see Figure 14.4). The mega-event syndrome (Müller 2015) has many different symptoms, among them being one of the more forceful drivers of slum gentrification (Davis 2011; Shin and Li 2013; Gaffney 2015). Finally, the amount of investment and political energy devoted by governing elites to the latter process is a clear indication that the displacement of poor populations from the sites of previous residence is not simply an unfortunate overflow of a broader movement for modernization for all (if it was so, in abstract it could be remedied, for example with in situ upgrading [see Huchzermeyer 2009]) but rather a conscious and inevitable outcome of freeing up space for more affluent populations.

14.3.4 Implementation Overflows of Urban Policies and Housing Provision

Fourth, up to a point slum gentrification can come from the unintended overflows of housing policies and programs which exacerbate rent gaps in informal areas in the process of being renewed and push the most vulnerable away. López-Morales (2011) tells of Santiago de Chile's inner city *poblaciones* (self-built working class areas, which are not exactly slums but rather the immediately better-off residential typology for the urban poor; see more below) where differential ground rents exist for incumbent populations or for large-scale developers in areas deemed for renewal. A state-subsidized market for renewal coupled with liberalizing regulatory tweaks mean that current owner-occupiers

have access to a lower capital ground rent than market agents of renewal. López-Morales' focus is on a long disinvested municipality, where housing is of 'pure use value' (idem: 352) but which will undergo a rapid process of commodification leading to the displacement of incumbent populations in favour of large-scale developers. In Cape Town's Westlake district, Lemanski (2014) integrates the concept of downward raiding with that of gentrification to better explain the process of the sale of low-standard state-subsidized houses by low-income households to businesses and wealthy families from nearby areas (who use them as housing for their employees). She further explains how this raid into low-income public housing leaves the sellers destitute of any future public subsidy and potentially excluded from standard housing for life. Again this area is, albeit poor, not a slum (even if a significant share of the sellers will end up in informal settlements down the line). However, this kind of low-income variation of the 'right to buy' seems to be a worrying 'forerunner for the future rather than a unique outlier' (idem: 2953) and not just for South Africa: slum renewal projects coupled with individual tenure can be subject to a similar process, as mentioned above. In both these cases, applying the slum label is a slight overstretch given their housing types sit just above the slum category. However, it is also not completely false given their sub-standard housing conditions, their close relationship with slums – e.g. the residents of low-income public housing would otherwise be living in informal settlements and, indeed, may still end up in them – and the sense of being precursors to what may happen to informal settlements. Where the slum epithet is entirely appropriate is in analysis of the implementation wrongs of a slum eradication program in Lisbon (Ascensão 2015). The PER rehousing program (1993–present) involved the demolition of 30,000 shanty dwellings spread out in slum pockets across the metropolitan area and the rehousing of its residents in public housing estates. The program involved both in situ rehousing (with apartment blocks built on the sites of the previous informal settlements) – a just solution – and clearance and re-housing in more peripheral, segregated and underserviced housing estates across the metropolitan area. The Marianas, Fontainhas or Pedreira dos Húngaros settlements were among the latter cases. In more complicated cases where the squatted land was privately owned and local governments failed to expropriate it in timely fashion, the original privileged locations were earmarked for residential development for the white middle classes and the mainly black immigrant poor populations were displaced to scattered destinations (discursively presented as a non-segregating option) or even left homeless if not deemed eligible for the program. The Quinta da Serra, Santa Filomena or Bairro 6 de Maio settlements were among the latter cases. In short, despite substantial public investment, only in the first of the three types of cases did this eradication program in Lisbon not involve some degree of slum gentrification.

All these four sub-modalities do not involve the fine-detail capitalist mechanisms of displacement at the house or street level which the 'trickle out' process described in the first section entails. Rather, they come as the result of citywide urban changes emerging from strategic national and transnational policies coupled with substantial public and private investments. Furthermore, there are circuitous relations between the four sub-modalities when one considers developments at particular locations, with specific projects involving elements of more than one sub-modality. Hence Vila Autódromo, clearly related to the mega-event set of circumstances, is also correctly listed above as an example of transnational investors 'redeveloping' informal urban areas into luxury highrises.

14.4 SLUM GENTRIFICATION, AN UMBRELLA DESIGNATION: HETERODOX COMPARISON AND POSTCOLONIAL URBAN THEORY

That all these different things have come under the broad conceptual umbrella of slum gentrification is a view that has been consolidating in the literature. Previously, gentrification in, and of, slum areas was a phenomenon identifiable in sparse information which mentioned the possibility that informal settlements could be, and indeed were being, gentrified (e.g. Mukhija 2002: 568; Davis 2006: 43). However, the process tended to be subsumed in those descriptions by the concurrent or alternative processes the authors addressed – upgrading policies, Haussmanization and so on. What recent work has brought about is the reconfiguration of slum gentrification as a process in itself. Such a bold conceptual move by Lees, Shin and López-Morales (2015, 2016) aims to get to grips with the fact that a variegated yet common process can be witnessed in many cities in the world:

Property-led (re)investment in spatially constrained slum areas, the visibly changing urban landscapes of the global South, the social ‘upgrading’ of locale by incoming higher-income groups, and the direct or indirect displacement (or threats of displacement) of the lowest income groups in society as a whole, are four factors usually occurring at the same time in many places in the ‘informal’ urban world (Lees et al 2016: 168).

Inspired by the cosmopolitanism of Robinson’s (2006, 2015) work and calls for a more horizontal comparative urban research and a less West-centric urban theory, they wish to take insight from different places in the in/formal world, irrespective of where the cities they are located in stand in global or world hierarchies. Importantly, they shy away from diffusionist logics that gentrification is transposed from cities in the Global North to those in the Global South, as well as from evolutionist ones, where gentrification is only a thing of advanced economies.

Regarding slum gentrification in particular, they understand the polysemic nature of the word ‘slum’ and its associated problems; that slums differ between themselves, that some face the threat of state-led evictions or are constantly harassed by the police or mafia squads, while in others ‘slum dwellers may have land titles and the forms of displacement are more subtle and less obvious’ (Lees et al 2016: 145). They also acknowledge that ‘there are cases where slum gentrification simply means slum removal, [whilst] in other cases, it means the gentrification of slums in situ by wealthier in-movers’ (idem: 147). Yet they still seek to understand what is it that is going on in the informal world that seems to pertain to a single (but complex) movement. They do so under the umbrella of ‘slum gentrification’, and they are not alone.

Nevertheless, slum gentrification is not a fully stabilized concept yet, as it conflates existing or growing theorizations of what has happened to many informal settlements around the world over the past two decades – the exacerbation of mechanisms of displacement which were perhaps mitigated in the 1970s-to-1990s period⁶ – but it is slowly being theorized. Such theorizations oscillate between robust re-appraisals of Marxist categories such as accumulation by dispossession (López-Morales 2011, 2016), the re-use of other

⁶ When research on squatter settlements that runs from Mangin (1967) to Turner (1976) to Santos (1977) to Gilbert (2000), to name only four, may have had some effect on policy.

concepts such as ‘urban commons’ and ‘enclosures’ (Gillespie 2016; Ghertner 2014) and more empirically inflected descriptions of what happens at specific locations, with the latter’s terminology in close relation to the described events, such as ‘marginal gentrification’ (Doshi 2015), ‘hybrid gentrification’ (Lemanski 2014) or ‘area gentrification’ (Ascensão 2015). Although using different lexicons, these are important undertakings in the sense they enable to put in comparison cases which previously ran the risk of not being compared or put in parallel at all.

14.5 CRITIQUES AND THE SOCIAL USE OF THE CONCEPT

Slum gentrification as a separate concept and not merely a descriptive aside has been criticized, starting with its wording: that it reads uncomfortably regarding both its slum and gentrification parts. First, it reads uncomfortably regarding the slum part because – as the recent debate on the stand-alone use of the word has pointed out – it re-uses a derogatory term from the late 19th century to refer to city areas that have since been more objectively classified as informal, illegal or squatter settlements, as low-income areas or similar denominations, thus making an unwelcome comeback to broad sweeping denigrations of the urban poor (Gilbert 2007). This much is true, but given the return of the word was mostly driven by actors with global reach such as the UN through its Millennium Goals agenda and its agency UN Habitat (2003, 2007), it became dominant vocabulary. One of the positive aspects of this otherwise negative situation is that the ‘slum’ – whether construed as an epistemological shorthand for complex urban theories of poverty in contemporary megalopolis (Rao 2006) or as fine-detail explorations of its rhetoric uses by slum dwellers and policy-makers (Arabindoo 2011) – makes crystal clear that slums in late-19th-century European and American cities and slums in early-21st-century metropolises across the world have been produced by potentially comparable processes of uneven development and structural income inequality which have become a pressing global issue across different disciplines (e.g. Wilkinson and Pickett 2009; Piketty 2014). Urban studies is no different in this attention to inequality, therefore the power of the word slum to emphasize such historical lineages somewhat justifies its usage and should not be thrown away.

Second, it reads uncomfortably regarding the gentrification part because it refers to a process that is not located in areas usually associated with gentrification such as historical districts that undergo periods of strong disinvestment or other working- or middle-class areas in the city, but rather in very poor informal environments, hitherto considered to be outside the mechanisms of capital investment in the formal city (cf. Desai and Loftus 2013). It is also uncomfortable because using the gentrification term may seem to camouflage what in effect are processes of forceful urban renewal: the gentrification label suggests a more benevolent string of events than do forced evictions or displacement, therefore many authors feel uncomfortable in using it.

And still, the term has become increasingly used worldwide and one of the reasons it has is because the dynamics of slum gentrification are indeed similar to those of classic gentrification: a cycle of disinvestment (or under-investment, as explained below) in existing working or poor city areas; followed by pioneer movements into these areas (to visit, inhabit or research – yes, academics are among the forces that push gentrification through, albeit by any means its most negative one), related to cultural distinction or to

opportunities for investment; these pioneer movements then become entangled in city-wide or area-based modernizing projects; the built environment is subject to significant change; the areas enter relatively more mainstream residential choices; and finally this results in higher rents and other economic disadvantages to incumbent populations such as increasingly unsecure tenure; ultimately pushing people away.

Among the most vocal critics of the use of the phrase to describe this particular string of events are development geographers who claim that there is no such thing as 'slum gentrification' (noted in Lees et al 2016: 214), that there already exist concepts such as slum clearance and forced evictions which cover the most important elements of the process. However, such criticisms fail to notice how key elements such as the 'replacement of populations' and the 'cycles of investment in the built environment' are subsumed within those concepts as secondary; whereas in the gentrification literature they are central, as their use by residents and activists in several different contexts attest to (see below). Within this first group of critics, there is a sense that their criticisms come from the wish to protect the field of development geography and some of its fetishistic solutions (the above-mentioned toilet blocks and micro-finance, but also pre-paid water and electricity meters; see Loftus 2013; Baptista 2015), which have often been pushed via consultancy, research projects and general policy advice. One more example of development 'fixes' are transportation infrastructure projects, which in several parts of the world have led to the indiscriminate expulsion of populations residing in settlements the projects were to cross. For instance in the implementation of Manila's North Rail-South Rail Linkage Project, 35,000 households were relocated from long-standing informal settlements near the tracks to eleven dispersed sites outside Metro Manila (Choi 2016: 585). In short, such critiques fail to fully acknowledge the complications of development models.

Another set of preoccupations comes from Ghertner's (2014) 'sympathetic critique' of the efforts to extend gentrification theory into the Global South and his preference to shift the discussion on contemporary forms of urban displacement from gentrification to the concept of accumulation by dispossession (curiously also used by some of the authors he later criticized in more severe terms, such as Ernesto López-Morales [Ghertner 2015]). First, he states that gentrification is the reinvestment of capital in disinvested space for he (quite correctly) argues that slums are not disinvested space but rather underinvested space, with an informal cycle of investment by poor residents over time (idem: 1558). In this sense, what he offers is simply a rigid formulation of the core mechanisms of gentrification (that it must entail investment in disinvested, not underinvested, space) in order to criticize its extension to contexts of slum demolition and displacement. It is a weak argument that falls short of the more productive approach of the planetary gentrification thesis (Lees et al. 2016), especially since it is quite easy to demonstrate that informal settlements indeed undergo a first cycle of investment from builders-residents, except it is done informally. That is indeed the essence of one of the more controversial researchers on land titling in informal settlements (yet very influential with global elites), Hernando de Soto (2000): to get this first cycle of investment (which comprises several instances of non-monetary exchanges and investment) into the formal economy.⁷

⁷ Furthermore, in a slight conceptual expansion to canonic gentrification theory, the argument can also be made that, from the start, the efforts of informal settlers in constituting their built environments is a form of sweat equity, although one which unlike that of pioneer gentrifiers in the Global North is not rewarded at a later

Ghertner's second argument is stronger and needs to be factored in, although it is a maximalist argument. Reflecting on empirical evidence from Delhi, he notes how 'slums are not a passive stage in land privatization, rather they function as a central vehicle for facilitating the alienation of public land to private developers' (Ghertner 2014: 1562). He then describes these forms of privatization along the lines of 'enclosures' that privatize common land into exclusively owned plots and do away with use rights to land. He argues that resistance needs to be against all forms of privatization of public land, and states that all that antigentrification struggles do is try to prevent the 'deepening commoditization' (idem: 1563) of something that was already commodified rather than a more fundamental move to resist the conversion of public land into the commodity form in the first place. Ghertner would do well to read the work by Lees and others on the conversion of public land (council estates/public housing) into a commodity in relation to new-build gentrification.

Of course, slum dwellers facing the demolition of their houses in many parts of the world do not protest against the privatization of public land, because by experience they know these arguments hold no sway for local governments and private investors steeped in a neoliberal state of mind. Instead, they shout 'Gentrification!' as one of the few rallying cries that still has some effect on public opinion and policy-makers worldwide (see Shin et al. 2016: 459–461). Evidence from the already-cited Santa Marta favela in Rio de Janeiro shows the typical set of circumstances where 'gentrification' is a socially relevant word. The residents of the peak of the favela, which encroaches on an environmentally protected natural park standing on public land, were notified to leave under a legal exception that waives standard administrative procedure for evictions in favelas in the case of the need to protect the environment or of landslide risk. However, the space resulting from the foreseeable removals will not be used to reinstate the natural park but very likely a hotel that will take advantage of the spectacular views (Ost and Fleury 2013: 658; Menezes 2015: 256–258). Furthermore, in this case the opportunity for the top of the favela to become a touristic attraction is facilitated, in terms of access for tourists, by the funicular (*plano inclinado*) which was put in place in 2008 following a Favela Bairro-type upgrade program implemented by the state government in the early 2000s (*Programa Estadual de Urbanização*). Again you see the role of public infrastructure projects to initiate processes of urban value increase. But the point is that in their activism against the threat of imminent evictions, the banners residents hung outside their houses, which were aimed at the tourists who take the funicular on different tours to the neighbourhood, read 'Gentrification' and 'World Cup for whom?' ('*Copa para Quem?*'); not 'Against the privatization of public land'. Residents know that the latter, however apt it could be to describe the case, is laughable in terms of media and policy impact. Gentrification, for the time being, is still not!

Because gentrification is the label that, no matter how derided or criticized, better gets under neoliberalism's skin, it is a particularly good one to contest and resist it. As Bernt (2016: 638) has also noted, it allows local activists, critical scholars and progressive planners to come together and enter into dialogue with policy-makers and even, to a limited

point (when re-selling their house after value appreciation) but is rather subject to dispossession (when evicted after the land is turned into a different use).

Source: Photo by author.

Figure 14.3 Contestation against gentrification at the peak of the Santa Marta favela in Rio de Janeiro, 2015

extent, top decision-makers. The latter still have to respond to the cries of gentrification in redevelopment plans, but no longer bother responding to those against the privatization of the public realm. In contexts of severe power imbalances, such as dialogues between slum dwellers and city officials, to have a concept which may seem too moldable yet is understood by everyone in its underpinning of different struggles across the world to fight evictions and displacement, is of great importance and should be appreciated.

14.6 HOW TO RESEARCH SLUM GENTRIFICATION?

Evidence for slum gentrification across the world is varied and undeniable. However, because it is a contested topic further research is much needed. Possible ways to study it include longitudinal studies, which involve large household surveys (e.g. Gulyani and Talukdar 2008), usually possible only with funding from large 'donor' organizations (such as the World Bank, UN Habitat or the EU), international 'cooperation' programs (such as Germany's GTZ, France's Coopération successor AFD, USAID, and so on) or large NGOs. Optimally, such large studies should be designed to include research assistants hired where the study is taking place – for instance slum dwellers embarking on undergraduate or graduate studies – so that the experience and data gathered during the research project can be used after it is over.

On a similar scale, research into long-term changes in population types (by income, ethnicity, etc.) in specific wards and municipalities, based on Census data, can be illuminating to pinpoint slum gentrification (Hammel and Wylie 1996). To an extent also dependent on access to official data (or more difficultly achieved through residents' own records), the production of displacement maps provides excellent visual illustrations of the gentrification process, whether the centrifugal displacement from one site only (e.g. London Tenants Federation et al 2014: 8–9 on the Heygate Estate in London) or a more networked circulation across an entire city (Faulhaber and Azevedo 2015: 67 on Rio de Janeiro). A great example of digital dissemination of efforts to map gentrification is the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project documenting the effects of gentrification on San Francisco Bay Area residents (see <http://www.antievictionmap.com>).

For more modest research endeavors, the simplest way of assessing whether a specific informal settlement is undergoing gentrification is to check for rent hikes (Yutzy 2012; Ost and Fleury 2013). It is easier said than done as rent prices in informal settlements are informally constituted and not publically published (not even on rental websites) but it is worth pursuing. Next on the list is to understand the assemblage of policy and capital formations for specific renewal projects. This involves looking at the global repertoire of policies and models of intervention to understand the localized use and adaptation of such global paradigms (titling, upgrade, etc.); as well as looking at which particular investments are being made at particular sites. The latter may involve financial prospectuses that circulate among investors and where foreseeable land rent may be explicit. The financialization of housing (Aalbers 2008; Rolnik 2013) is a worldwide phenomenon and financialized investment on homeownership for former slum dwellers is a small but integral part of it.

Interviewing and following displaced households into their new surroundings or new ones as they come in (slum gentrifiers) can provide insights into definitions of home and

Source: Courtesy of Lucas Faulhaber and Lena Azevedo.

Figure 14.4 Displacement map of Rio de Janeiro

dwelling in contexts of 'domicide' (Porteous and Smith 2001). Interviews and ethnographic research with local and outside housing activists, or with slum tour guides (Freire-Medeiros 2011; Durr 2012) will help us better understand the social and cultural background to gentrification in informal settlements. In addition, cultural geographers, anthropologists and sociologists may also want to investigate the discursive views on the slum in specific cities (such as the 'dangerous and insalubrious slum to be eradicated'; or the 'positive urban adaptation to be valued and capitalized'), present in media, policy documents or even in art and literature, as well as the cultures and lifestyles of early slum gentrifiers.

Other methods or combinations of methods to research slum gentrification can be added to the list, as this is a work in progress. One final item worth mentioning which can inspire researchers on slum gentrification in their future work goes back a few decades: Bunge's (1971) radical but hopeful method of 'setting up bivouac' in neighbourhoods at risk (in his case, Fitzgerald in Detroit in the late 1960s) was a partisan yet responsible and accountable method to 'see faithfully from another's point of view' (Merrifield 1995: 52). It included the use of extravagant indicators such as medical records of 'rat-bitten children', geo-referencing them in the city to point out the segregated spatiality of poverty and inequality (Bunge and Bordessa 1975: 326). Current researchers (in the present case, of settlements at risk of being razed) may take inspiration to be as bold and innovative to draw the attention of policy- and decision-makers to the injustices at work.

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15. New-build gentrification

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15.1 INTRODUCTION

In the 1990s and 2000s, the process of 'new-build gentrification' (Davidson and Lees 2005, 2010) took gentrification from modest mews (Glass 1964) to shimmering multi-million dollar residential towers. The scale and speed of neighbourhood transformation associated with this form of gentrification was striking. New-build gentrification became a central element of what was labelled 'third wave gentrification'. In 2001, Hackworth and Smith defined the latter process in the following way:

Prophesies of degentrification appear to have been overstated as many neighbourhoods continue to gentrify while others, further from the city centre begin to experience the process for the first time. Post-recession gentrification seems to be more linked to large-scale capital than ever, as large developers rework entire neighbourhoods, often with state support (467).

Some 15 years on from this defining statement, three things jump out at the reader. First, the late 1990s concern with degentrification (also see Marcuse 1993) appears almost quaint from the vantage point of today's increasingly gentrified cities. Second, third wave gentrification contained two distinguishing features: the reliance on (i) corporate capital and (ii) governmental support. Simply put, transforming neighbourhoods – and, indeed, city regions – via new residential developments required large developers with lots of capital and the regulatory support of the state. Third, early conceptualizations of new-build gentrification overwhelmingly originated from North America and the United Kingdom. In doing so, this gentrification scholarship was closely connected to attempts to understand the state-forms associated with Third Way political ideology (see Giddens 1999). In early accounts of new-build gentrification (e.g. Davidson and Lees 2005), the 'state-led' prefix therefore often presumes a particular state-form; one closely connected to the centre-left effort to reform the harder edges of neoliberalism. These three distinctions remain critical, if often under-estimated, to current understandings of the history of gentrification(s).

Class-based, large-scale, capital-intensive transformations of modern urban space can arguably be dated to 29 June 1853; the day that Napoléon III instructed Georges Eugène Haussmann to 'aérer, unifier, et embellir' Paris. In the works that continued until the 1920s, the transformation of Paris famously involved replacing working class quarters with an epoch defining bourgeois landscape. Harvey (2005) describes how this urban transformation was related to a very particular politico-economic situation: 'The surpluses of capital and labor power, so crushingly evident in 1848, were to be absorbed through a program of massive long-term investment in the built environment that focused on the amelioration of space relations. Within a year of the declaration of Empire, more than a thousand were at work on the construction site of the Tuileries . . .' (104).

This crisis of capitalist accumulation created two necessities. First, the state had to