Antonio La Spina
Luiss Guido Carli & Centro Studi Pio La Torre
alaspina@luiss.it

Types of gentrification, crime and social impact

1. Two ideas of gentrification

Gentrification can be seen as "the production of urban space for progressively more affluent users"[1]. Very frequently this phenomenon is seen as implying a willful displacement of less affluent dwellers in order to make room for the newcomers. This probably happens because more often than not it is mostly dictated by profit motives, at the cost of undermining and disintegrating

1 Jason Hackworth, "Postrecession gentrification in New York city," *Urban Affairs Review* 37, no. 6 (2002): 815. He adds that "this general approach is chosen in place of the 'classic' definition – direct displacement of the working class from residential quarters – in light of several decades of research and debate that shows that the concept is usefully applied to nonresidential urban change and that there is frequently a substantial time lag between when the subordinate class group gives way to more affluent users" (*ibidem*, 839). Semi (2017, 395) refers to Hackworth's definition, too, and notices that it does not include many of the aspects which are frequently stressed by other authors. Hackworth has recently updated his views. Among other things he (2018, 51-52) stated that "the notion that gentrification was a risky bet for real estate investors is a distant memory", given that it has become "a high-profit-margin segment of the real estate industry".

pre-existing community bonds. I would label SG the ideal type of a gentrification essentially driven by *speculation*, or at any rate by self-interest. However, even when that has indeed been the case, it did not mean that aggressive speculators of the SG kind have always fought against any type of public intervention. On the one hand, they might have opposed those public bodies or measures that were aimed at shielding poorer people and restricting the room for manoeuvre of large-scale investments. On the other hand, real estate investors needed favourable policy decisions from urban planners and municipalities, also "through programs that prodded the private market ('enterprise zones, for example) rather than direct subsidy"[2]. "Overall, gentrification is now more corporate, more state facilitated, and less resisted that ever before"[3]. There was deregulation to a certain extent, but public bodies did not totally abstain from interfering. Gentrification always requires some kind of public intervention, even when it is of the SG type.

Can we argue that gentrification *necessarily* results in disintegration and displacement? The answer is no. In some relevant cases there have been efforts aimed at allowing residents to stay in their homes as well as avoiding other undesirable effects. It is advisable, therefore, to think also of another ideal type of gentrification, an *integrative* one, which I will call IG. One must also bear in mind that "gentrifier" is not a synonym for real-estate developer. Most of the times, gentrifiers are instead relatively well educated middle-class young adults, including couples with children, sometime artists, creative workers or representatives of other social groups featuring non-traditional lifestyles. Such people look for cheaper houses and comfortable locations in the city center or not far from it. They could be willing not to threaten existing communitarian relationships in many respects (unless certain local habits are unlawful or disturbing without good reasons). Grafts of newcomers can of course generate some problems. According to Hyra[4], one can be "political displacement". Another is "cultural displacement", that occur when "newcomers seek to establish new norms, behaviours and amenities",

2 Jason Hackworth and Neil Smith, "The changing state of gentrification," *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 92, no. 4 (2001): 469.

3 Hackworth, "Postrecession gentrification," 839.

4 Derek Hyra, "The back-to-the-city movement: Neighbourhood redevelopment and processes of political and cultural displacement," *Urban Studies* 52 no. 10 (2015): 1753-1773.

and the point of view of "the new residents cohort dominate and prevail over the tastes and preferences of the long-term residents", who can experience "resentment" and "feelings of community loss". "Understanding" such "processes … and attempting to minimize their effects, is critical to ensuring the sustainability of inclusive, diverse, mixed-income communities"[5].

On the one hand, SG is the result of powerful economic interests and profitable strategies. Therefore, it is much likely going to prevail, unless it is not curbed. On the other hand, we can imagine some coalitions - including residents, respectful gentrifiers, grassroots movements, cultural institutions, certain local politicians and civil servants, and so on - that could – at least in some cases – countervail SG by means of IG. I add that, if a given neighbourhood is characterized by marginality, low incomes, unemployment, insecurity, and other social problems, IG could offer older residents a valuable chance for improvement, provided that it is aptly framed and implemented. Of course, this implies both actual and relevant public expenses, as well as remarkable opportunity costs for would-be speculators, given that the much lucrative opportunities would be totally or partially lost. It nevertheless possible, at least in some occasions, to envisage an IG strategy that protects long-time dwellers and at the same time grants other private actors some reasonable benefits.

It is commonplace to emphasize the negative aspects of SG, perhaps failing to distinguish it from IG. For many people "gentrification is a serious issue in their lives that is nothing but an injustice, an upheaval, a threat to the vitality of urban neighbourhoods". "The working class and/or low-income communities … are at best severely disrupted … or at worst eliminated by it"[6]. Slater[7] advocates the use of "critical perspectives in gentrification research". Atkinson[8] thinks instead that "gentrification has regularly divided the opinions of policy-makers, researchers and commentators", and that "a move

5 Ibid., 1754, 1756, 1767, 1768.

6 Tom Slater, Winifred Curran, and Loretta Lees, "Gentrification research: new directions and critical scholarship. Theme issue," *Environment & planning* A, 36, no. 7 (2004): 1141.

7 Tom Slater, "The Eviction of Critical Perspectives from Gentrification Research," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 30, no. 4 (2006): 737-757.

8 Rowland Atkinson, "The evidence on the impact of gentrification: new lessons for the urban renaissance?," *European Journal of Housing Policy* 4, no. 1 (2004): 109, 111, 115, 117.

away from the portrayal of gentrification as a simple social good or evil will inevitably be an analytical improvement". The "impacts" can be either costly or beneficial, but "the research evidence on the benefits of gentrification is significantly more sparse than that of its ill effects".

Given that the word has a pejorative meaning for many people, certain "large, state-led gentrification projects … are 'rebranded' as social-mixing or urban restructuring, rather than overtly stated as gentrification"[9]. It might also happen that what is officially presented as an IG is actually a SG in disguise, or that an IG undergoes alterations along the way, so that it becomes a SG in due time. However, albeit a genuine IG is not easy to be realized and presumably rare, its possibility must not be excluded *a priori*.

Chaskin and Joseph illustrate what has been done in Chicago and call it an instance of "positive gentrification"[10], whereby a major goal of these efforts is to integrate low-income and public housing residents into the fabric of the developments and the surrounding (regenerating) community, among higher-income residents, and in contexts of greater stability, safety, opportunity and order.

They depict "positive gentrification" as the opposite of "neoliberal urban reform". The latter has produced, among other things, "the increasing privatization of urban spaces"[11]. According to Freeman and Braconi gentrification can "reverse central-city decay" and "if it proceeds without widespread displacement … also offers the opportunity to increase socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic integration … existing residents of inner-city neighborhoods could benefit directly" from it. "Rent regulation and public housing may have a certain logic in the context of gentrification"[12].

---

9 Brian Doucet and Daphne Koenders, "'At least it's not a ghetto anymore': Experiencing gentrification and 'false choice urbanism' in Rotterdam's Afrikaanderwijk," *Urban Studies* 55, no. 16 (2018): 3634.

10 Robert J. Chaskin and Mark. L. Joseph, "'Positive' Gentrification, Social Control and the 'Right to the City' in Mixed-Income Communities: Uses and Expectations of Space and Place," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 37, no. 2 (2013): 480.

11 Ibid., 484.

12 Lance Freeman and Frank Braconi, "Gentrification and Displacement. New York City in the 1990s," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 70, no. 1 (2004): 39-50.

Gainza writes that something similar to IG was accomplished in San Francisco[13], a working-class neighbourhood of Bilbao where the attraction of cultural industries has been used to revitalize the area [so that] what is taking place … cannot be described as "regeneration" or "displacement", but as a change-in-progress that induces transformations on the built environment, population, retail activity and the symbolic dimension … San Francisco is nowadays an open and dynamic neighbourhood where different identities coexist, provoking new forms of socialization.

Another example is that of the Netherlands, where "the more managed and mild nature of gentrification (compared with that of Anglo-Saxon countries) means that" certain "negative experiences and perceptions … are rarely found". "Protection against displacement means that residents are able to appreciate some tangible benefits of neighbourhood improvement without feeling threatened … Gentrification is a dominant policy tool … and is characterized by top-down, policy-driven approaches"[14]. Steinmetz-Wood *et al.* state that gentrification often does not go hand in hand with "social cohesion and informal social control"[15]. Nevertheless, having investigated what happened in Montreal, they found "that the effects of gentrification may not all be negative". If certain conditions occur, it can be "beneficial for individuals' perceptions of neighborhood collective efficacy"[16].

As a matter of fact, displacement of low-income people can be caused by factors other than gentrification. There is a "heightened threat of displacement that the poor disproportionately face in all urban areas, regardless of whether there are undergoing gentrification

13 Xabier Gainza, "Culture-led neighbourhood transformations beyond the revitalisation/gentrification dichotomy," *Urban Studies* 54, no. 4 (2017): 953, 955, 962.

14 Doucet and Koenders, "'At least it's not a ghetto anymore'": 3636, 3645-3646.

15 Madeleine Steinmetz-Wood, Rania Wasfi, George Parker, Lisa Bornstein, Jean Caron, and Yan Kestens, "Is gentrification all bad? Positive association between gentrification and individual's perceived neighborhood collective efficacy in Montreal, Canada," *International Journal of Health Geographics*, 16, no. 24 (2017): 1-8.

16 On collective efficacy, also with regard to crime, Kozey (2020).

or not". "A fuller theory of vulnerability" is therefore needed [17]. In Billingham's opinion[18], research has been overwhelmingly focused on a few megacities (such as New York or London and not many others). Secondly, it is necessary to study not only neighbourhoods, but also "socioeconomic and demographic change at the municipal and regional levels … More importantly, municipal and regional policies affecting economic activity and class-specific migration patterns have profound influences on the trajectory of gentrification"[19].

2. Gentrification and insecurity

The choice to buy or rent a flat in a gentrifying neighbourhood is a bet. The idealtypical newcomer is prepared to adjust herself to the new situation, to accept some initial or even durable discomfort not only because she likes the place and is a tolerant person, but also on the basis of a rational expectation of certain benefits that must significantly exceed the costs, be they monetary, psychological, transactional, adaptive. In this respect the size and the types of criminal threats that are *perceived* with regard to a given neighbourhood can deter the would-be gentrifier from betting on it.

Anticipation of increasing crime in "central cities" is regarded, together with racial motivations, as one of the reasons behind the "white flight" to the "suburbs during the middle part of the twentieth century"[20]. "Crime had an adverse impact on net migration and population size", although this was not so for the "black

17 Chase M. Billingham, "Waiting for Bobos: Displacement and Impeded Gentrification in a Midwestern City," *City & Community* 16, no. 2 (2017): 147, 163. On displacement as opposed to "demographic change" occurring "through normal housing succession" see Freeman and Braconi (2004, 48), Freeman (2005), Slater (2006). Newman and Wyly (2006) point out some of the difficulties that emerge when studying displacement and criticize some of the points made by Freeman and Braconi. They agree that "public regulation of the market" can help "to mitigate displacement pressures". "Low-income residents who manage to resist displacement may enjoy a few benefits from the changes brought by gentrification, but these bittersweet fruits are quickly rotting as the support for low-income renters are steadily dismantled" (*ibidem*, 42, 52). Easton, Lees, Hubbard and Tate (2020) review the methodological problems that are met in several studies concerning the quantification of displacement.

18 Chase M. Billingham, "The broadening conception of gentrification: recent developments and avenues for future inquiry in the sociological study of urban change," *Michigan Sociological Review* 29 (2015): 75-102.

19 Ibid., 80,81.

20 David S. Kirk, and John H. Laub, "Neighborhood Change and Crime in the Modern Metropolis," *Crime and Justice*, 39 (2010): 441-502.

population"[21]. In the reverse case, when members of certain social groups begin to consider moving towards neighbourhoods amenable to gentrification, we therefore expect that they will be inclined to do so only if they estimate a low risk of becoming victims of serious crimes.

Taylor and Covington studied Baltimore in the seventies and argued that gentrification, implying "social disorganization" and "relative deprivation", was linked to a certain increase of murders and aggravated assaults[22]. They added, however, that such "findings may no longer be current if, since 1980, the locations have become more homogeneous and thus, perhaps, have developed into 'defended neighborhoods'". Barton, among others, notes that "gentrifiers" vis-a-vis "incumbent residents" are "more likely to possess high-value goods", which will be presumably be protected by means of updated technologies that they can afford[23]. Covington and Taylor, again with regard to Baltimore in the same period, found that in "gentrifying neighborhoods" "robbery" was on the increase and "larceny" was not diminishing[24].

Such trends might however be related to specific places and times. Moreover, as emphasized by Kirk and Laub[25] (quoting McDonald 1986) among others, after the initial years of a gentrification process it can be expected that "crime declines long term as neighborhoods stabilize and informal social control increases". "Gentrification appears to lower crime, especially in the long run"[26] (Kirk and Laub, 2010, 463-465). This conclusion is shared by Barton and Gruner, who reviewed the main "criminological theories"[27]. In their view, "a more nuanced approach to the topic" is needed, and "research can contribute to the policy discussion" [28]. "Property prices" in given

21 Ibid., 456, 457, 459.

22 Ralph B. Taylor and Jeanette Covington, "Neighborhood Changes in Ecology and Violence," Criminology 26, no. 4 (1988): 579, 580, 582, 583.

23 Michael S. Barton, "Gentrification and violent crime in New York City," *Crime & Delinquency* 62, no. 9 (2016): 1184.

24 Janette Covington and Ralph B. Taylor, "Gentrification and Crime: Robbery and Larceny Changes in Appreciating Baltimore Neighborhoods during the 1970s," *Urban Affairs Quarterly* 25 (1989): 148, 159, 161.

25 Kirk and Laub, "Neighborhood Change and Crime,": 463-465.

26 Ibid., 463-465.

27 Michael S. Barton and Colin P. Gruner, "A Theoretical Explanation of the Influence of Gentrification on Neighborhood Crime," *Deviant Behavior* 37, no. 1 (2016): 30-46.

28 Ibid., 39, 43-44.

neighborhoods and certain types of crimes appear to be inversely related in a significant way[29]. Boggess and Hipp emphasize that gentrification must be seen as a "spatially diffuse process"[30]. Crime, therefore, should be studied not only in gentrified or gentrifying neighbourhoods, but also in the surrounding ones. By doing so they found "a positive relationship between gentrification and crime rates" in "isolated neighborhoods", i.e. those "surrounded by areas that are *not* undergoing … home value increases".

Ellen and O'Regan discuss the "dramatic decline in total crime rates", which has taken place in U.S. cities since the nineties[31]. "Crime rates" in central "cities … declined more sharply than crime in their own surrounding suburbs". Because suburbs were less affected, the authors suggest that the "reductions … may have disproportionately benefited traditionally disadvantaged groups"[32]. "The crime decline… likely contributed to the rapid gentrification of cities"[33]. Papachristos, Brazil and Cheng agree on the "absolute reduction" but argue that a "crime gap" (that is "the disparity in crime rates across urban neighborhoods") is still present[34]. "The concentration of homicide and violent crime is especially acute in disadvantaged black communities". Moreover, in their view at least in some cases – the one they focused upon being Chicago – the reduction of crime was more beneficial to "safer communities" and has "generated additional inequalities by widening the crime gap"[35] (*ibidem*, 1052-1053, 1067). Papachristos, Smith, Scherer and Fugiero [36], having

29 Nils Braakmann, "The link between crime risk and property prices in England and Wales: Evidence from street-level data," *Urban Studies* 54, no. 8 (2017): 2005.

30 Lynnsay N. Boggess and John R. Hipp, "The Spatial Dimensions of Gentrification and the Consequences for Neighborhood Crime," *Justice Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (2016): 608.

31 Ingrid G. Ellen and Katherine O'Regan, "Crime and U.S. Cities: Recent Patterns and Implications," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 626 (2009): 22-38.

32 Ibid., 24-25, 30.

33 Rachael A. Woldoff and Christopher Uggen, "Community and Crime: Now More than Ever," *City & Community* 17, no. 4 (2018): 942; Barton, "Gentrification and violent crime," 1183; Kirk and Laub, "Neighborhood Change and Crime,": 465-466; Amy E. Schwartz, Scott Susin, and Ioan Voicu, "Has falling Crime Driven New York City's Real Estate Boom?," *Journal of Housing Research* 14 (2003): 101-135.

34 Andrew V. Papachristos, Noli Brazil, and Tony Cheng, "Understanding the Crime Gap: Violence and Inequality in an American City," *City & Community* 17, no. 4 (2018): 1051-1074.

35 Ibid., 1052-1053, 1067.

36 Andrew V. Papachristos et al., "More coffee, less crime? The relationship between gentrification and neighborhood crime rates in Chicago, 1991 to 2005," *City & Community*, 10, no. 3, (2011): 215-240.

operationalized gentrification by referring to the presence of coffee shops[37], also stress differences between neighborhoods with regard to racial composition and proximity to certain other neighbourhoods, even when they exhibit similar patterns of gentrification. Some "white neighborhoods … experience greater crime declines because they are spatially adjacent to neighborhoods with higher levels of social control", while the opposite could be true if some of the "nearby surrounding areas" are ones where crime is frequent[38]. Secondly, "Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics gentrify and experience gentrification in different ways". Thirdly, the racial composition of each neighborhood matters. "Coffee shops are present almost entirely in areas with declining homicide", and "the robbery models … produce somewhat similar findings", albeit the reverse applies in Black neighborhoods, where anyway coffee shops are rare[39]. With regard to New York, Barton also found that "concentrated disadvantage was positively associated with assault and homicide", while "gentrification" is "negatively associated" with "robbery" and "violent crimes" (2016, 1193, 1195)[40].

Alongside with hard data on crime rates, subjective beliefs can be very influential, too, when a person chooses to move to a new neighbourhood. Taylor and Covington (1993) argue that "population composition", "unsupervised … troublesome teen groups", "physical" and "social incivilities", which by definition do not amount to criminal behaviours, are nevertheless related to "fear of crime", insofar they are seen as indicators of dangerous attitudes in certain urban spaces[41].

More recently, Hwang and Sampson voiced a note of caution in their critical evaluation of the efforts which were done in Chicago, where

37 Barton (who uses a different methodological approach) in "Gentrification and violent crime in New York City", 2016, noticed that "the location of coffee shops" is "influenced by city planning efforts, individual tastes, and residential preferences", and that they "were clustered in the central business district" (ibid., 1190). This weakens the reliability of the indicator.

38 "With few exceptions, notably highly segregated residential areas and gated communities" (Alex Hirschfield, *et al*., "How Places Influence Crime: The Impact of Surrounding Areas on Neighbourhood Burglary Rates in a British City," *Urban Studies*, 51, no. 5 (2014): 1057, 1060). See also Boggess and Hipp (2016).

39 Papachristos et al., "More coffee, less crime?," 219, 228, 232-235.

40 Barton, "Gentrification and violent crime," 1193, 1195. Kreager, Lyons and Hay (2011) studied urban revitalization in Seattle, with analogous results.

41 Ralph B. Taylor and Janette Covington, "Community Structural Change and Fear of Crime," *Social Problems*, 40, no. 3 (1993), 376-378, 385-386, 391.

anyway "racial integration that satisfies particular thresholds is the norm" and residents are protected "against displacement"[42]. Their analysis (based also on Google Street View) has a general relevance, beyond the specific case treated.

Perceptions are shaped by racial-ethnic composition, independent of socio-economic standing, actual crime rates, objective measures of disorder […] are resistant to short-term changes and even contrary evidence […] gentrifiers may have preferences for racial or ethnic diversity [However] the durability of race-based residential stratification suggests that gentrifiers' preferred level of diversity is limited […] the racialized order of gentrification leads most poor minority neighborhoods to remain so[43].

3. Integrative gentrification and crime

A successful IG strategy is supposed to satisfy several coexisting and potentially conflicting objectives and demands. The most intricate aspects have to do with low-income residents, shopkeepers or craftsmen. If they are not organized and vocal, their needs might be overlooked. Even when such needs are taken in due consideration, each of the options that are open to policymakers has disadvantages and can generate "tensions"[44]. If rents are blocked so that residents can stay where they are, this will for sure be a problem for their landlords, but also for tenants and homeowners, in case the cost of living goes up after the arrival of gentrifiers[45]. Apart from this, the main goal of a GI is to improve social integration and welfare in targeted neighbourhoods. Atkinson mentions "increased social mix", "rehabilitation of property both with and without state sponsorships", "change of image" which "may invite further investment and alter preconceptions", "deconcentration of poverty" among the expected beneficial outcomes of gentrification[46]. If the concentration of poor people is

42 Jackelyn Hwang and Robert J. Sampson, "Divergent Pathways of Gentrification: Racial Inequality and the Social Order of Renewal in Chicago Neighborhoods," *American Sociological Review* 79, no. 4 (2014): 726-751.

43 Ibid. 729-731, 748.

44 Chaskin and Joseph, "'Positive' Gentrification," 480-502.

45 These and other "negative impacts of gentrification processes" are treated among others by Atkinson (2004, 111-117).

46 Atkinson, "The evidence on the impact of gentrification," 112, 118.

high, it might indeed be expedient to propose some of them to move outside targeted neighbourhoods, provided that poor households accept to live in a new apartment[47]. This of course presupposes a generous allocation of public funds to be devoted to low-income groups. At the same time, well-to-do gentrifiers are "an articulate and vigorous lobbying group" and "generally take more from the city coffers than they contribute"[48]. There is also a risk that troublesome cases of social marginality and criminality are merely shifted elsewhere, without solving them[49]. Hochstenbach and Musterd speak of a "suburbanization of poverty" with regard to the Netherlands, where one finds "large social rental stock, extensive tenant protection … rent regulation" and "limited … direct displacement", so that "individual neighborhoods may remain or become more mixed due to gentrification"[50]. Nevertheless, in their perspective "the aggregate effect at a higher scale may instead be the opposite", if "lower income households are increasingly confined to a shrinking social rental sector or to affordable segments of the owner-occupied sector, and to low status or declining neighborhoods"[51].

Any option of intervention may be flawed in some respect, but also doing nothing has a cost. To tackle certain problems through action is sometime necessary, so as to prevent bursts of discontent. Even when the weakest members of the community are not capable of exerting pressure, it is unfair to leave them behind. Therefore, an approach which is almost totally "conservative" of the status quo can be questionable as well. Each available line of action, fallible and imperfect as it may be, should be carefully and honestly weighted against the alternatives.

An IG strategy usually needs both vast amounts of public money and intrusive regulatory measures. Both might generate opportunities for particularism, patronage, outright corruption. Such risks can in principle be mitigated or avoided through careful design and implementation.

---

47 Chaskin and Joseph, 'Positive' Gentrification", 497-499. Kirk and Laub, "Neighborhood Change and Crime", 469-470.

48 Atkinson, "The evidence on the impact of gentrification," 117.

49 Kirk and Laub, "Neighborhood Change and Crime," 444, 465, 468, 473-474, 485.

50 Cody Hochstenbach and Sako Musterd, "Gentrification and the suburbanization of poverty: changing urban geographies through boom and bust periods," *Urban Geography* 39, no. 1 (2018): 26-53.

51 Ibid., 31, 30, 47.

The great and long-lasting reduction of violent crime rates is the result of several factors, including law-and-order policies more or less loosely inspired by criteria such as zero tolerance, technological advances enhancing crime prevention and detection, demographic changes. IG in turn targets marginalized social groups in order to improve social conditions in the city, with expected effects on crime, too.

According to Sharkey, Torrats-Espinosa and Takyar, academic research has "largely overlooked" the role of those "local nonprofits" that "influence the level of social cohesion within a neighborhood" and "create social capital"[52]. They found "strong evidence that … community nonprofits had a substantively meaningful negative effect on murder, violent crime, and property crime"[53]. Therefore, nonprofits working in targeted neighbourhoods should be thought of as central actors in IG programs[54].

In more general terms, Ramey and Shrider argue that "local crime control or neighborhood improvement efforts" should be "bolstered by public-level assistance" and "outside support" and discuss the experience of the Neighborhood Matching Fund in Seattle (NMF, which has been imitated by "several European cities", but not much in the U.S.)[55]. The NMF co-finances "parochial" projects with earmarked resources and by doing so stimulates residents' mobilisation. The authors maintain that such an approach is an effective tool of crime prevention for "struggling neighborhoods – those with high crime rates and high disadvantage"[56]. Publicly sponsored mortgage investments are obviously related to the physical aspects of gentrification/revitalization, such as buildings renovation. Shrider and Ramey emphasized that the NMF aids "organizations that want to make physical improvements or foster social relationships in the

52 Patrick Sharkey, Gerard Torrats-Espinosa, and Delaram Takyar, "Community and the Crime Decline: The Causal Effect of Local Nonprofits on Violent Crime," *American Sociological Review* 82, no. 6, (2017): 1214-1240.

53 Ibid., 1215, 1218, 1234

54 One example is that of the Greater Astoria Historical Society in New York, quoted by Ranaldi (2014, 187-188) in her comparison between Astoria and the Roman Testaccio. With regard to Italy, Giulia Bonafede and Grazia Napoli (2015) discuss the historic centre of Palermo, while Semi (2015) compares experiences in Rome, Milan, Turin, Genoa.

55 David M. Ramey and Emily A. Shrider, "New Parochialism, Sources of Community Investment, and the Control of Street Crime," *Criminology & Public Policy* 13, no. 2 (2014): 193-216.

56 Ibid., 194, 199, 212, 211.

community", providing a "public benefit that is free and open to anyone", and often having "community building as a primary goal"[57]. Without public support "mortgage lending" would cluster "in more advantaged areas", where it is less needed[58]. The authors argue that the NMF program is conducive to violent crime reduction[59].

Other IG tools – which like the NMF program are "not aimed specifically at crime reduction"[60] – could be "school investments", especially those concerning "early childhood". Madero-Hernandez et al. offer evidence that, although such investments "have received little empirical attention", they can produce significant results both in the "short term" and in the "long run", also because they foster prolonged interaction and cooperation between different types of private and public actors[61].

4. Speculative gentrification and crime

IG must meet multiple urgent and sometimes elusive social needs. Consequently, even when policymakers want to pursue a real IG, the risk of failure is high. SGs are in many respects ambitious, but not so much when compared to IGs. When certain neighbourhoods are gentrifying without a specific commitment to IG, one might expect the even if SG prevails, anyway and eventually it will bring about some crime reduction there. However, if offenders are displaced, crime

57 Emily A. Shrider and David M. Ramey, "Priming the Pump: Public Investment, Private Mortgage Investment, and Violent Crime," *City & Community*, 17, no. 4, (2018): 996-1014.

58 Nicholas Branic and John R. Hipp, "Growing pains or appreciable gains? Latent classes of neighborhood change, and consequences for crime in Southern California neighborhoods," *Social Science Research* 76 (2018): 78, 80, 81, 90: Branic and Hipp used mortgage "loan … data for the city of Los Angeles over the decade of 2000-2010" which includes the subprime crisis started in 2007. They notice that those neighbourhoods where loans are "disproportionately unavailable … may experience worsening disadvantages over time that may exacerbate local crime levels". Crime rates are also positively influenced by the "*relative quickness*" of "demographic … change", as well as by the disruption of "social networks and ties".

59 Ibid., 997, 1000-1001, 996. Albeit they "cannot claim causality" and "cannot directly test" their "mechanism". Furthermore, "Seattle is somewhat unique compared to other cities", and "the NMF program" helps "building social ties", while other "forms of public investment" have different goals (Shrider and Ramey, 2018, 1011-1012).

60 Ramey and Shrider, "New Parochialism," 193.

61 Arelys Madero-Hernández, Rustu Deryol, Murat M. Ozer, and Robin S. Engel, "Examining the Impact of Early Childhood School Investments on Neighborhood Crime," *Justice Quarterly* 34, no. 5 (2017): 760, 763-765, 781.

can be supposed to reappear elsewhere, and maybe its total amount would even grow[62], also as a consequence of "increased resentment and conflict"[63]. Unlike with IGs, this would not be - strictly speaking - a substantial mishap for a SG, but rather only one of its side effects, however annoying it may be.

Gentrifying and even more gentrified neighbourhoods as such must be rendered and kept attractive for both existing and potential residents. Among others Laniyonu[64] emphasizes that this implies, among other things, the reduction or suppression of "social disorder" - "rather than serious crime" - through "aggressive … order maintenance policing" (OMP)[65]. He argues that "the intensity of OMP policy will not follow demand for services" expressed by the citizens, but rather "perceptions of threat felt by dominant sociopolitical groups". Furthermore, he shows that "significant policing" tends to be pursued in "lower status … adjacent or neighboring tracts", more than in gentrifying tracts proper[66]. Kellogg speaks of "residential segregation", "mass incarceration", "increasing crime rates simply by virtue of increased surveillance", "criminalization of cultural behaviors", "unfair and often illegal behaviors in an effort to push … long-term residents" out of gentrifying areas[67].

Gentrification can either take place through scattered purchases or rentals of flats or be guided by big investments and powerful real estate developers, who can acquire, renovate, demolish, re-build, resell entire buildings or blocks. Even when the latter is the case, each and every step of the necessary decision-making processes (involving also municipalities, banks, professionals, residents, corporations, and so on) can in principle be fully lawful. Of course, when considerable sums of money are implied the risk that certain offenses are committed grows, especially where mafia-type organizations are

62 Kirk and Laub, "Neighborhood Change and Crime".

63 Atkinson, "The evidence on the impact of gentrification".

64 This author speaks of "revitalization" or "growth strategies" as almost equivalent to what I call SG (Laniyonu, 2018, 899). Others, like Kreager, Lyons and Hays (2011) instead speak of "urban revitalization" in Seattle in a sense that is more akin to IG.

65 Ayobami Laniyonu, "Coffee Shops and Street Stops: Policing Practices in Gentrifying Neighborhoods," *Urban Affairs Review* 54, no. 5 (2018): 902, 899-900.

66 Ibid., 905, 906, 920, 924.

67 Casey Kellogg, "There Goes the Neighborhood: Exposing the Relationship Between Gentrification and Incarceration," *Themis: Research Journal of Justice Studies and Forensic Science* 3, no. 1 (2015): 178, 180, 187, 190, 191-192.

active in the region, or there are opportunities for corruption or other white-collar crimes.

Smith has analyzed the relationship between gentrification and "gang homicides" in Chicago, on the basis of her distinction between "three types of gentrification" which she titles "(a) *private economic investment* … measured [by] coffee shops"; "(b) *forced state intervention* … measured … as public housing demolition", when "public lands" are turned over to "private investors"; "(c) *changing demographic composition*", defined as "the im-migration of particular residents … into previously poorer neighborhoods"[68]. Having analysed data concerning the range of time from 1994 to 2005, she found both an inverse relationship with (c) and another negative albeit weaker correlation with (a). Given the link between "demolition" and "increased gang conflict and fear of relocation", "highly concentrated in areas of disadvantage", it is "noteworthy" that type (b) "*significantly increases gang homicides over time*". "Just as crimes are not equal, neither is gentrification".

6. Concluding remarks

It is now evident beyond doubt that the answer to the question about the relationship between gentrification and crime begs other questions. Which type of gentrification? Which crimes? Here I have sketched just two types of the former which obviously require to be refined and could be complemented by other types. For the time being I add that actual cases of gentrification can be located along an ideal continuum between SG and IG. Many or perhaps most of them will gravitate towards straightforward SG. Whether gentrification of certain neighbourhoods will be a success, but also whether crime reduction, social integration and human development will actually be reached, is something which depends on the ex-ante features of given cities and also, crucially, on national, sub-national and municipal policies (to which European Union ones must be added when appropriate). Therefore, generalisations should be treated with great caution.

68 Chris M. Smith, "The Influence of Gentrification on Gang Homicides in Chicago Neighborhoods, 1994 to 2005," *Crime & Delinquency* 60, no. 4 (2014): 570, 574, 578, 584-585.

Not only, as we have seen, pure SG tends to disintegrate social bonds. It can also be doubted that it manages to reduce ordinary crime, if we rightly have in mind - besides refurbished neighbourhoods - the whole urban constellation. By definition, white collar criminals and mafia-type organisations will be interested in SGs, while at least the latter are instead counter-interested in IGs. I repeat that this does not mean that all SGs will necessarily be ridden with bribes or dominated by mobsters. It is a possibility that may not materialize at all, if rigorous and very effective checks, rules, penalties and guardians are in place.

As I have already hinted at, when a potential for gentrification exists, it will often be exploited by certain economic interests and other actors in order to generate a SG, *unless* this "natural" tendency is counterbalanced by a sufficiently powerful IG. Like all other public programs, IGs can fail. Yet, we have mentioned a number of ingredients that, if aptly dosed and melted, can form an effective antidote to failure: public housing; protection of low-income residents from displacement, as well as with regard to their purchasing power; rent control; enhancement of community ties; local nonprofits; schools, education, human capital, civicness; dedicated institutional actors, such as Seattle's NMF. When these and other elements are actually put in motion, so that the relevant measures go beyond paper provisions and reassuring declarations, an appropriate IG program can prove to be *better suited* that a SG one to reaching the blanket reduction of both ordinary and more serious crimes, fostering inclusive growth, social integration, satisfaction of basic needs, enjoyment of citizenship rights, avoiding the perils of crooked exchanges and racketeering. While a SG stands on its own feet and does not bother to throw problems out of the neighbourhoods it targets, an IG becomes meaningful only if it is part and parcel of a comprehensive strategy for governing the city as a whole.

References

Atkinson, Rowland. "The evidence on the impact of gentrification: new lessons for the urban renaissance?." *European Journal of Housing Policy* 4, no. 1 (2004): 107-131.

Barton, Michael S. "Gentrification and violent crime in New York City." *Crime & Delinquency* 62, no. 9 (2016): 1180-1202.

Barton, Michael S., and Colin P.Gruner. "A Theoretical Explanation of the Influence of Gentrification on Neighborhood Crime." *Deviant Behavior* 37, no. 1 (2016): 30-46.

Billingham, Chase M. "The broadening conception of gentrification: recent developments and avenues for future inquiry in the sociological study of urban change." *Michigan Sociological Review* 29 (2015): 75-102.

Billingham, Chase. M. "Waiting for Bobos: Displacement and Impeded Gentrification in a Midwestern City." *City & Community* 16, no. 2 (2017): 145-168.

Boggess, Lynnsay N. and John R. Hipp. "The Spatial Dimensions of Gentrification and the Consequences for Neighborhood Crime." *Justice Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (2016): 584-613.

Bonafede, Giulia and Grazia Napoli. "Palermo multiculturale tra gentrification e crisi del mercato immobiliare nel centro storico." *Archivio di Studi Urbani e Regionali*, XLVI, 113 (2015): 123-150.

Braakmann, Nils. "The link between crime risk and property prices in England and Wales: Evidence from street-level data." *Urban Studies* 54, no. 8 (2017): 1990-2007.

Branic, Nicholas, and John R. Hipp. "Growing pains or appreciable gains? Latent classes of neighborhood change, and consequences for crime in Southern California neighborhoods." *Social Science Research* 76 (2018): 77-91.

Chaskin, Robert J., and Mark L. Joseph. "'Positive' Gentrification, Social Control and the 'Right to the City' in Mixed-Income Communities: Uses and Expectations of Space and Place." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 37, no. 2 (2013): 480-502.

Covington, Janette and Ralph B. Taylor. "Gentrification and Crime: Robbery and Larceny Changes in Appreciating Baltimore Neighborhoods during the 1970s." *Urban Affairs Quarterly* 25 (1989): 142-172.

Doucet, Brian, and Daphne Koenders. "'At least it's not a ghetto anymore': Experiencing gentrification and 'false choice urbanism' in Rotterdam's Afrikaanderwijk." *Urban Studies* 55, no. 16 (2018): 3631-3649.

Easton, Sue, Loretta Lees, Phil Hubbard, and Nicholas Tate. "Measuring and mapping displacement: The problem of quantification in the battle against gentrification." *Urban Studies* 57, no. 2 (2019): 286-306.

Ellen, Ingrid G., and Katherine O'Regan. "Crime and U.S. Cities: Recent Patterns and Implications." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 626 (2009): 22-38.

Freeman, Lance. "Displacement or succession? Residential Mobility in Gentrifying Neighborhoods." *Urban Affairs Review*, 40, no. 4 (2005): 463-491.

Freeman, Lance, and Frank Braconi. "Gentrification and Displacement. New York City in the 1990s." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 70, no. 1 (2004): 39-52.

Gainza, Xabier. "Culture-led neighbourhood transformations beyond the revitalisation/gentrification dichotomy." *Urban Studies* 54, no. 4 (2017): 953-970.

Hackworth, Jason. "Postrecession gentrification in New York city." *Urban Affairs Review* 37, no. 6 (2002): 815-843.

Hackworth, Jason. "Gentrification as a politico-economic window: reflections on the changing state of gentrification." *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 110, no. 1 (2018): 47-53.

Hackworth, Jason, and Neil Smith. "The changing state of gentrification." *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 92, no. 4 (2001): 464-477.

Hirschfield, Alex, Mark Birkin, Chris Brunsdon, Nicholas Malleson, and Andrew Newton. "How Places Influence Crime: The Impact of Surrounding Areas on Neighbourhood Burglary Rates in a British City." *Urban Studies*, 51, no. 5 (2014): 1057-1072.

Hochstenbach, Cody, and Sako Musterd. "Gentrification and the suburbanization of poverty: changing urban geographies through boom and bust periods." *Urban Geography* 39, no. 1 (2018): 26-53.

Hwang, Jackelyn, and Robert J. Sampson. "Divergent Pathways of Gentrification: Racial Inequality and the Social Order of Renewal in Chicago Neighborhoods." *American Sociological Review* 79, no. 4, (2014): 726-751.

Hyra, Derek. "The back-to-the-city movement: Neighbourhood redevelopment and processes of political and cultural displacement." *Urban Studies* 52, no. 10 (2015): 1753-1773.

Kellogg, Casey. "There Goes the Neighborhood: Exposing the Relationship Between Gentrification and Incarceration." *Themis: Research Journal of Justice Studies and Forensic Science* 3, no. 1 (2015): 176-204.

Kirk, David S., and John H. Laub. "Neighborhood Change and Crime in the Modern Metropolis." *Crime and Justice*, 39 (2010): 441-502.

Kozey, Katheryn. "Collective Efficacy, Group Threat, and Urban Change: Examining Informal Social Control Forces in Areas of Gentrification." *Sociological Research Online* (2020): 1-22.

Kreager, Derek A., Christopher. J .Lyons, and Zachary R. Hays. "Urban revitalization and Seattle crime, 1982-2000." *Social Problems*, 58, no. 4 (2011): 615-639.

Laniyonu, Ayobami. "Coffee Shops and Street Stops: Policing Practices in Gentrifying Neighborhoods." *Urban Affairs Review* 54, no. 5 (2018): 898-930.

Madero-Hernandez, Arelys, Murat M. Ozer, Rustu Deryol, and Robin S. Engel. "Examining the Impact of Early Childhood School Investments on Neighborhood Crime." *Justice Quarterly* 34, no. 5 (2017): 759-787.

McDonald, Scott C. "Does gentrification affect crime rates?". *Crime and justice*, 8 (1986): 163-201.

Newman, Kathe and Elvin K. Wyly. "The Right to Stay Put, Revisited: Gentrification and Resistance to Displacement in New York City," *Urban studies* 43, no. 1 (2006): 23-57.

Papachristos, Andrew V., Noli Brazil, and Tony Cheng. "Understanding the Crime Gap: Violence and Inequality in an American City." *City & Community* 17, no. 4 (2018): 1051-1074.

Papachristos, Andrew V., Chris M. Smith, Mary L. Scherer, and Melissa A. Fugiero. "More coffee, less crime? The relationship between gentrification and neighborhood crime rates in Chicago, 1991 to 2005." *City & Community*, 10, no. 3 (2011): 215-240.

Ramey, David M. and Emily A. Shrider. "New Parochialism, Sources of Community Investment, and the Control of Street Crime." *Criminology & Public Policy* 13, no. 2 (2014): 193-216.

Ranaldi, Irene. *Gentrification in parallelo. Quartieri tra Roma e New York*. Roma: Aracne, 2014.

Schwartz, Amy E., Scott Susin, and Ioan Voicu. "Has falling Crime Driven New York City's Real Estate Boom?." *Journal of Housing Research* 14 (2003): 101-135.

Semi, Giovanni. *Gentrification. Tutte le città come Disneyland?*. Bologna: il Mulino, 2015.

Semi, Giovanni. "*Città per chi le abita*." il Mulino, 66, no. 3 (2017): 395-401.

Sharkey, Patrick, Gerard Torrats-Espinosa, and Delaram Takyar. "Community and the Crime Decline: The Causal Effect of Local Nonprofits on Violent Crime." *American Sociological Review* 82, no. 6, (2017): 1214-1240.

Shrider, Emily A. and David M. Ramey. "Priming the Pump: Public Investment, Private Mortgage Investment, and Violent Crime." *City & Community* 17, no. 4 (2018): 996-1014.

Slater, Tom. The Eviction of Critical Perspectives from Gentrification Research." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 30, no. 4 (2006): 737-757.

Slater, Tom, Winifred Curran, and Loretta Lees. "Gentrification research: new directions and critical scholarship. Theme issue." *Environment & planning* A 36, no. 7 (2004): 1141-1150.

Smith, Chris M. "The Influence of Gentrification on Gang Homicides in Chicago Neighborhoods, 1994 to 2005." *Crime & Delinquency* 60, no. 4 (2014): 569-591.

Steinmetz-Wood, Madeleine, Rania Wasfi, George Parker, Lisa Bornstein, Jean Caron, and Yan Kestens. "Is gentrification all bad? Positive association between gentrification and individual's perceived neighborhood collective efficacy in Montreal, Canada." *International Journal of Health Geographics* 16, no. 24 (2017): 1-8.

Taylor, Ralph B., and Jeanette Covington. "Neighborhood Changes in Ecology and Violence." *Criminology* 26, no. 4 (1988): 553-590.

Taylor, Ralph B., and Janette Covington. "Community Structural Change and Fear of Crime." *Social Problems* 40, no. 3 (1993): 374-397.

Woldoff, Rachael A., and Christopher Uggen. "Community and Crime: Now More than Ever." *City & Community* 17, no. 4 (2018): 939-944.