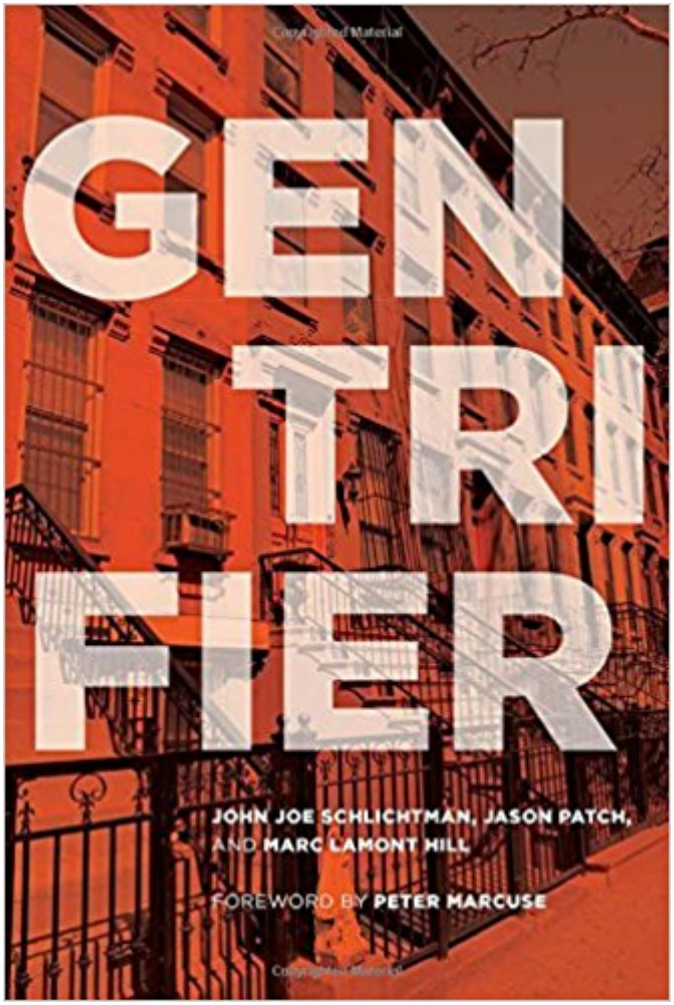
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Gentrifier (UTP Insights)



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Synopsis

Gentrification and gentrifiers are often understood as Ã¢â ¬Ëœdirtyâ ¬â„¢ words, ideas discussed at a veiled distance. Gentrifiers, in particular, are usually a Ã¢â ¬Ëœtheyâ ¬â„¢.Gentrifier demystifies the idea of gentrification by opening a conversation that links the theoretical and the grassroots, spanning the literature of urban sociology, geography, planning, policy, and more. Along with established research, new analytical tools, and contemporary anecdotes, John Joe Schlichtman, Jason Patch, and Marc Lamont Hill place their personal experiences as urbanists, academics, parents, and spouses at the centre of analysis. They expose raw conversations usually reserved for the privacy of peopleÃ¢â ¬â„¢s intimate social networks in order to complicate our understanding of the individual decisions behind urban living and the displacement of low-income residents. The authorsÃ¢â ¬â„¢ accounts of living in New York City, San Diego, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Providence link economic, political, and sociocultural factors to challenge the readersÃ¢â ¬â„¢ current understanding of gentrification and their own roles within their neighbourhoods. A foreword by Peter Marcuse opens the volume.

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Customer Reviews

Ã¢â ¬Å“The co-authors of Gentrifier take a daring tack: Professors all, they break the third wall of social science to admit that their interest is not purely academic.Ã¢â ¬Â• Gentrifiers themselves,

Schlichtman, Patch and Hill Ã¢â ¬Å“believe that by sharing their experiences, they can help Ã Â make sociological sense of this fraught topic.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Daniel Brook The New York Times, Sunday, July 9, 2017)

"Gentrifier does a masterful job of explaining, unpacking, and grounding the key analytical concepts that underpin debates on gentrification. In clear, readable, and entertaining prose, John Joe Schlichtman, Jason Patch and Marc Lamont Hill make gentrification more tangible and relevant as an important social topic worthy of rigorous and careful understanding." (John L. Jackson, Jr., Richard Perry University Professor and Dean of the School of Social Policy & Practice, University of Pennsylvania)"John Joe Schlichtman, Jason Patch and Marc Lamont Hill clearly engage in the theoretical and policy debates surrounding gentrification while offering very smart analyses of their own narratives. There is a lot out there on gentrification but Gentrifier is most definitely fresh!" (Mary Pattillo, Harold Washington Professor of Sociology and African American Studies, Northwestern University)"Gentrifier is the sort of book that vintage, pre-Kardashian Kanye West might have written had he had a PhD in urban policy, supplying it with an irresistible hook: "We're all gentrifiers, I'm just the first to admit it." Schlichtman, Patch, and Hill help us shelve what we thought we knew about gentrification, and give us instead a brutally honest reckoning with the ills, conveniences and virtues Ã¢â ¬â œ but especially the consequences on the vulnerable Ã¢â ¬â œ of gentrification. They ably wrestle with a characteristic facet of modern existence, rescuing the term from automatic demonization while never once letting it off the hook for the damage it can do." (Michael Eric Dyson, Professor of Sociology at Georgetown University and author of 'Tears We Cannot Stop: A Sermon to White America')

Absolutely loved the book. I saw myself in many of the pages and examples. Described a multi-tool approach to evaluation of the shifts in housing choices in the city. Gave wonderful definitions of the scholarly work in the field which have already been published. I am a relative novice in social study and literature but found it easy to read and logical in organization. It certainly will cause me to give a better analysis of future homebuying choices for me as well as my adult children. Thank you for this wonderful work.IK Carter MD

Excellent analysis and compelling stories. I don't agree with all of their takes on gentrification, but this was still a unique and valuable contribution.

The term gentrification was coined just 50 years ago by Ruth Glass in London. It described the landed gentry descending en masse into a deteriorating neighborhood. Investing in it, they changed it.Gentrifier is an attempt to describe every conceivable angle and objection to gentrification, by three ethnographers who use their own experience as the basis. This is, of course, never wise. I did like that they distilled gentrification of a neighborhood into a de- phase, followed by a re- phase. That is a lovely, elegant and simple image for anyone to grasp the impact. They have also classified gentrifiers into six stereotypes: Conqueror, Colonizer, Competitor, Capitalist, Consumer, and Curator, which I was not so happy with. There are at least two other obvious possibilities they never consider (possibly because they donÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t begin with C). In immigrant communities all over the world, people with similar backgrounds like to congregate. It gives them a sense of support, familiarity and comfort. So if an Indian community suddenly develops in New Jersey, itÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s gentrification as blacks and/or whites move out. And two, there can be a (all too rare) sense of excitement being part of something that is building, not just existing. When Soho changed from industrial to artsy, it attracted people who liked that new ethos. ItÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s not just (or necessarily) wealthier people taking over rundown housing.From what I have seen, gentrification is just a slander of the term redevelopment, like calling public school government school. (I wanted to use ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“urban renewalÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•, but apparently I have spent a lifetime misusing urban renewal. The authors narrowly define it as government cleansing in the 1950s-70s, so we canÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t use it to describe the rebirth of neighborhoods today.)What Gentrifier skips over is that we go through eras. Cities used to hollow out as suburbs became fashionable, starting with the interstate highway system in the 50s. Now suburbs are dÃƒÂ©classÃƒÂ© and inner cities are where itÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s at. The whole world is urbanizing, so thereÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s investment going on. Cities are living breathing beings, if you read Jane Jacobs or Ayn Rand. They get ill, they recover, they grow, they die, they re-emerge. Gentrification is one passing phase in the life of a neighborhood. In 25 years, you wonÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t recognize it. It could disappear like Detroit or blossom like Bed-Stuy. Neighborhoods were never built blighted. Gentrification is just another stage.Gentrifier reads like philosophy: things are both what they seem and not. Everything can be viewed positively and negatively. There is no clear path, it says. In quantum physics, the mere fact a scientist witnesses an event changes its outcome. In Gentrifier, many just want to fit in and not change their new neighborhood. But guess what? Just by being there, they do. And unless we want to live in Amish villages, there will be gentrification, not better, not worse.David Wineberg

I bought this book because I want to study an issue that so many people living in America's (and Europe's) urban centers are talking and arguing about, to try to get more insight into the topic.The authors call this book an "auto-ethnography" and it does seem to be that. There is a good exploration of some of the subtleties and contradictions in the study of "gentrification." However, I would have liked the authors to go farther and take a broader perspective. For me, many of the limitations of the book come from their definition of "gentrification" which they define on pg 4 as having to do with "middle-class people moving into divested neighborhoods in a period during which a critical mass of other middle class people did the same, thereby exerting economic, political and social pressures upon the existing community." For me this definition is too narrow, as is the term "gentrification".There's an inherent problem in the term "gentrification" as its' used now, which is that it takes just one kind of change to a community and vilifies it, while apparently. ignoring or viewing as neutral all other types of changes to a community. Gentrification is viewed as a modern phenomenon, (the term being coined in 1964) ...but communities and use of their claimed spaces have been changing for far longer than that, and I can't see leaving out this whole part of the picture.For instance, in California, the original indigenous inhabitants of the Bay Area were Native Americans. Then along came the first "gentrifiers", the Spanish nobility, who obtained ranchos or land grants from the Spanish crown or Mexico, and took over the lands. Then these ranchos were lost in part by fraud, in part by hardship, and were subdivided and sold to settlers -- the next set of "gentrifiers." Settlers and farmers then were in turn "gentrified" out by those building early cities and towns.Though many people in Oakland (for example) now refer to whites who move into majority black neighborhoods as "gentrifiers", the fact is that at the city's start, in 1854, it is possible that no black citizens lived in the city at all. It would have been mostly hispanic rancho owners and whites at the time of its founding. Even just prior to WWII, only 3% of Oakland's population was black. Seen in this context, it seems legitimate to question why there is a need to view black communities as somehow owning the city or parts of it.The point being, that places change, and it seems oddly narrow to only look at some parts of this change and to vilify some forms of change and not others. Shall we call working class people who move into a middle class or upper class area, as "slummifiers" or "ghettoizers"? On pg 134 of their book, the authors describe Spike Lee complaining that his father has lived in the area since 1968 and played jazz music there, but now the new people moving into their neighborhood are calling the cops on him due to the noise. But this problem also occurs exactly in reverse. Noisy working class people move into nice quiet middle class areas and ruin them. You have a quiet middle class or upper middle class neighborhood, and then a working class family moves in and starts using their front lawn to park greasy and dumpy cars they are

working on, plays loud music on weeknights, has friends come over late at night who use their car horn as a doorbell to say I'm here. In other words, bring ghetto behavior to middle class areas.And this problem can occur in a widespread way, and has, in many cities which have decayed by the influx of working class or underclass into formerly middle class areas. But where are the articles and books vilifiying such slummification or ghettoization of formerly nice areas? Fair is fair.....it seems ridiculous to me to demonize some forms of change while ignoring others which may actually cause more serious social problems.

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