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Gentrification in Europe

The cases of London, Lisbon and Rome

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1 Introduction

1.1 The phenomenon of urbanization in today's world

As globalism and urbanization rapidly redesign and transform how we live and see the world around us, we must try our best at recognizing and understanding the changes that this phenomena are bringing so rapidly in our daily lives. It is fundamental to keep a closer look at how this forces evolve and spread at an enormous speed, soon becoming the norm and sometimes being even unnoticed.

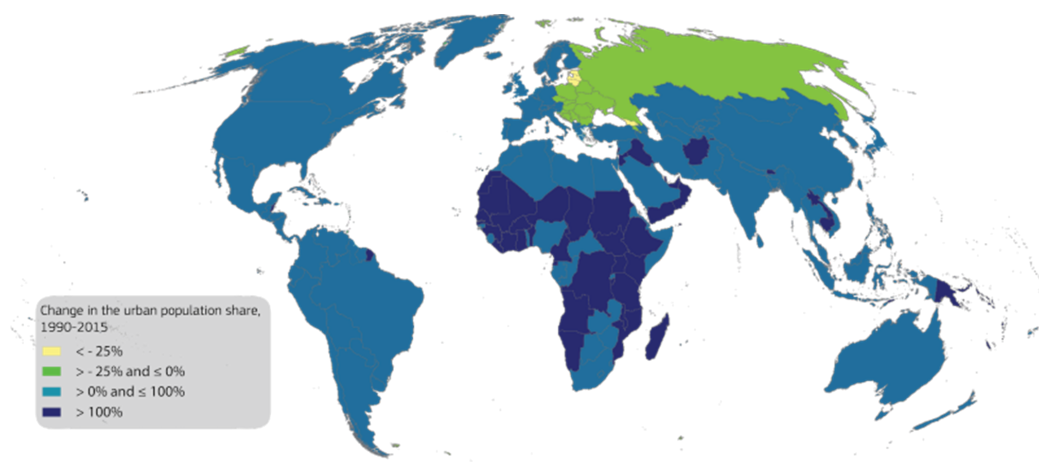
We can say that the phenomenon of urbanization can be probably considered as old as cities are, but taking into account that thanks to the predominant role of agriculture in early societies, the rural and the urban areas were equally populated, the proportions remained constant overtime with very few exceptions. Urbanization started to noticeably accelerate in the middle of the 18th century and subsequently took off with the industrial revolution in the 19th century. Since then the Western world has seen urbanization redesign its nations and define them, and the phenomenon hasn't stop yet and it is still going strong. Moreover, from the 50s urbanization has taken a hold of the developing world as well, where it has been the driving force of the creation of massive urban agglomerates that are growing at an impressive pace. It is in this dimension that we can easily observe how

disruptive this process can be.

Rural flight has been part of the reality of the urbanization phenomenon for a long time, it has always been quite difficult for people living in rural areas and small villages to access certain goods and services that have become considered more and more essential to conduct a comfortable life. Furthermore, with the advent of drastic environmental change, life in farms or small villages has become even more susceptible to the extremely difficult weather conditions than it ever was before. Taking this into consideration we can say that during history many people moved into more populated areas, such as big cities, in search of new opportunities and a better standard of living, but this historic explanation does not fully explain nor justify the exponential growth of the rate of urbanization that we are encountering nowadays in countries such as India or China.

1.2 Theory evidence around the extreme phenomenon of a urbanized world

Cities presumably facilitated the way we live, work, travel, trade etc. The emergence of highly dense cities and urban agglomerates has taken rapid speed, changing the global environment and economy. More exactly nowadays, according to the European Commission's Joint Research Center's (JRC's) as 2019, more than three-quarters (76%) of the world's population now live in urban areas, approximately 5.6 billion people. Urban centers have nearly doubled in number (from more than 6,900 in 1975 to more than 13,100 in 2015) and their population size has also exponentially grown. Across the globe, the number of countries and territories with less than 50% of total population living in urban areas has fallen from 48 in 1975 to 36 in 2015. Over the same period, the number of countries with more than 90% of their population in urban areas doubled from 16 to 32. (European Commission's Joint Research Center's (JRC's) - new Atlas of the Human Planet 2019)



As we can observe in the image above changes in the urban population share are not equally distributed. Developing countries are the main drivers of the current exponential growth in urban population and urban agglomerates proliferation. Africa, Asia and Latin America in particular are seeing an abrupt shifting from a rural to an urban reality for their people. The effects of globalization and environmental change has made living in these areas extremely precarious, to a certain extent we are witnessing a forced migration to the city due to unpredictable weather condition that threat people's survival and the loss of land due to acquisition measures. All this people that pour into cities more rapidly than ever, start a process of rapid and unplanned urbanization that more than often comes with many problematic aspects such as slums.

1.3 Growing importance of the understanding of urban social movements

Urban social movement was a term introduced in the early 70s by the sociologist Manuel Castells. He thought that in regard to urban sociology the main struggle was the one of social integration, and that systematic inequalities were created by structural forces. We can consider cities as the protagonist and as the arena in which social mobilisation actually takes place. The right to the city struggle in the context of globalization makes fundamental the

understanding of the phenomena of urban social movements.

With the worsening of the global economic and financial crisis, many cities have seen protest movements arise, producing new political and imaginary practices to counter the policies implemented by representative democracies, going through a profound crisis of legitimacy. While providing support and transnational diffusion, these movements see cities as the primary places of today's organization, pushing the academic world more and more to question the relationship between social movements and urban spaces. Urban social movements have thus assumed absolute relevance in the interdisciplinary debate, after having remained in the shadows within the literature on "new social movements"; the latter were considered as separate social movements which, moved by issues related to collective consumption, fought for the affirmation of a more just and democratic urban environment. Faced with the exponential growth of capitalist urbanization and the role of cities as central nodes of the accumulation and regulation processes of financial capitalism, urban spaces assume a strategic importance for social movements both on the symbolic level of actions and on that of their organization and daily reproduction. Social and urban geography as well as urban studies can therefore make an important contribution in the analysis and understanding of these spatial dynamics.

1.4 Pros and cons of a nearly total urbanization of the world

In big urban areas people are easily able to find most of what are now considered essential services and goods, on top of that a great variety of opportunities can be found all in one place.

Cities nowadays are the main mean through which money is collected, in many countries around the world cities have more economic power than their home nations. Some cities gain major incomes throughout the tourism economy, besides money easily flows and agglomerates into big cities via the trading system and the banking one.

Living in an urban centre can be considered at the same time both beneficial and harmful to the individual and to the collectivity as a whole. The density and the proximity we found in cities ensures that aspects essential for market competition are ensured, and this is surely considered beneficial by most people since it brings opportunities and a fair market in which activities can compete with each other and prosper, but we could be biased. The economist Madhura Swaminathan states that “These are the costs of participating in the urban economy. Your increased income is cancelled out by increased expenditure. In the end, you have even less left for food.” Many in fact are the harmful downsides of urbanization and the increased cost of living is among them. Moreover, even though cities are considered a great place for diversity to prosper, mass marginalization together with a diffused sense of alienation and stress are widespread aspects of living in a big urban area. Attempts towards a search for an equilibrium are being made, especially in the big urban agglomerates of developing countries where the phenomenon of suburbanization is taking place.

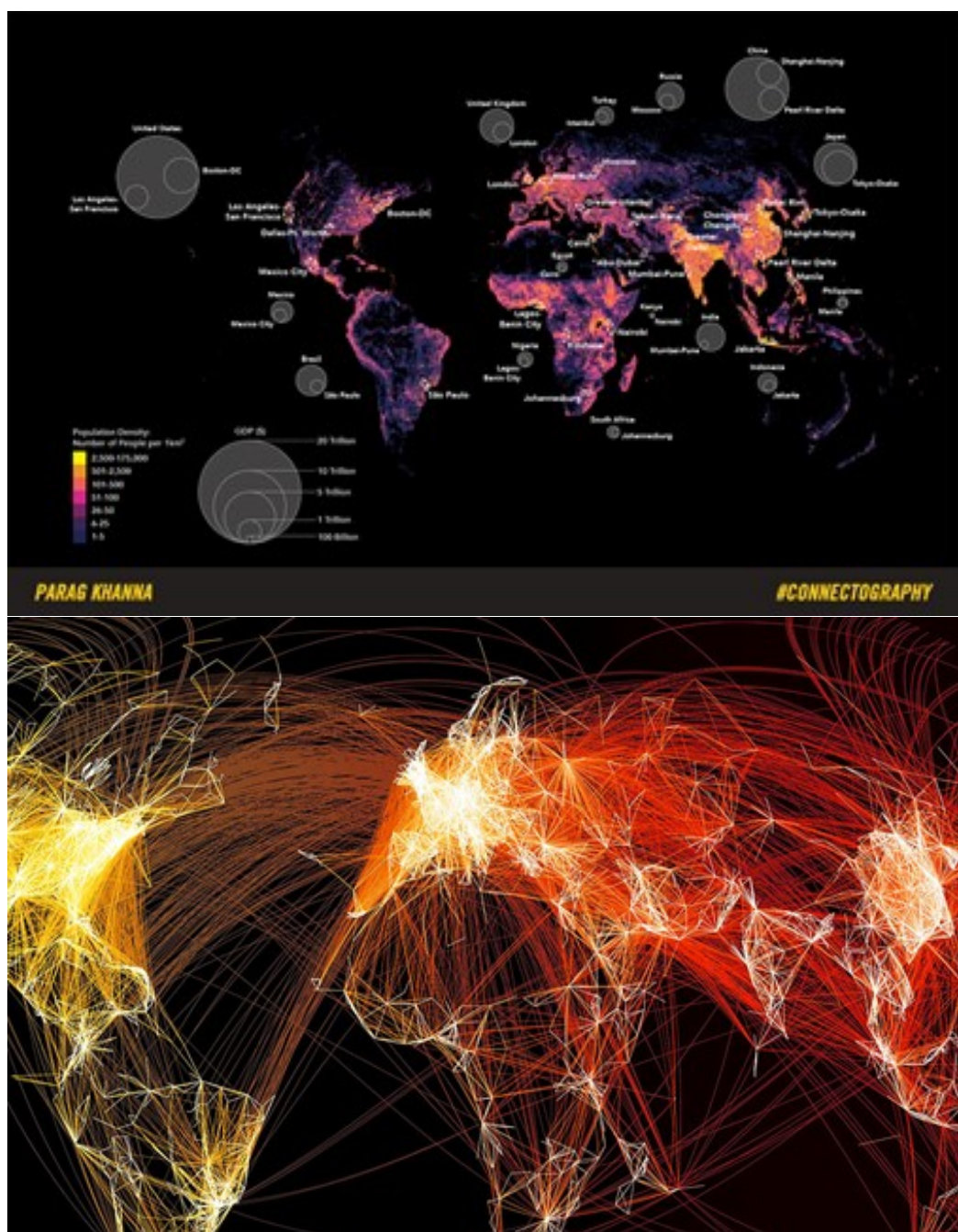
Being the new focus of our global economy, cities must be considered and seen as the future for innovation and entrepreneurship; the concept of smart cities truly embodies this ideal.

A smart city is a set of urban planning strategies aimed at optimizing and innovating public services so as to relate the material infrastructures of cities with the human, intellectual and social capital of those who live there, thanks to the widespread use of new technologies of communication, mobility, environment and energy efficiency. The final aim is to improve the quality of life and meet the needs of citizen, businesses and institutions, and for this purpose the city in question will try to collect as much data as possible through various monitoring systems spread all around the city and present in the day to day life of citizens. We can commonly refer to this technologies as ICT (Information and Communication Technology).

Despite cities undeniable supremacy, in regard to political and fiscal power, states anachronistically retain this capacity concentrated at the

nation-state level and, considering that many of these nations are economically inferior to their cities, this can be considered borderline absurd. Parag Khanna, political expert and leading global strategy advisor, looking at the fundamental role that cities hold at a global level and considering how globalization drives the economy and the way we live in today's world, developed the theory of connectography.

Connectography is a theory that can enable us to map the future of global civilization. According to this theory, connectivity redesigned our geography and we must recognize that and start to use a new map of the world that can enable us to understand it as it evolves. This new map eliminates national borders in favour of mega cities, starting from these huge urban agglomerates we can trace all the infrastructures that connect them deeply, making them all dependent on one another. These infrastructures can be identified in railways, piping systems, trade and flight routes, internet connection and so on. If this map was to be in use instead of our current ones, inequalities could be deeply reduced. In fact connectivity infrastructures supersede traditional geopolitical coordinates and are even able to eliminate the prospective of conflicts, and this can be linked to the way we are more and more defined by our dependency to one another, rather than by our borders.



Taking this into account we can say that ahead of us is the enormous task of trying to ensure that cities, as global entities, will be provided with the powers over political, fiscal and economic decisions. In doing so, and by governing themselves, cities will be responsible for future innovation and

progress: economically, socially and environmentally.

1.5 Events driven by governments and/or economies?

The phenomenon of urbanization can come to light in different ways, it can be “naturally” initiated by the collectivity, it can be planned by the state or put into action by the economy.

In the Western world the urbanization process has been going on for a while, as we already said before, and this ensured that it could develop over time guaranteeing some degree of control and administration as it was growing; still of course there were forces that contributed to the rapid expansion of urban centres in particular periods of time, such as the time of the industrial revolution, but nothing that could ever be compared to the speed at which urbanization is becoming a reality in underdeveloped countries today. In these regions of the world, cities are expanding like we have never seen before; the dilemma is if this newly metropolitan areas will ever be able to cope with the amount of people reversing in it in such a short time; huge interventions will be needed. Dense agglomerations offer the opportunity of large productivity gains and it is probably also for this reason that businesses, corporations and financial centres locate themselves in big cities; but they are not the only ones benefitting from this agglomerations effects: all the economic sector does. Economies usually have great gains from the urbanization processes, and because of that they often are the driving force and reason behind it, thus creating a sort of feedback loop in which the economy is responsible for the growth in urbanization rates and vice versa.

When talking about guided urbanization on behalf of governments the situation gets less generally clear and involves many other factors. The main example we have today is the one of China where two mega cities are currently located. The plan that is currently in action started in 2010, and actually aims at integrating around 900 millions of people (70% of China’s population) into cities by 2025, in order to do so the Chinese government is building new cities and towns where to relocate people whose villages

will be simply demolished. This manoeuvre is supposed to give back to China around one trillion yuan from annual investment opportunities. The economic gain derived from the policy could make us believe of being still an economic driven strategy. But this is not the case; in fact since the rate of urbanization is largely spaced the one of economic growth, China is being found unprepared to masses of displaced people reversing in cities that are not yet able to grant them the services expected to be in place by then.

We must therefore say that urbanization would be better controlled as a phenomenon already in expansion, rather than one mechanically put into action.

2 Gentrification

2.1 Theory and analysis

The phenomenon of gentrification as we know it nowadays, came to light between the 1950s and the 1980s. The first one to use this term was the British sociologist Ruth Glass in 1964 when referring to the changes in the working class districts in London. Since then this definition has been strongly criticised by scholars as too narrow. The gentrification movement has spread globally but, it must not be viewed as homogenous and identical to itself. There are in fact different terms used to refer to gentrification, and they can reflect in some way the major issue of the process on which the ones using it are focusing into. As an example in Finland gentrification emerged later in 2000, there they refer to the phenomenon as *syrjäytyneiden akanvirta*, this stands for ‘the migration of the disadvantaged’. This goes to clearly show how the concept of gentrification has widely evolved from when it was first pointed out, and the consequent conscience that has been now built around the phenomenon. However it is important to notice that the disadvantages of gentrification are not mainstream to everyone and everywhere, and even are not always the case in every country. Here in Italy the term gentrification is not widely used, as well as in Finland but, we refer to this process as

rigenerazione urbana, that literally means urban regeneration. The term as correct as the Finland's one is, certainly gentrification implies and widely promotes regeneration and valorisation, it's indeed one of the major positive outcomes of the process; the fact that we describe and call gentrification by its success surely gives away how it is perceived.

Therefore we must approach gentrification knowing about its two faces and how they can apply differently in distinct scenarios.

2.2 Complex and unique phenomenon

For clarity we could summarize by saying that there are mainly two point of view on the interpretation of the process of gentrification, the first being: the process by which middle class and high income households impose themselves in popular neighbourhoods, with a shift from rented properties to owned ones, and with the consequent displacement of the pre-existing working class inhabitants. Along with that, the new middle class residents will as a result radically change the character, the culture and the constitution of the neighbourhood.

The second interpretation views the gentrification process as a revaluation of a neighbourhood habitations from low to high value residences, a revitalization of the area from an architectural and economic point of view and, when taking places in the historic centre of cities, a great opportunity for the preservation and exploitation of the structures.

We will then reflect on both point of view, the one focusing on the misplaced and the one about the 'gentrifiers'.

Trying to simplify the views of many scholars, I think that we could start by describing gentrification as a termite. You can imagine where you will find it, from your wool closet to a neighbourhood with character and architectural value, but you are not sure on when and if it will eventually show up. Yet, when gentrification or termites finally decide to show up they will rapidly spread, conquering the wardrobe or the neighbourhood; and probably contaminating surrounding areas. Surely gentrification looks

better than termites do, but what inspired this similarity are the damages that gentrification leaves in the socioeconomic fabric of a community.

For the poor gentrification is an issue on many fronts. This phenomenon affects housing, economic and health matters. After an area is targeted, the original residents will find themselves obliged to find cheaper housing at the outskirts of the city, and peer pressure will contribute to the eradication of the “old” inhabitants.

By losing its people the neighbourhood will also lose its character and indeed its structure; this particularly affects the city centre quarters, because of tourist and in order to maximize the exploitation of the area, shops will rush to be in the area, many restaurants will open and all the little independent shops that used to serve the community will be forced to close. Leaving a neighbourhood that does not well serve the single person or family living in it, but that has been reshaped to serve the tourists. This phenomenon has gone so far that entire city centres have been emptied out of the real population that no longer can afford to live in it, since people owning are better off by renting for short periods of time at high prices to tourists.

Moreover, outside of Europe the matter has taken a new turn: gentrification can be seen as the new colonialism. Two scholars in particular, Atkinson and Bridge in 2005 critiqued gentrification as a new form of colonialism. Poor quarters can be often inhabited by minority groups belonging to the working class and, when the neighbourhood starts its transformation and privileged people come to live in it the community is fragmented and in some way expropriated as if it was a colonisation. Nowadays many people are aware of gentrification processes and many are the protests against it.

An article from The Guardian stroke to me in particular: ‘We are building our way to hell: tales of gentrification around the world’; the article’s collection of people’s experiences around the world made very clear the global aspect of gentrification and the different major issues raised by the singular persons underlined its different features. In the last decades the

gentrification process has acquired growing interest in regards to the ongoing debate about the strategic development of cities.

An insight on the positive outcomes of gentrification can be found in The rise of the creative class book written in 2002 by Richard Florida, that tries to analyse the relation between the presence of the so called ‘creative class’ in a specific area and the capacity of that area in emerging as a centre of innovation and development. It is not extremely clear what a creative class really is, but it is surely true that artists are considered by some crucial actors in the gentrification process, mainly because they can be the first to target neighbour with cultural and architectonic value where living is still reasonably cheap. Artists’ choices attract people, Florida refers to it calling it the Bohemian Index. A major example is the Soho quarter in New York. What happens can be briefly summed up as follows: artists find cheap living in characteristic and culturally permeated districts, this gets people fascinated and because of that investors move into action and gentrification comes to life.

But the process does not stop; Soho today is not anymore an artists’ district. The paradox is that while artists are the one to start the process, they actually end up being victims of it. In fact, artists are usually not that well off and when gentrification kicks in they’ll have to move as the rest of the original inhabitants.

2.3 History of gentrification

Gentrification is the term used to refer to the process of transformation that a popular neighbourhood undergoes in becoming a new prestigious living area. The resulting changes will consist also in a shift of the social composition of the people living in the aforesaid area and a consequent price increase of the habitations there.

The term gentrification finds its origin in the word gentry, that was used to refer to the upper middle class in England; we can in fact say that the phenomenon of gentrification refers to the great influx of middle class

people into neighbours inhabited by the working class. But, is it a modern phenomenon? Not really. There are many claiming that gentrification as more ancient roots, saying for example that Rome around the 3rd century A.D. was indeed undergoing a major gentrification and it was not the only ancient place in which the process took place.

Also because of that, some believe that gentrification is a tendency, some call it a ‘back to the city’ movement, an urban phenomenon simply caused by spontaneous changes in the society.

Middle class people, once seeking for a big home with a lovely garden in a neighbour with good schools in order to raise a family, are now mostly represented by freelancers or couples wanting to save the time of the commute from work to home and fascinated by the city life. The increasing growth of the population and the subsequent emergence of new recent issues, such as traffic and little free time, together with a new ideal of quality of living, are attracting more and more middle and upper class people back in the heart of cities.

Still, to some, this whole analysis is erroneous and reductive; gentrification is actually dictated by economics and there are indeed actors behind it directing the flow of capitals, merely for economic reasons or even for political ones.

As we start to grasp, it is not easy to define gentrification, it is a complex and multi-faced phenomenon, it differs from place to place and from time to time and it can be viewed in many different ways, resulting in both positive and negative outputs.

2.4 Social importance

In developed countries the wave of the ‘back to the city movement’ is counter balanced by a depletion of the people formerly inhabiting the area; in wealthy countries people have enough economic wellbeing in order to desire higher standards for living and for this reason working class people, living in popular areas that have an artistic value but that are not already provided with

many comforts, find it easier and desirable to move to newly constructed areas placed more at the city's periphery. Wealthier people or investors, then, actually repopulate the area while also putting capital into it; this will then generate new added value and will preserve the historical significance; retraining the area. We encounter now a new problem: are gentrification and requalification inclusive of each other, or are they two distinct phenomena? The debate is ongoing, gentrification does not have a univocal meaning and it is for this reason that many are the scholars and the subjects focusing on the gentrification phenomenon.

It is difficult to answer but we can surely affirm that not always gentrification implies requalification. When gentrifying an improvement of the area is desirable but there are time in which there is no urgent need for it, that is to say when the districts fascinated for his bohemian aspect or simply it appeals to fast and low tourism and people can easily exploit and have benefits from it without having to requalify. Growth in tourism has always represented a correspondent growth in the economy, at least until today. Recently people are starting to affirm that the era for which tourism growth was a positive thing in itself is now over. A new awareness stands as the results of incessant tourist growth that, did not fulfil the promised benefits, and the contradictions of the model start to appear more and more evident while the negative impacts in social terms are getting more intense. First of all, there would be negative effects on the work front, due to low wages resulting from low productivity growth services. The second aspect that has seen the growing intolerance of the inhabitants is linked to the liveability of the neighbourhoods, in particular some of the central areas. The negative effects of tourism, from the saturation of public space to the mono-theming of the commercial offer, up to the uncivilized behaviour of the tourist themselves is only recently reached the general mainstream audience.

Our age as even developed powerful tools to implement the gentrification process and in some ways taking it to an extreme. A major example, and probably the most important one to make, is the one of the Airbnb platform.

Airbnb needs no introduction, the issue has to do with the economy and the balance of entire cities, that with this system are seeing residents driven out from their neighbourhoods, in favour of an almost total conversion of the apartments into potential spots for Airbnb. Politics tries to put a stop to the phenomenon, also because of the protests of the population, but at the moment it has not yet found the right tools to fight it in an effective way. Like many recent innovations brought to us by technology, this one as well has evolved too rapidly and unexpectedly with respect to political times. The limits imposed in the historical areas of the cities try to stem the current, but the flow comfortably bypasses the barrier.

But, if nothing else, gentrification still involves and promotes the recovery and revaluation of entire neighbourhoods. The consequence is that prices rise, and that it is true, but often these areas are what some would call 'ghetto neighbourhoods' with a very high percentage of crime. Keeping this in mind we can easily agree that with the arrival of massive investments, there is also a recovery of entire areas of the cities, from which in fact most of the citizens and the tourists were in some way drawn away. The Airbnb phenomenon, most of the times, does not have these positive effects either. It takes away space from the community to monetize, but it does not bring any advantage. There is the ongoing attempt to create maps in order to analyse and predict changes in the various neighbourhoods around cities and over time.

Many factors have also been taken into consideration - such as education, poverty, students enrolled in private schools or going to college and the medium salary of families - and it has been shown that often areas undergoing gentrification are surrounded by areas in sharp decline. In addition to the price of houses, some of these studies seem to prove that the proximity to transport facilities, the presence of public housing with an historical value and even that of cafes and restaurants affect it. Therefore, there is no effective measurement to try to verify and predict the phenomenon, taking also into account the most important reason: that different cities have different

characteristics and settings, and because of that surely very different outcomes. Even the increase in housing costs is not an obvious indicator of an ongoing transformation of the neighbourhood. This variable, in fact, takes into account the price trend at a time of economic decline in which we now live and if in this period the potential cost of a house is lower than the price at which it is sold, then it could be possible, but not entirely certain, that this could indeed represent the beginning of a gentrification process.

3 Causes and effects: three studies

3.1 The dawn of gentrification

When referring to the phenomenon of gentrification, London is the first city that comes to our minds. This is mainly because when the class struggle for housing manifested itself in the late 60s and people started to recognise a pattern in the occurring changes in the city district, London was the city on which to focus with a magnifying glass in order to find answers. By doing so, we could have observed that, awkwardly enough for the time, there were people from the middle class restoring Victorian run down houses in order to live in some real neglected areas of north London. This is probably what sociologist, Ruth Glass, observed when she coined the term gentrification, looking at a phenomenon in which houses rapidly gained value on the market, and for this reason entire districts changed their aspect and their inhabitants, in order to welcome in new elites. The new people living in these upcoming areas were defined as a cultural new class, mainly protagonists of what was considered at the time the ‘new economy’. This was the situation just at the ‘micro level’, and it was fascinating and bizarre to some, but it all made more sense by looking at the bigger picture. At the time, London was not, and still is not, like any other city. London’s gentrification mainly derived by the cosmopolitan characteristics and services it already had to offer at the age. The city was a big cultural centre, home to intellectual and artists, to entrepreneurs and new business men; and it was indeed on behalf

of architects, artists and directors that gentrification came to life in one of its purest forms. This was not all that there was to it, there were also big economic reasons for gentrification to start: it could have been simply derived as just one of the outputs that can be obtained from the maximization of capital through rental income or assessed capital value, and in particular when this is enabled by the speculation and exploitation of different people's, from different social classes, ability to pay.

A new global economy emerged and surely the spreading of gentrification has been amongst the driving forces for this development, that has not yet seemed to stop, and since then has broaden across the UK economy and the European one.

3.1.1 London today

London is one of those cities that successfully evolved and adapted to the phenomenon of gentrification making the most of it, and by doing so it has become home and one of heart of global culture, media and services, as well as one of the most important financial and business centre. Nowadays, there is an enormous disparity and diversity between London and other cities around the UK and this is clearly reflected and manifested by looking at the London real estate market, that can be compared and understood only against the ones of cities such as Paris and New York. Gentrification in London is still ongoing, but the process is certainly not the same anymore: the city is 'naturally' been gentrified since the 60s and we could say that by now the process goes on by inertia. Indeed the gentrification in London is now being organically planned in newly found areas that were once not even neighbourhoods.

Practically speaking what we can see today walking around the city? In the neighbourhood of Notting Hill is possible to get an idea of a complete gentrification process, that can be said of having come to an end in some ways, having lost the dynamism of the moments of change, and having assumed the features of a typical prestigious and historic district. It can be considered

one of the first example in London and it happened spontaneously, without being planned. The residential transformations in Camden also dates back to the 70s, an author gentrification by architects. The situation is different about what is happening in the post-industrial reconversion areas of King's Cross, a planned one, and one of the largest intensive transformation sites in all Europe. With the forecast of 2000 new housing, the presence of cultural activities the Central St. Martins of Arts and Design College, the location along the canal, and in connection with the prestigious infrastructural hub of King's Cross and St. Pancras International, lends itself to become an area of centrality with astonishing potential. But here we are not facing a 'regular' kind of gentrification. In fact, the intervention is highly planned together with the local authorities, and most of these areas were actually not inhabited before, in some cases there were just some gasometers. This means that there will be no social substitution, the new residents will be first settlers. Are we sure we are still facing a gentrification process, or is it just an urbanization plan put into action in an already urbanized city? If it was still a case of gentrification, it would be great having eliminated the harmful aspect of people displacement and all the issue that derives from it; but we can consider rather utopian being able to keep all the good and leave behind all the bad.

3.2 The phenomenon of touristification

Touristification is a fairly new term but it describes a phenomenon, that derives from the process of gentrification, and that has spread with such enormous speed so that most of us actually know what it actually refers to. Touristification can be seen as the result of a rapid gentrification wave, caused mainly by a demand for tourism in some of the most important European cities. The phenomenon has a negative connotation and can be indicated as one of the negative possible outputs of a gentrification process, this is because the tourism that characterizes these cities can be in some way considered different than previously; many in fact talk about a new archetype

of tourist that, following new trends, is in search of picturesque views and good restaurants at a low price. But what are actually the issues that touristification brings to a city in order to be considered so pure evil? There are many, first of all, the increase in the precariousness of the right to housing, a common consequence of the gentrification processes related to real estate speculation for tourism purposes. Consequently we have an increase in the cost of living and the transformation of local businesses into tourist ones, which no longer meet the needs of the local inhabitants. Then there is the massification of places, which distorts the daily life of the citizens and the saturation of the transport system, the dependency of the local economy on the tourism sector also contributes to expose it to greater economic fragility and feeds precarious working conditions. Another problematic is the one linked to environmental pollution and the exploitation of resources and territory for the realization of infrastructures that do not serve the original population, but instead benefit the tourism, furthermore some even put forward the hypothesis of a trivialization of the territory that becomes a sort of themed park.

The problematic has been so exasperated that some cities in southern Europe actually united in the so called “SET network”, whose aim is for cities to join together to ask for boundaries and limits to be set by government in the tourism industry; amongst them there is the city of Lisbon.

3.2.1 Lisbon: a city in rapid transformation

The case of Lisbon is an interesting and recent development in the spreading of gentrification around the world and in particular about the phenomenon of touristification. The exasperation of this problematic has contributed to what is called by many the ‘Lisboom’. The old city once scenario of plagues, earthquakes, revolution and economic crises is now trying to deal with an invasion of people and foreign capitals as never seen before. Not only the city attracts tourists of every sorts from around the world, it is also considered by many as the perfect place to develop new projects; artists, ‘startupper’,

musicians and creatives are in love with the city. Is that the problem? Not really, this is the bright side of it, and more generally what is usually the bright side of gentrification, the problem is what comes with all of this.

The start of the process of substitution, in specific urban areas, of the economically disadvantaged class in favour of a wealthier one, along with urban rehabilitation actions is, in the specific case of Lisbon, ultimately resulting in a touristification of the entire city. In this circumstances the local population is always being substituted by a new one, but this time the new population is made up by tourists and multinational companies, no actual new residents are inhabiting the areas. The city is undergoing major renovations, after the Troika and also thanks to gentrification and the exploitation of the city as an attraction, the economy is actually growing positively. On the back of that Lisbon is not anymore home to the Portuguese people. This example stands for many when talking about underdeveloped countries; in fact, while in developed countries gentrification could be seen as a natural process in which everyone plays an active role and changes are not being enforced, in underdeveloped ones people do not participate but rather are victim of a greater scheme.

3.3 Gentrification: incomplete phenomenon

Rome can be defined as a complex city, this can be said for many reasons, from the multidimensionality of its processes of alteration to the administrative policies that were applied in doing so, Rome has recently came to be defined by the conflict between the city centre and its periphery and the attempts made had to constantly face with many rhetorical conflicts such as the ones advocating for the maintenance of the history, tradition and culture of the city and ones that tried to implement modernization. In recent years the city of Rome has primarily relied on an economy based on tourism and events, millions of people who could afford to spend some nights in the city. At the same time, the institutions have persecuted a model of urban regeneration that was meant to bring new life to the public buildings for sale, but

that actually ended up creating short-lived realities, more than often alien to the original character of the neighbourhood, with few benefit for the inhabitants and opportunities that were only favourable for large investors looking to open the next luxury hotel in the capital. As of now, with the collapse of this growth model, this is a city of empty spaces. Every year the ministry of economy announces ambitious plans to sell public assets to raise cash, but usually most of the properties and areas remain unsold, empty and closed. In recent times the city found a new declared goal: to regenerate parts of its territory. Marketing, event and catering companies have been entrusted with the enhancement of entire districts. However in the last few months the situation has taken a new turn, posing new challenges to the ones already existing, international mobility has collapsed, tourists are becoming a rare species and even students returned home. Ahead of us is the prospect of a devastating recession and all of this new projects, from the Soho house to the spaces in the sale of Cassa Depositi e Prestiti, from the Student hotel to the former Atac remittances, show all of their weaknesses and could remain actually useless. On top of this, the city has never really developed an alternative economy, in the years Rome has remained pretty much still. The city has not offered opportunities for some time, there is no economy in which to integrate, there is no work and the cost of living is high. All of this combined made the capital stubbornly resistant to the potential of a huge wave of gentrification, that has been able only to contaminate very few neighbourhoods and in some has even been sponsored and then rejected. This goes to show and underline the peculiarity of this magnificent and at the same time disastrous city, but at the same time makes us think on what we are missing out by not experiencing this phenomenon to its full potential.

3.3.1 Rome: a peculiar case

Garbatella is a popular neighbourhood of Rome built around the 20s, when a new phase of urbanization was going on the newly acquired capital, in order to provide housing for the workers that were building new homes in the city

centre. But Garbatella is not to be confused with a popular area full of big buildings with few little balconies, far from that it actually looks more similar to a little village or a small town with independent or two-family houses and gardens. The neighbourhood can be described as a green area each building has its own courtyard and it could be because of this that the inhabitants have created a big community. Looking around there are kids sitting on the walls, or old ladies sitting in plastic chairs outside their homes, surrounded by the sheets hanging in the courtyards, everything appears extremely homogeneous and serene. This is a very rare thing to witness in a metropolis, especially in these years of globalization. This community spirit and dedication to social solidarity probably played a fundamental role in the failed gentrification of Garbatella. Around the 90s, in fact, the first sales of public housing began, and it is at that time that the neighbourhood was at risk of losing all traces of its old strongly working-class and popular identity that was meant to be replaced by some generic area for bourgeois fascinated by the authenticity of those places.

Another reason for which Garbatella has still yet to become a chic and secluded neighbourhood of Rome filled with trendy restaurant and overpriced vintage shops, most likely, is that its structure does not allow all of this to happen. The spaces are distributed in such a way that it would not be physically possible to use common spaces as a big square full of shops and overpriced cafes, because the garden city conformation does not allow those places that are both public and private to be converted into exclusively commercial areas. Because of this we can say that the hostility of the conformation of Garbatella well protects it from the invasion of gentrification.

But this is to be taken as a rare case, other districts in the city did not resist the forces of gentrification and, for good or bad, have actually become something quite different from their original form. Examples can be the neighbourhood of Pigneto or the one of San Lorenzo, that have become extremely appealing to young people in particular for their night life and independent shops; or the case of Trastevere and Rione Monti, two beautiful

areas both from an artistic and cultural point of view, that are placed at the very heart of the capital and are more than ever emptied of their original inhabitants and replenished by Airbnb and restaurants for tourists.

3.4 Comparison between these cities

Even though they are all Europe (or let's say they have all been in Europe until recent events), these three cities bring very different aspects of the same phenomenon to the table. This goes to show and reinforce what we have repeated many times: gentrification is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon, its process is always unique in itself and to its context and its outputs can vary significantly and most of the time are not predictable.

It would be difficult to imagine a London not gentrified, the city owes so many of its characteristics aspects to this process that taking gentrification out of the equation would be like stripping the city of its identity. We can generally say that the experience has been successful. The creation of a city with a leading economy, high standard of living and a huge variety of cultures living together could obviously not have been painless but positive outcomes were predominant, even just by looking at the we can all agree is one of the most beautiful megacities of the world.

Quite differently from London the city of Lisbon has been only recently exposed to the events and forces of gentrification, to which it was estranged due to harsh economic reasons and being launched at rapid speed in the new fast tourism economy did not make it any easier. The rapid flow of new capital into the city has been giving, in a first place, new life to the area revitalizing whole districts and making it a new leading centre for culture and entrepreneurship in Europe. But it was not long after these events that the city, being more beautiful than ever and still reasonably cheap, was literally assaulted by a horde of tourists that were happy to compromise on the accommodation and eager for trendy spots. We can only say that gentrification has taken a bad turn in this case and hope that future regulation will be able to solve, at least in part, the issue.

Rome can be a controversial city to take into discussion, being a city with a very complex and unique urban structure and history, but keeping this in mind it was not too surprising seeing how gentrification struggled a bit in coming to life and sometime was even repressed by people or events. The city has proven true to itself and hopefully the fear of missing out will make us able to try and implement further effort into the long-overdue and needed requalification of the city districts.

4 Conclusion

4.1 How gentrification is and will be perceived

Generally speaking Gentrification these days is not that well received, even though more than often we are talking about an overdue improvement of a certain area that could actually gain great benefit from these processes, we must take close to our attention that there are well-founded issues, such as the one of housing, that cannot be risked by ignoring the possibility of them taking place during the development of the phenomenon. The term gentrification is becoming more and more widespread, but its significance is still not that clear or well defined and this can only create more confusion and contribute to mislead the use of it.

Perhaps the negativity around the phenomenon could be caused by the fact that not enough is actually said about the real benefits deriving from the growth of investments in social, economic, environmental activities and the stimulating competition between global cities. Perhaps starting from framing what is actually missing in our country to release its true innovative potential we could start to think of gentrification as anew tool for improvement.

4.2 Regulating gentrification

In order to start some kind of regulation for the gentrification of neighbourhoods in cities we must find and agree on how to recognise and measure

the possibility and risk of gentrification taking place, and we must dispose of enough resources in order to control and prevent the displacement of the original inhabitants. In regard to displacement, and the subsequent loss of secure housing, small steps are being made so that state can be grantor for the housing issue. One of the most recognizable effort is surely the Habitat III conference that has taken place in 2016 as part of the UN Habitat Program initiative. UN Habitat is a United Nations program whose purpose is to work in the direction of better urban planning, its mission is to promote the development of socially and environmentally sustainable urban settlements, and the fundamental achievement of adequate housing for all. The conference laid great bases to work towards a regulation of the phenomena responsible for displacement in cities such as gentrification. A new urban agenda was approved and, paradoxically signed by the States and not by the cities, calling for greater engagement in the challenges we face or for the delegation of the regulatory capacity to do so themselves. The right to housing and its social function must be recognized as a right to protection, not only by the individual cities but also at a higher global level. The responsibility and goal of guaranteeing the right to live in dignity in one's own city must be shared by all the various levels of government, from the local to the more global one. The final Habitat III declaration claimed that systemic reforms, a strong public sector and long-term financial support are needed to enable access to adequate housing for all people. National and local authorities need to regain a leading role in responding to housing needs and access constraints at affordable prices, this in particular must be ensured for the poorest sectors of the population. Cities must come together with their own identity and their shared aspects to make their guiding role globally recognized with greater competences and powers to adopt measures in favour of their citizens.

4.3 The next studies: developing countries

Developing countries are fairly new to the phenomenon of gentrification and being in a very different situation compared to the one of developed countries

makes them even more vulnerable to the side effects and the disruptive outputs that can derive from it. For example one peculiar aspect to this case is that many, when their areas undergo a gentrification process, actually prefer to migrate to another country rather than be locally displaced. This can be easily understood and in some way can seem rational, but by doing so people are indeed losing their culture and identity. The loss of cultural attachment by the original inhabitants can take place even without leaving the country since the cost of life and renting can rise greatly the displacement is most often permanent. In some cases the displacement often conflicts with the work interests of the inhabitants that might have land nearby or an activity that will be most probably lost, making them homeless and without a secure income. All of this issues are being neglected by the local authorities, that are not able or fail to compensate and do not attempt to provide resettlement. Frequently this problematics have even one more downfall: the proliferation of slums and environment in which criminality and anti-social behaviour rapidly expand.

It would be extremely important to combat this degenerations since these realities not only weaken the community as a whole but also generate a non-commercial viability definitively turning away the chance of attracting into the country new capital and investors that could contribute to the financial support effort.

4.4 Hopes for the future

We must strive to understand what we can do for the cities and neighbourhoods of the world since they form the backdrop to our hectic existence, and we must actively participate in order to try at better guide the fate of the places we are lucky enough to live in.

We could start by proposing a new definition of gentrification, capable of innovating the work and services of post-industrial society, promoting healthy competition between territories, working in an effort to overcome decadence and instead relaunch development, helping people to move as

freely and easily as possible, effectively contribute to the dynamic change in the social composition of neighbourhoods in cities.

In order to ensure an healthy development of the processes of gentrification, we must regulate and intervene in the early stages of it. We should try our best in protecting the inhabitants and the true character of these neighbourhoods, and at the same time we must let in the modernization that the revitalization and requalification of the area will bring to the district. Trying to freeze situations and refusing changes as per se will only bring more disadvantages to a future that is surely due to come.

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Sintesi

Questo saggio cerca di analizzare, senza alcuna pretesa di essere esaustivo, il fenomeno della gentrificazione in Europa, con particolare riferimento a tre capitali: Londra, Lisbona e Roma. Per capire le problematiche relative alla gentrificazione bisogna necessariamente affrontare prima il fenomeno dell'urbanizzazione, ovvero quel fenomeno sociologico che a partire dalla rivoluzione industriale ha portato la popolazione, dei paesi più sviluppati, in precedenza equamente distribuita tra città e piccoli centri rurali, a spostarsi verso i centri urbani che garantivano sotto molteplici aspetti una migliore qualità della vita. L'urbanizzazione ha iniziato ad accelerare notevolmente a metà del XVIII secolo e successivamente è decollata con la rivoluzione industriale nel XIX secolo. Da allora il mondo occidentale ha visto l'urbanizzazione ridisegnare le sue nazioni e definirle, e il fenomeno non si è ancora fermato ed è ancora forte. Inoltre, a partire dagli anni '50 l'urbanizzazione ha preso piede anche nei Paesi in via di sviluppo, dove è stata la forza trainante per la creazione di massicci agglomerati urbani che stanno crescendo ad un ritmo impressionante. È in questa dimensione che possiamo facilmente osservare quanto possa essere dirompente questo processo. Le città hanno presumibilmente facilitato il modo in cui si vive, si viaggia, si lavora e si commercia. L'emergere di città e agglomerati urbani ad alta densità ha assunto una velocità rapida, cambiando l'ambiente e l'economia globali. Gli aumenti della popolazione urbana non sono equamente distribuiti. I paesi in via di sviluppo sono i principali motori dell'attuale crescita esponenziale della popolazione urbana. Inoltre, gli effetti della globalizzazione e del cambiamento ambientale hanno reso la vita in queste aree estremamente precaria, in una certa misura stiamo assistendo a una migrazione forzata verso la città a causa di condizioni meteorologiche imprevedibili che minacciano la sopravvivenza delle persone e la perdita di terra a causa di misure di acquisizione. Tutta questa gente, che si riversa nelle città più rapidamente che mai, avvia un processo di urbanizzazione rapida e non pianificata che il più delle volte porta con sé molti aspetti problematici. I movimenti sociali urbani hanno così

assunto una rilevanza assoluta nel dibattito interdisciplinare, dopo essere rimasti nell'ombra all'interno della letteratura sui "nuovi movimenti sociali"; questi ultimi erano considerati movimenti sociali separati che, mossi da questioni legate al consumo collettivo, si battevano per l'affermazione di un ambiente urbano più giusto e democratico. Di fronte alla crescita esponenziale dell'urbanizzazione capitalista e al ruolo delle città come nodi centrali dei processi di accumulo e regolazione del capitalismo finanziario, gli spazi urbani assumono un'importanza strategica per i movimenti sociali, sia sul piano simbolico delle azioni che su quello della loro organizzazione e quotidianità riproduzione. La geografia sociale e urbana così come gli studi urbani possono quindi dare un contributo importante all'analisi e alla comprensione di queste dinamiche spaziali. Vivere in un centro urbano può essere considerato allo stesso tempo benefico e dannoso per l'individuo e per la collettività nel suo insieme. La densità e la vicinanza presente nelle città assicura che gli aspetti essenziali per la concorrenza di mercato siano assicurati, e questo è sicuramente considerato vantaggioso dalla maggior parte delle persone poiché offre opportunità e un mercato equo in cui le attività possono competere tra loro e prosperare, ma questo è solo un aspetto del fenomeno. Molti, infatti, sono gli svantaggi dell'urbanizzazione e l'aumento del costo della vita è tra questi. Inoltre, anche se le città sono considerate un luogo ideale per la prosperità della diversità, l'emarginazione di massa insieme a un diffuso senso di alienazione e stress sono aspetti diffusi della vita in una grande area urbana. È importante sottolineare che essendo il nuovo fulcro della nostra economia globale, le città devono essere considerate e viste come il futuro dell'innovazione e dell'imprenditorialità; il concetto di città intelligenti incarna questo ideale, approfondirò questo argomento. Nonostante l'innegabile supremazia delle città però, per quanto riguarda il potere politico e fiscale, gli stati mantengono anacronisticamente questa capacità concentrata a livello di stato-nazione e, considerando che molte di queste nazioni sono economicamente inferiori alle loro città, ciò può essere considerato un paradosso. Parag Khanna, esperto politico e consulente strategico leader a livello glob-

ale, esaminando il ruolo fondamentale che le città rivestono a livello globale e considerando come la globalizzazione guida l'economia e il modo in cui viviamo nel mondo di oggi, ha sviluppato la teoria della connettografia. Secondo questa teoria, la connettività ha ridisegnato la nostra geografia e questo va riconosciuto iniziando ad utilizzare una nuova mappa del mondo che possa permetterci di comprenderlo mentre si evolve. Questa nuova mappa elimina i confini nazionali a favore delle megalopoli e crede che partendo da questo immenso agglomerato urbano possiamo tracciare tutte le infrastrutture che le collegano profondamente, rendendole tutte dipendenti l'una dall'altra. Il fenomeno della gentrificazione come lo conosciamo oggi, è venuto alla luce tra gli anni Cinquanta e Ottanta. Il primo ad usare questo termine fu la sociologa britannica Ruth Glass nel 1964, riferendosi ai cambiamenti nei quartieri popolari di Londra. Da allora questa definizione è stata fortemente criticata dagli studiosi in quanto troppo ristretta. Il fenomeno della gentrificazione si è diffuso a livello globale, ma non deve essere considerato omogeneo e identico a se stesso, infatti il concetto di gentrificazione si è ampiamente evoluto da quando è stato segnalato per la prima volta, e la conseguente coscienza che si è ora costruita attorno al fenomeno ne è solo in parte dimostrazione. Esistono principalmente due punti di vista sull'interpretazione del processo di gentrificazione, il primo è: il processo attraverso il quale le famiglie borghesi e ad alto reddito si impongono nei quartieri popolari, con uno spostamento dagli immobili in affitto a quelli di proprietà, e con il conseguente spostamento di gli abitanti preesistenti della classe operaia. Insieme a ciò, i nuovi residenti della classe media cambieranno di conseguenza radicalmente il carattere, la cultura e la costituzione del quartiere. La seconda interpretazione vede il processo di gentrification come una rivalutazione delle abitazioni di un quartiere da residenze di basso ad alto pregio, una rivitalizzazione dell'area dal punto di vista architettonico ed economico e, quando si svolgono nel centro storico delle città, una grande opportunità di la conservazione e la valorizzazione delle strutture. In questo saggio verranno esaminati entrambi i punti di vista, quello incentrato su la denaturalizzazione e messa in fuga di abitanti

di un quartiere e quello sui "gentrificatori". Cercando di semplificare il punto di vista di molti studiosi, si può descrivere la gentrificazione è come una termita: si può immaginare dove trovarla, dall' armadio dove si tengono i capi di lana, ad un quartiere con grande carattere e valore architettonico, ma non si può essere sicuri di quando e se alla fine si presenterà. Eppure, quando la gentrificazione o le termiti decidono finalmente di farsi vedere, si diffondono rapidamente, conquistando il guardaroba o il vicinato; e probabilmente contaminando anche le aree circostanti. Sicuramente la gentrificazione sembra all'apparenza migliore delle termiti, ma ciò che ha ispirato questa metafora è che sia la gentrificazione che le termiti lasciano danni nel "tessuto" inteso come stoffa o come tessuto socioeconomico di una comunità. Esiste però un ulteriore dilemma, ossia: gentrificazione e riqualificazione sono situazioni reciprocamente inclusive o si tratta di due fenomeni distinti? Il dibattito è in corso, la gentrificazione non ha un significato univoco e per questo la risposta è difficile, ma si può affermare con certezza che non sempre la gentrificazione di una zona implica la riqualificazione della suddetta. Ciò accade quando è auspicabile un miglioramento della zona ma non ce n'è bisogno urgente, cioè quando i quartieri affascinano per il suo aspetto bohémien o semplicemente quando si cerca di attrarre al turismo veloce e di basso livello, quindi i proprietari delle abitazioni possono facilmente sfruttare la rendita grazie alla posizione senza necessità che venga riqualificata. La crescita del turismo ha sempre rappresentato una corrispondente crescita dell'economia, almeno fino ad oggi., recentemente però si comincia a vedere che l'era per la quale la crescita del turismo era di per sé una cosa positiva è finita. Questa nuova consapevolezza si pone come risultato di una incessante crescita turistica che, non ha portato i benefici promessi, e quindi le contraddizioni del modello iniziano ad apparire sempre più evidenti mentre gli impatti negativi in termini sociali si fanno più intensi. La nostra epoca ha anche sviluppato potenti strumenti per implementare il processo di gentrificazione e in qualche modo portarlo all'estremo. Un esempio importante, e probabilmente il più importante da fare, è quello della piattaforma di Airbnb. Questo argomento

verrà approfondito quando si tratterà della città di Lisbona ed in particolare del fenomeno della turistificazione. Ho scelto Londra come punto di partenza per la mia analisi in quanto, quando ci si riferisce al fenomeno della gentrificazione Londra, è la prima città che viene in mente. Questo principalmente perché quando la lotta di classe per il diritto alla casa si manifestò alla fine degli anni '60 e la gente iniziò a riconoscere uno schema nei cambiamenti in atto nel distretto cittadino, Londra era la città su cui concentrarsi con una lente d'ingrandimento per trovare risposte. In questo modo, si può osservare che, abbastanza stranamente per l'epoca, c'erano persone della classe media che restauravano vecchie e fatiscenti case vittoriane per vivere in aree trascurate del nord di Londra. Questo è probabilmente ciò che osservava la sociologa Ruth Glass quando ha coniato il termine gentrificazione, osservando un fenomeno in cui le case acquistavano rapidamente valore nel mercato immobiliare, e per questo interi quartieri cambiavano conseguentemente aspetto e abitanti, pronti ad accogliere in nuove élite. Londra è una di quelle città che si è adattata al fenomeno della gentrificazione nel migliore dei modi, evolvendosi con successo e sfruttandolo al massimo, e così facendo è diventata uno dei fulcri per quanto riguarda la cultura, i media e i servizi globali, nonché uno dei più importanti centri finanziari e commerciali. Ho poi rivolto la mia analisi verso la città di Lisbona in modo da poter analizzare il fenomeno della turistificazione che oggi coinvolge moltissime città del sud Europa in particolare nella penisola iberica. Il termine turistificazione è relativamente recente e descrive un fenomeno, che deriva dal processo di gentrificazione, e che si è diffuso con una velocità così esponenziale che ormai chiunque sa a cosa si riferisce. La turistificazione può essere vista come il risultato di una rapida ondata di gentrificazione, causata principalmente da una domanda eccessiva di turismo. Il fenomeno ha una connotazione negativa e può essere indicato come uno dei possibili output dannosi di un processo di gentrificazione; questo perché il turismo che caratterizza queste città può essere in qualche modo considerato diverso rispetto al passato; il nuovo archetipo di turista infatti non porta benefici alle città, in quanto è alla ricerca perlopiù di

scorci suggestivi e buoni ristoranti ad un prezzo contenuto. Il caso di Lisbona è uno sviluppo interessante e recente nella diffusione della gentrificazione nel mondo e in particolare del fenomeno della turistificazione. L'exasperazione di questa problematica ha contribuito a quello che da molti viene chiamato il "Lisboom". La città vecchia un tempo scenario di pestilenze, terremoti, rivoluzioni e crisi economiche sta ora cercando di affrontare un'invasione di persone e capitali stranieri mai vista prima. L'avvio del processo di sostituzione, in specifiche aree urbane, della classe economicamente svantaggiata a favore di una più ricca, insieme ad azioni di riabilitazione urbana, si traduce, nel caso specifico di Lisbona, in ultima analisi, in una turistizzazione dell'intero centro città. In questa circostanza la popolazione locale viene sempre sostituita da una nuova, ma questa volta la nuova popolazione è composta da turisti e multinazionali, nessun nuovo residente effettivo abita le zone.

In ultimo ho voluto analizzare lo scenario romano, un po' per affetto dato che è la mia città, un po' perché unico nel suo genere e discordante in molti aspetti da ciò che molti pensano rispetto all'evoluzione 'naturale' del fenomeno di gentrificazione. Roma può essere definita una città complessa, per molte ragioni, sia per la multidimensionalità dei suoi processi di alterazione sia per le politiche amministrative applicate in modo frammentario. Negli ultimi anni la città di Roma si è basata quasi unicamente su un'economia che fa affidamento a turismo e eventi. Allo stesso tempo, le istituzioni hanno perseguito il modello di rigenerazione urbana che doveva dare nuova vita ad edifici pubblici in abbandono, ma che di fatto ha finito per creare realtà di breve durata, più che spesso estranee al carattere originario del quartiere, con pochi vantaggi per gli abitanti e opportunità favorevoli solo ai grandi investitori. Per ora, con il crollo di questo modello di crescita, questa è una città piena di spazi vuoti. Riflettendo su queste contraddizioni ho toccato lo strano fenomeno del quartiere di Garbatella, in cui la gentrificazione è stata respinta fortemente sia dalla comunità di abitanti che dal quartiere stesso. La struttura urbanistica di questo quartiere, lo spiccato senso di comunità da sempre vivo tra i suoi abitanti hanno fatto sì che venisse di fatto respinto

qualsiasi tentativo di cambiamento. Ma questo di Garbatella è un caso raro, altri quartieri della città non hanno resistito alle forze della gentrificazione e, nel bene e nel male, sono effettivamente diventati qualcosa di completamente diverso dalla loro forma originale. Ne sono un esempio il quartiere del Pigneto o quello di San Lorenzo, diventati estremamente appetibili per i giovani, in particolare per la loro vita notturna, o il caso di Trastevere e Rione Monti, due bellissime zone sia dal punto di vista artistico che culturale, che si trovano nel cuore stesso della capitale e sono più che mai svuotate dei loro abitanti originari e ripopolate attraverso affitti brevi tipo Airbnb e ristoranti per turisti.

Ho scelto queste tre città perché portano sul tavolo aspetti molto diversi dello stesso fenomeno, e vanno quindi a dimostrare ciò che abbiamo ripetuto più volte all'interno di questa tesi: la gentrificazione è un fenomeno complesso e multidimensionale, il suo processo non è sempre unico in sé e nel suo contesto e i suoi output possono variare in modo significativo e il più delle volte non sono prevedibili. Sarebbe difficile immaginare una Londra non gentrificata, la città deve così tanti dei suoi aspetti caratteristici a questo processo, che togliere la gentrificazione dall'equazione sarebbe come spogliare la città della sua identità. In generale possiamo dire che l'esperienza ha avuto successo. La creazione di una città con un'economia leader, un alto tenore di vita e un'enorme varietà di culture che convivono insieme, ovviamente non avrebbe potuto essere indolore, ma i risultati positivi sono stati predominanti e nonostante o forse proprio per merito della gentrificazione rimane una delle più belle megalopoli del mondo. A differenza di Londra, la città di Lisbona è stata esposta solo di recente agli eventi e alle forze della gentrificazione, a cui in precedenza era rimasta estranea per ragioni economiche. Pertanto l'essere lanciata a ritmo serrato nella nuova economia del turismo veloce ha reso il tutto più difficile. Il rapido afflusso di nuovi capitali in città ha dato, in primo luogo, nuova vita all'area rivitalizzando interi quartieri e facendone un nuovo centro di punta per la cultura e l'imprenditorialità in Europa, ma poco tempo dopo questi eventi, la città, essendo più bella che mai e an-

cora ragionevolmente economica, è stata letteralmente assalita da un'orda di turisti, ben disposti a scendere a compromessi sull'alloggio, purché fosse a buon mercato, e desiderosi di locali alla moda. La gentrificazione a Lisbona non ha quindi coinciso affatto con la riqualificazione urbana e ha in questo caso avuto prevalentemente effetti negativi. E' auspicabile che una futura regolamentazione sarà in grado di risolvere, almeno in parte, la questione. Roma può essere una città controversa da mettere in discussione, essendo una metropoli con una struttura urbana e una storia complessa e unica. Tenendo presente questo, non è stato troppo sorprendente vedere come la gentrificazione abbia faticato non poco a prendere vita e a volte il tentativo è stato represso da persone o eventi. La città si è dimostrata fedele a se stessa ed è auspicabile che il timore di perdere la propria identità la renda in grado di tentare un ulteriore sforzo per la riqualificazione attesa e necessaria dei propri quartieri storici. In conclusione si è visto come in generale il fenomeno di gentrificazione attualmente non sia così ben accolto; anche se il più delle volte si parla di un miglioramento di una certa area che potrebbe effettivamente trarre grande beneficio da questi processi, ma va ovviamente posta molta attenzione ad alcune problematiche come quella degli alloggi, che non si possono ignorare, rischiando la possibilità che si verifichino durante lo sviluppo del fenomeno. Il termine gentrificazione sta diventando sempre più diffuso, ma il suo significato non è ancora così chiaro o ben definito e questo può solo creare più confusione e contribuire a fuorviarne l'uso. Forse la negatività intorno al fenomeno potrebbe essere causata dal fatto che non si parla abbastanza dei reali benefici derivanti dalla crescita degli investimenti in attività sociali, economiche, ambientali e dalla stimolante competizione tra città globali. Forse partendo dall'inquadrare ciò che di fatto manca al nostro Paese, per liberare il suo vero potenziale innovativo potremmo iniziare a pensare alla gentrificazione come un nuovo strumento di miglioramento. Si è cercato di capire quali sono i passi presi in direzione di una regolamentazione del fenomeno. Al fine di avviare una sorta di regolamentazione per la gentrificazione dei quartieri nelle città, si deve concordare sui parametri necessari

per riconoscere e misurare la possibilità e il rischio di gentrificazione, e si deve disporre di risorse sufficienti per controllare e prevenire lo sfollamento degli abitanti originari. Inoltre guardando al futuro possiamo individuare i paesi in via di sviluppo come il nuovo focus per un'analisi ed il controllo dei processi di gentrificazione. Il mio ultimo pensiero è che è necessario cercare di capire cosa si può fare per le città e i quartieri del mondo, poiché fanno da sfondo alla nostra esistenza frenetica, e bisogna partecipare attivamente per cercare di guidare al meglio il destino dei luoghi in cui abbiamo la fortuna di vivere. Al fine di garantire un sano sviluppo dei processi di gentrificazione, si deve regolamentare e intervenire nelle sue prime fasi, bisogna fare tutto il possibile per proteggere gli abitanti e il carattere dei vari quartieri, e allo stesso tempo si deve dare spazio alla modernizzazione che la rivitalizzazione e la riqualificazione dell'area può portare.