

# **In Press: Mixed communities: Gentrification by stealth? (2011)**

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## **The Impossibility of Gentrification and Social Mixing**

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### **Introduction**

Social mixing, less segregation and more ‘socially balanced’ neighbourhoods all seem like inherently positive policy ambitions. Why then have a raft of urban policy programs that have placed the goal of social mixing at their core been subject to, at times, condemning criticism (Lees, 2008; Slater, 2006; Smith, 2002)? The answer proposed here is that the current policy-led push to generate social mixing and socially mixed neighbourhoods through ‘social upgrading’ has contained a deeply problematic understanding of class dynamics and politics. This, it is argued, is symptomatic of a wider treatment of the question of class in the neoliberal period (Peck and Tickell, 2002), where a utopian kernel embedded within the intellectual project of Hayek and his followers (see Harvey, 2005) has been – not always exactly – translated into a multitude of policy visions, notably including Richard Florida’s influential creative city (Peck, 2005).

Given class remains an antagonistic social relation in critical theory, it is unsurprising that some, if certainly not all (see Slater, 2006), gentrification scholars have been critical of social mixing policy agendas in Europe and North America (see Lees [2008] for review). As Slater et al. (2004) have argued, the term gentrification refers “to nothing more or less than *the class dimensions of neighbourhood change* – in short, not simply changes in the housing stock, but changes in housing class” (p. 1144). For most gentrification scholars then, the analytical focus on pro-social mixing policy agendas has centred on socio-economic dimensions (i.e. not racial or ethno-cultural dimensions). In terms of the instruments used within these policy agendas, such a focus does not represent a problematic bracketing of the object (Zizek, 2006). For example, housing tenure requirements (i.e. affordability requirements) have driven social mixing via socio-economic characteristics, even if this inevitably carries other social dimensions. In addition, the spatial planning dimensions of the UK governments Urban Renaissance and Housing Renewal programs have been premised upon ‘rebalancing’ socio-economic mix, via attracting the ‘respectable’ middle classes back to problematised (inner city) neighbourhoods. For the most part then, policy programs have not been focused on rebalancing other modes of social difference, although various identity politics are certainly intertwined in neighbourhood change.

If we therefore focus upon the question of social mixing in its socio-economic dimensions, pro-social mix urban policy agendas pose a particular question: Can the juxtaposition of different social classes generate the intended policy outcomes? In order to answer this question we must first examine how the intentions of pro-social mix urban policy programs are set out. In this chapter, I focus upon the policies of the UK's Labour government dating from the launch of the Urban Renaissance (DETR, 2000); although similar policy frameworks have been installed elsewhere (see Lees, 2008). With thesis sketched out, the rest of the chapter approaches the question of spatial proximity and class. Drawing upon recent gentrification scholarship that has examined cross-class neighbourhood relations, a theoretical understanding of what Butler and Robson (2003) have described as 'social tectonics' is developed. The intention here is to signal both the politics inherent to currently in-vogue social mix agendas and the particularity of the question of socio-economic mixing.

### **The social mix prescriptive**

From its very inception, the New Labour government of Tony Blair, and subsequently continued under Gordon Brown, premised its (urban) social policy thinking around a very particular understanding of socio-economic difference. Established soon after election in 1997, the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) was charged with implementing a cross-departmental program of poverty alleviation. In doing so, specific understandings of socio-economic difference were installed through the New Labour agenda (Fairclough, 2000). Colley and Hodkinson (2001) have argued this understanding has been primarily premised upon viewing the poor as morally irresponsible, self-excluding and anti social: ““Deep-seated structural inequalities are rendered invisible, as social exclusion is addressed through a strongly individualistic strategy based on personal agency” (p.335). For some then (also see Powell, 2000), the lexicon of the SEU erased key structural concerns and a related claim for redistribution.

In response to such claims, Anthony Giddens (2002) has stated: “A focus upon social exclusion has nothing to do with trying to sweep poverty under the carpet. Social exclusion is not just about poverty, but about living in neighbourhoods that are crime-ridden and lack access to shops, transport, decent schooling and job opportunities. Many of the excluded are, to some degree, casualties of the welfare state itself, caught up in a negative spiral of dependency.” Here, Giddens' starkly illustrates the spatial dimension placed upon social exclusion. In differentiating this key policy concept from plain-old poverty, it is space – problematic neighbourhoods – that generate social (and spatial) exclusion. And certainly, Giddens' thinking is present in the SEU's work. In the *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal* the SEU released in 2001, they located the problem of poverty in the neighbourhood setting. In the document's foreword, Tony Blair states: “The job of renewing and revitalising poor neighbourhoods has consistently been a top priority for this Government. In my first speech as Prime Minister, I set out our new approach to social exclusion... It made clear that [these] neighbourhoods suffered from serious multi-faceted problems that would require action on all fronts” (ibid. p.5). Blair's message is echoed throughout the document, as it identifies “economic ghettoisation”, the “erosion of social capital”, “the failure of core services in

deprived areas” and “the lack of clear strategy or concerted joint action” as the various spatial qualities of social exclusion.

This thinking has been directly reflected, if with some mutations, in New Labour’s urban policies since the release of the Urban White Paper in 2000. And while there has been extensive debate over the New Labour’s policy programs – notably the Urban Renaissance (Imrie and Raco, 2003), Housing Renewal (Allen, 2007) and Sustainable Communities (Raco, 2007) – it is worth here stressing one particular point: that the discursive and conceptual reworking of poverty (in its various guises) that has taken place under Third Way governments has been closely tied to a particular set of spatial ideas about causation and solution. As Lupton and Power (2002) argue: “Poverty and social exclusion in Britain are spatially concentrated. This is not a new pattern... the concentration of problems in particular neighbourhoods is not coincidental; [...] the nature of neighbourhoods actually contributes to the social exclusion of their residents” (p.118). The intuitive solution that emerges from this framing of poverty unites the UK government’s urban policy programs: the de-concentration of problematised people from problematised neighbourhoods.

We therefore see the Urban Task Force (DETR, 1999) – architects of the Urban Renaissance (DETR, 2000) – proclaiming that we must implement reform that ‘brings people back to the city’ and enables these to ‘take back control of them’. We see Housing Renewal demolishing vast tracts of housing to disperse the poor and reinstall a newly composed neighbourhood community (see Allen, 2007). Similarly, the Sustainable Communities (ODPM, 2003; also see Raco, 2007) program has focused upon addressing a complex set of housing delivery and standards problems with the objective that “It will take us towards successful, thriving and inclusive communities, urban and rural, across England. Communities that will stand the test of time and in which people want to live” (p. 3). Social mixing has therefore become a desired outcome of urban policy. It is perceived to offer a ways in which ‘damaging’ socio-spatial agglomerations can be eliminated. The fix for poverty is therefore intimately spatial, as Lees (2008) argues in the global context: “Socially mixed urban communities created by the in-movement of middle-class people into poor, marginal areas of the inner city are being posited, under the rubric of urban renaissance, as the desegregating answer to lives that are lived in parallel or in isolation along class, income, ethnic and tenurial fault lines” (p. 2463).

### **Social tectonics and the prospects of mixing**

What then have been the implications of pro-social mixing policy programs? Have they proven capable of addressing socio-economic disparities? In terms of new (gentrifying) residents mixing with incumbent (the working class) residents, the gentrification literature has been quite unanimous: there is little mixing between these groups and even fewer signs that social class divisions are eroded by the generated spatial proximity. Indeed, it would seem the left-leaning liberal gentrifier of the 1960s and 1970s who actively seeks out social diversity – moving into the inner city to seek out social diversity and reject suburban middle-class sterility (see Butler and Lees, 2006; Caulfield, 1994; Ley, 1996) – is now a rare being; perhaps only present within the imagery of urban policy.

Most accounts of cross-class relations in gentrifying neighbourhoods now correspond to Butler and Robson's (2003) idea of 'social tectonics'. Drawing upon their examinations of gentrification and the practices of gentrifiers in neighbourhoods across London, Butler and Robson argue that, for the most part, gentrifiers and incumbent communities tend to pass each other by; they simply co-habit proximate spaces, having few social relations. These findings have been echoed elsewhere in London (Davidson, 2008) and across the globe (Rose, 2004; Slater, 2004). Within the gentrification literature and beyond, there are various reasons offered for such disconnection. Influentially, Smith's (1996) 'revanchist city' thesis has been used to contrast divided gentrified neighbourhoods to the image of the emancipatory gentrifier. Smith argues: "The revanchist city represents a reaction to an urbanism defined by recurrent waves of unremitting danger and brutality fuelled by venal and uncontrolled passion. It is a place, in fact, where the reproduction of social relations has gone stupefyingly wrong [...], but where the response is a virulent reassertion of many of the same oppressions and prescriptions that created the problem in the first place" (p.212).

Beneath Smith's graphic language, it is not difficult to see the presence of the urban policy thinking that underlies pro-social mixing policies (see Uitermark, 2003): dangerous places where the reproduction of social relations has gone wrong. Is this not the imaginary for the Urban Renaissance? We might therefore draw more from Smith's thesis, particularly in terms of the built form of the latest 'third-wave' (Hackworth and Smith, 2001) of gentrification. For Smith (2002), the revanchism he identifies has become manifest in new collections of actors implementing gentrification, alongside new built forms:

"Retaking the city for the middle classes involves a lot more than simply providing gentrified housing. Third-wave gentrification has evolved into a vehicle for transforming whole areas into new landscape complexes that pioneer a comprehensive class-inflected urban remake. These new landscape complexes now integrate housing with shopping, restaurants, cultural facilities [...], open space, employment opportunities – whole new complexes of recreation, consumption, production, and pleasure, as well as residence" (p.443)

For Atkinson (2006), the residential form of this mode of gentrification is the gated development. He argues:

"Gentrification provides an example of what can be seen as both insulation and incubation strategies by upper-income groups... Policy-makers seem to have understood these preferences as a route into remaking and boosting central-city spaces by facilitating enclave-style new-build and a wider promotion of gentrification. Buyer confidence is achieved through the scale and relative secession of new development which facilitates a sense of privacy, status and withdrawal that connects with middle-class patterns of sociation" (p.826)

While pro-social mixing urban policies may, in some sense, rely on the imaginary of the emancipatory gentrifier, in the post-1993 third-wave of gentrification, this figure is largely absent. Instead, an excluding and exclusive form of gentrification has expanded (Atkinson and Bridge, 2005). It has featured social practices that actively avoid cross-class social mixing and has been increasingly characterised by the construction of built environments that inhibit the very possibility of mixing (Atkinson, 2006; Davidson, 2008).

There is therefore little doubt that as a tool for the promotion of cross-class social mixing, gentrification has been a total failure, not least because the process inevitably displaces those lower-income groups who are the very focus of policy (Davidson, 2008). Why then has this form of inclusion been so difficult to achieve? Of course, part of the answer to this question has been the decline in tenure security of many low-income groups; the ability of many to remain (i.e. not displaced) in gentrifying housing markets has diminished over the past 30 years as various protections have been eroded by neoliberal reforms (Newman and Wyly, 2006). However, we require an explanation as to why the spatial proximity of different social classes, engendered by policy-led gentrification, has failed to create 'a' community. In the following sections, a theoretical explanation is developed which claims it is the very question of social class, and the particularities of the demand of socio-economic 'inclusion', that causes social tectonics.

### **Social distance**

Gentrification's emancipatory spectre – that which is embedded within pro-social mix, gentrifying policy agendas – emanates largely from the prospect that because people of different social classes are living together in the same neighbourhood, this will generate reduced social difference and/or greater levels of understanding/tolerance. It is therefore concerning that the gentrification literature continues to document both the particular lifestyle practices of gentrifiers (Bridge, 2001; Butler and Robson, 2003; Ley, 2003) and how the cohabitation of gentrifiers with working class communities tends to not result in any sense of cohesive collective identity (Davidson, 2008; Watt, 2006). In short, there is little evidence, particularly within recent scholarship, that gentrification operates in an emancipatory mode.

Scholarship that has employed Bourdieu's habitus concept has been particularly effective in explaining the continued social distance between gentrifiers and the communities they move into and, indeed, how this is recreated through everyday practice. For Bourdieu, habitus represents the system of dispositions (and by extension practices and perceptions) that incorporates the subject into a set of objective social structures. As Bourdieu (1984) states: "Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier. Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make, between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar, in which their position in the objective classifications is expressed or betrayed" (p.6). As a method through which to articulate and practice their socio-cultural dispositions, gentrification has been recognised as a significant mode of contemporary class practice. Bridge (2006) has argued this takes two forms: "...there is a spatial and a temporal deployment of cultural capital. The spatial deployment is classic gentrification involving overt housing aesthetic, neighbourhood politics and distinctive consumption in public – as part of a symbolic reordering of the central city. 'Temporal' deployment involves capital accumulation that is not necessarily so rapidly materialised (or convertible into economic capital). It is less visible and aligns much more with traditional middle-class strategies of distinction through education" (p. 726).

While the full implications of Bourdieu's understanding of class remain debated, its use within the gentrification literature has brought theoretical reasoning to the fact that gentrifiers have mostly remained distinct from their working class neighbours. In this sense, we can return to the

phenomenology of Edmund Husserl that influences Bourdieu's work (see Robbins, 2005; also see Coole [2007] on Merleau-Ponty). Robbins (2006) has claimed that much of Bourdieu's work was focused upon an examination of how the lifeworld experience – the pre-given for Husserl – generates intellectual difference and distinction. For Husserl, the lifeworld emphasised the centrality of perception for human experience (see Moran, 2005). It proposes the pre-conscious as the route to establish science via the essential features of consciousness. Importantly here, Husserl's lifeworld is the individual's horizon of meaning; the plane of perception and cognition that conditions choice and reaction. It is the "natural standpoint" with which we insert ourselves into "the concrete world" (Brand, 1973). Bourdieu therefore shares with Husserl a key concern with the ways in which individuals 'construct' perception and intentionality: "Bourdieu was interested in understanding how far cultural tastes are biologically determined or how far individuals inherit a natural culture which circumscribes their choices of artificial cultural products or symbols" (Robbins, 2005, p. 16)

Bourdieu's habitus therefore offers a sociological interpretation (and extension) of the lifeworld. It shares Husserl's emphasis that the lifeworld remains, by definition, an inter-subjective entity: "The constitutive element of the life-world is inter-subjectivity, not the Ego" (Brand, 1973, p. 158). The lifeworld, particularly in Husserl's later work (Moran, 2005), becomes something that is defined in a social sense through the shared "we". In particular, Husserl emphasises the prefabricated meaning that is circulated through time and space via language; the lifeworld as cultural creation. Just as Bourdieu's later concept of habitus pivots around the differentiated structuring of socio-cultural dispositions, so then Husserl's understanding of the lifeworld is shaped by an appreciation of how social action structures communities. However, Bourdieu's sociological approach places much greater emphasis on the hierarchical structuring of the inter-subjectively defined lifeworld. As Browitt (2004, p. 1) puts it: "*Habitus*, however, is much more constraining than lifeworld in that forms of 'symbolic domination', that which situates us as either the submissive or the dominant in social hierarchies, radically limit our practical capacity as agents to transform the social world."

The question of gentrification's emancipatory potential – via the generation of social mix(ing) – therefore takes on a more radical dimension when Bourdieu's emphasis on hierarchy is highlighted. Whilst it may be generally accepted that the localised perceptions and practices of gentrifiers and their working class neighbours are different, existing, in Butler and Robson's (2003) terms, as parallel worlds that simply rub past each other, what Bourdieu's concept of habitus highlights in the inherent processes of class differentiation and structuring that are at play. Not only are the lifeworlds of gentrifiers and working class residents different, but they are necessarily so for Bourdieu:

"The habitus is not only a structuring structure, which organizes practices and the perception of practices, but also a structured structure: the principle of division into logical classes which organises the perception of the social world is itself the product of internalization of the division into social classes. Each class condition is defined, simultaneously, by its intrinsic properties and by the relational properties which it derives from its position in the system of class conditions, which is also a system of differences... social identity is defined and asserted through difference" (1984, p. 172)

Here then, the prospect of the liberal gentrifier, the individual(s) who moves 'back to the inner city' and engages with the existent community – eats the same things in a similar manner, participates in the same leisure activities, enjoys shared conversation – represents a truly radical injunction.

If we follow Bourdieu, it is therefore of little surprise that gentrification has such a poor record of generating social mixing between the social classes: "The most fundamental oppositions in the structure (high/low, rich/poor etc.) tend to establish themselves as the fundamental structuring principles of practices and the perception of practices" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 172). For example, it has long been recognised that landscape change, the revision and re-inscription of urban aesthetics, has played a central role in the gentrification process. As Jager (1986) argues with respect to the classical gentrification process: "the esthetics of gentrification not only illustrate the class dimensions of the process but also express the dynamic constitution of social class of which gentrification is a specific part... etched into the landscape in the decorative forms of gentrification is a picture of the dynamics of social class" (p. 78). Jager, drawing on Bourdieu, is talking here of the expression of class identity "through the appropriation of history, and the "stylization of life" as Victorian gentility" (p.80). The same usage of architectural aesthetic to signify class identity is evident across the many different forms of gentrification today.

In the rural context, Phillips (1993; 2002) has illustrated the ways in which local community and planning disputes have played out in the context of a 'back to the country movement' that has constituted social distinction through quite different sets of architectural practices in both renovated and new-build constructions. Furthermore, a literature on new-build gentrification (see Davidson, 2007; Mills, 1988) has demonstrated the ways in which modern urban aesthetics have been incorporated into systems of social signification. Describing the gentrified Fairview Slopes neighbourhood in Vancouver, Caroline Mills (1988) argued: "...Fairview developments display a more pointed postmodern sensibility, each so self-conscious in its play of codes and symbols, its attempt at distinction" (p. 175). She goes on to argue that as a result "any sense of an integrated landscape is overwhelmed" (p. 175). The key point here is that gentrification has featured the articulation of difference, for example via architectural aesthetic, but also through consumption practices and political activities, which maintains social distance. In this sense, gentrification is unlike to ever feature the radical emancipatory figure who might act outside of the structuring practices that Bourdieu emphasises as central to the construction and recreation of class. In this sense, the lifeworlds of gentrifiers and working class communities are persistently demarked and separated.

Of course, we might want to insert some caveats to this Bourdieuan interpretation. In particular, I want to make two points here. The first concerns what Bridge (2001) calls "Bourdieu's oversocialized conception of human action". Here, Bridge draws attention to the fact that Bourdieu's concept of habitus leaves little space for human agency. Drawing on Elster (1983) he states "Bourdieu's move to a conception of class utility maximization, regardless of the conscious actions of individuals, leaves his analysis devoid of any causal mechanism between dispositions and what people actually do" (Bridge, 2001, p. 208). In response, Bridge proposes the insertion of Rational Action Theory into a Bourdieuan interpretation of gentrification, primarily through a claim that the gentrifier represents a particular manifestation of the middle classes: "This new class fraction is defined to some extent by their self-consciousness. The new middle class is a reflexive class. Whereas the dispositions of the traditional bourgeoisie are unschooled, tacit, unreflexive – the

aesthetic practices of the new middle class are public, discursive and self-conscious” (p. 211). Gentrification, as opposed to being a fixture of class structuring, Bridge argues the process “provides an example where the class habitus is adapted to a new field as a result of the existing habitus and the articulation of prior dispositions. It also involves conscious choices involving the physical and social environment exercised by a few members of the ‘urban’ middle class (p. 213). While Bridge (2001) critiques Bourdieu’s emphasis on class circumscriptions, he continues to note that “[T]he gentrification aesthetic is deployed to obtain distinction from the conventional middle-class suburbs and from working-class taste in the central city...” (p. 214). In this sense, both individual choice and social predispositions are (still) orientated around the maintenance and cultivation of social class difference.

The second caveat required concerns the occurrence of socio-structural disruption; the actual blurring of economic position and socio-cultural disposition. Whilst it is generally acknowledged that gentrification has failed to generate social mixing – and any envisaged reductions in inequalities – there is evidence that some (if limited) cross-class relations take place. Notably, Caulfield’s (1994) Toronto-based gentrification research found that “respondents reported that there had not previously been a conspicuously high degree of close contact between working- and middle-class residents, but in each case a substantial number of residents of both groupings turned out at community meetings to discuss the issues and try to take mutual action” (p. 174). While Caulfield’s findings are not repeated throughout the gentrification literature, they do represent a significant disruption to a Bourdieuan interpretation since social practice is not orientated around maintaining difference, but rather building mutual understanding and objectives. In the policy arena, such an observation remains important since it transforms ‘social tectonics’ (Butler and Robson, 2003) from a necessary feature of a capitalist urban society (Bourdieu, 1984) to a multiplication challenge. In short, the problem is not presented, in any way, as structural, but rather it is one of fostering neighbourhood-based communitarianism (see Fairclough, 2000).

But does the socio-cultural interaction of social classes represent a potentially radical injunction? In Ranciere’s (2005) critique of Bourdieu’s static reading of class we find a questioning of this prospect. For Ranciere (2005), Bourdieu’s reading of social class – via his concept of ‘field’ – fails because it provides an account of domination and, in parallel, narrates the same domination’s inevitable reproduction: “If the social machine captures us, it is because we do not know how it captures us. And if we do not know it captures us even though it is right before our eyes, it is because we do not want to know it. All recognition is a misrecognition, all unveiling a veiling” (Ranciere, 2005, p. 170). The possibility of emancipation is, for Ranciere, therefore absent from Bourdieu’s sociology: “The sociologist needs only to show each time the sufficient reason organizing the universe of judgements – simple distinction... There must be no mixing, no imitation. The subjects of this science, like the warriors of *The Republic*, must be unable to “imitate” anything else than their own dye” (p.189). Ranciere therefore urges us to consider the political implications of Bourdieu’s class schema through a critique of what he describes as the ‘division of the sensible’. By this, Ranciere articulates his view that emancipation (for the working classes) does not come through gaining (reflexive) knowledge – becoming incorporated into certain modes of perception – , but rather through redefining the world view in a ways that transcends current hegemonic installations.



Ranciere (2005) therefore diagnoses a particular absence of transcendent possibility within Bourdieu's interpretation of social class. He states: "The great strength of the opponents of freedom is that they show it to be inapplicable on the grounds of the inequality of competences and social capacities – the gulf separating working class brutality from bourgeois civility" (p.198). Drawing upon his historical portrait of Louis Garbiel Gauny, a Parisian carpenter writing to Saint-Simonian workers in the 1830s, Ranciere describes the politics he sees as absent in Bourdieu. He describes Gauny's account of himself laying on a parquet floor, gazing at the décor around him; a décor that positions his servitude. Ranciere describes how, in Gauny's account, his writings demonstrate a transcendence of any trappings of habitus: "The acquisition of this aesthetic gaze, the paradoxical philosophy of asceticism that this dispossessed worker draws from it, this torsion of habitus that he imposes upon himself and proposes is also the claim of a human right to happiness that extends the rhetoric of proletarian recruiters, the battle of cottages and castles" (p.199). Ranciere is describing how Gauny, the working class carpenter writing his diary, operates outside of Bourdieu's schema; how Gauny's own philosophising presents a 'cutting up' (Ranciere, 2001; 2005) of any deterministic, un-thought, sense of habitus.

What both these caveats add to the dominant Bourdieuan understanding of gentrification's relationship to social mixing is that, not only does an account of habitus as necessary socio-cultural disconnection lack an understanding of choice and temporality (Bridge, 2001), but – and most importantly – also it mirrors the current pro-social mix urban policy in that it lacks emancipatory potential (Ranciere, 2005). By this, I mean that a perceived common route to progressive reform is shared: the inclusion of working class people into dominant (middle class) modes of being. Hierarchical divisions are both based upon those 'who know' and those that don't, the 'ignorant'. This, I argue below, must be understood as a key element of currently hegemonic thinking centred on the symbolisation of middle class identity.

### **The paradox of middle class inclusion**

In this final section, I want to make the point that the consistent absence of social mixing from gentrifying neighbourhoods is not simply a policy failure or simple function of class reproduction, but rather that this absence is symptomatic of a wider politics. Indeed, the absence of mixing *and* its continued promotion within pro-gentrification policy circles are two-sides of the same coin. As Ranciere's (2005) critique of Bourdieu informs us, the prospect of mixing – in UK policy terms, the generation of social inclusion – is a false one within current social articulations; what Ranciere calls 'division of the sensible'. Ranciere sees emancipation not in the moralistic middle classes, who offer the prospect of a hand up, but rather with the political agency of the working classes; the very group he accuses Bourdieu of assigning to the role of blind victim. A program of inclusion (e.g. New Labour's Urban Renaissance) premised upon a process that is constitutive of middle class identity (i.e. gentrification) – and the current 'division of the sensible' – is therefore antithetical; the prospect of emancipation is trapped within Bourdieu's habitus.

We must therefore locate the politics of pro-social mixing, gentrifying urban policy agendas. What does this policy vision, one which presents the prospect of incorporating the 'excluded' into 'mainstream' (i.e. middle class) society, represent? Particularly when this mainstream society, or

rather with respect to gentrification a particular gentrifying fragment of it (Bridge, 2001), is necessarily defined inter-subjectively; through hierarchical difference. For Slavoj Žižek (2000a), such policy visions represent an ideological distortion of the key social antagonism. He states: “The [...] distortion is discernible in the fact that, today, the only class which, in its ‘subjective’ self-perception, explicitly conceives of and presents itself as a class is the notorious ‘middle-class’ which is precisely the ‘non-class’ (p.186). Here, the middle class is the non-class because it is defined “not only by their allegiance to firm moral and religious standards, but by a double opposition to both ‘extremes’ of the social space” (ibid.). For Žižek (2000a) then, the vision of a middle-class inclusive city (and society) is precisely a hegemonic distortion because it denies the economic and socio-cultural inter-subjectivity that defines it:

“The middle class’ grounds its identity in the exclusion of both extremes which, when they are directly counterposed, give us ‘class antagonism at its purest... the ‘middle class’ is, in its very ‘real’ existence, the *embodied lie*, the denial of antagonism – in psychoanalytical terms, the ‘middle class’ is a *fetish*, the impossible intersection of Left and Right which, by expelling both poles of the antagonism into the position of antisocial ‘extremes’ which corrode the healthy social body [...], presents itself as the neutral common ground of Society” (p. 187)

In his political resolution, Žižek turns to Rancière’s (1999) understanding of ‘politics’: “political conflict designates the tension between the structured social body in which each part has its place, and ‘the part of not part’ which unsettles this order on account of the empty principle of universality” (p. 188).

We can think about this in terms of the Parisian carpenter Gauny, laid on the parquet floor. For Rancière, Gauny written accounts represent an attempt to think beyond the structured social body, to step outside of the ‘division of the sensible’; to think of “the principled equality of all men *qua* speaking beings” (Žižek, 2000a, p. 188). It also, for Rancière, represents the actual occurrence of a working class being operating outside of their habitus (Bourdieu, 1984). Of course, Bourdieu’s concept of symbolic violence may be used to counter Rancière’s criticisms here. Symbolic violence, a concept not often attached to that of the much-used habitus within the gentrification literature, is defined by Bourdieu as: “the violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2004, p. 272). However, it this is not meant to signify pure passivity or acquiescence, rather is it argued “social agents are knowing agents who, even when they are subjected to determinisms, contribute to producing the efficacy of that which determines them insofar as they structure what determines them” (ibid.). For Bourdieu then, the cognitive structures of the agent are necessarily created by the very structures of the world around them, and, as such, there is a fundamental misrecognition; a doxic acceptance of the (social) world. This constitutes a violent self-perpetuation of habitus for Bourdieu. Yet, in terms of overcoming this repressive politics, Rancière’s critique must still stand: that we must not, as Bourdieu and Wacquant state (p. 273), ignore “the *illusio* that leads one to engage in the central games of society”, but rather seek transformative integration. As Žižek (2000a, p.188) states: “This identification of the non-part with the Whole, of the part of society with no properly defined place within it (or resisting the allocated subordinated place within it) with the Universal, is the elementary gesture of politicization”.

The promise of social mixing (and, consequently social inclusion) via gentrification therefore appears nonsense. An urban process that operates to hierarchically structure society, through the articulation of distinction, is being asked to do the exact opposite. But, of course, the spatial imaginary of 'socially mixed neighbourhoods' remains an enticing policy vision: who is against social mixing? Through appealing to the moral consciousness of the enlightened middle classes, all structuring functions are denied. The necessity of socio-economic difference is excluded. What we are left with is a vision of a middle *classed* society, whereby the middle classes are the agents of change; civilising the socially excluded through various means – sharing social capital, providing informal employment opportunity, providing 'good' role models etc. Gentrification's poor record of generating social mixing, its social tectonics, can therefore tell us is that the spatial, neighbourhood-based, imaginary of the policies that promote it do not contain an adequate social imaginary. Put simply, a socially inclusive society will not be achieved through any attempt to include people into a society that, by definition, relies on excluding social differences.

## Conclusion

Of late, the association between gentrification and social mixing has been largely generated by policy makers. This has involved the spatial-thinking of social policy problems, one where the physical segregation of different communities/classes is seen as the barrier to inclusion (see Lees, 2008). In the UK, this has involved problematising both the (spatial) barriers to the poor being 'included' in mainstream society and the barriers to the middle classes 'helping' – a moral obligation often associated with New Labour – those not 'included'. Of course, within the rhetoric of social inclusion we encounter the problem of which aspect of identity is to be subject to inclusion. Above, I have argued that gentrification and the policies which now promote inclusion via gentrification are intimately connected to social class. However, there are aspects of current urban policies that engage with other identities. We must therefore briefly address the relationship between various social fractures and the notion of inclusion. Furthermore, we must also guard against the simple problematisation of segregation, as IM Young (2002) argues: "Group-differentiated residential and associational clustering is not necessarily bad in itself, inasmuch as it many arise from legitimate desires to form and maintain affinity grouping" (p. 197). Here, Young forwards the notion of "differentiated solidarity", where largely cultural differences may result in residential clustering, however this, it is argued, should only occur when it is recognised that all exist "within a set of problems and relationships of structural interdependence that bring with them obligations of justice" (p. 196). Here, Young's correction of an over-arching multicultural liberalism is pivotal, since it highlights how different calls for 'inclusion' must be articulated at different scales and, therefore necessarily, between different 'communities'.

It is therefore necessary to conclude by situating the particularity of the question of inclusion with respect to gentrification. Gentrification's emancipatory potential emanates from the fact it has become one of very few 'voluntary', market-based processes that brings different groups together in the same neighbourhood. This offers a powerful (spatial) metaphor for policy makers because the breaking down of socio-spatial segregation is commonly viewed as a potentially effective mechanism for overcoming exclusion. However, and as IM Young (2002) warns, we should

be wary of simply proposing an all encompassing program of inclusion. Indeed, this is exactly what Zizek (2006) sees as being a key component of contemporary technocratic, liberal multiculturalist politics. For Zizek, liberal multiculturalism represents an impotent political space, where the 'other' (e.g. religious minorities, the poor) is tolerated, but only to the extent that they are not really the 'other'. In Ranciere's (1999) terms, the 'other' is tolerated until they become truly political. Inclusion, in this sense, is only offered so long as the 'other' remains symbolically ordered. When this ordering does not accompany inclusion, exclusion is re-inscribed. As Dean (2007) provocatively argues:

“White Leftist multiculturalists, even as they encourage the flourishing of multiple modes of becoming, find themselves in a similar bind (one in which class difference is inscribed): their support of differentiated cultural traditions means that they oppose the racism, sexism, and religiosity that bind together some poor whites. Just as the superego imperative operates in conservatism to encourage hate, so can it be found in liberalism and Left multiculturalism as well” (p.28)

But Zizek (2000b) goes further than the problematising of inclusion, claiming that the question is transformed in the context of social class.

Class, Zizek (2000b) argues, is not another facet of identity politics. Disagreeing with Laclau, he argues that unlike struggles over gender, race or religion, the political claim around class is not simple inclusion. It is not a demand to get along, to be accepted, or to be respected. Rather, its politics must necessarily be transformative. It is about, in both economic and cultural capital terms, transforming the very social structures that generate this 'difference'; removing the types of structuring structures of domination that are captured in Bourdieu's concept of habitus. The mode of spatial inclusion – the neighbourhood cohabitation of different social classes – promoted in pro- gentrification urban policy programs therefore becomes inadequate not only because gentrification has a dismal record of generating social mixing (and any consequence reductions in inequality), but also because it is not inclusion that is at question. Rather, any politics/policy must be concerned with the excluding and differentiating processes that give rise to gentrification in the first place. If we promote gentrification as a fix to poverty, we are, metaphorically, treating a drug overdose with yet more drugs.

To conclude, it is necessary to make one final point. Throughout this chapter I have taken the relationship between gentrification and social mixing seriously in terms of considering its emancipatory potential; considering its utility as a tool to address socio-economic inequality and resulting problems. It is therefore imperative that we not lose sight of the fact that gentrification has consistently shown itself to be an exacerbator of social inequity (Slater, 2006). Our understanding of state-led gentrification would therefore not be complete without recognising that in order to promote it, the injustices that gentrification has consistently inflicted have had to have been overlooked/displaced. In doing so, we might certainly apply Zizek's (2003) understanding of postmodern (un)ethics:

“On today's market, we find a whole series of products deprived of their malignant property: coffee without caffeine, cream without fat, beer without alcohol... And the list goes on: what about virtual sex without sex, the Colin Powell doctrine of warfare with no casualties (on our

side, of course) as warfare without warfare... up to today's tolerant liberal multiculturalism as an experience of the Other deprived of its Otherness [...]? (p. 96)

Might we add 'gentrification without class or displacement' to this list? It would certainly seem like that is indeed where urban policy is at. And if it is, perhaps we should be talking not about social mixing and inclusion, but rather about social ethics and a city without gentrification.

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