

“Sorry for the noise, we’re just trying to gentrify”

This paper aims the exploration of the tension resulting from the residential and the cultural forms of gentrification. We are also interested in the emerging tools designed to regulate the process of re-qualifying places. In its classical definition, scholars identify the residential strategies as the main motor of gentrification. More recently studies consider other forms of gentrification including different forms of social upgrading, actors and spaces. Recently, the process of urban regeneration has also been initiated or accompanied by cultural projects.

In ten years, what newspapers present as the most squatted city in Europe, Geneva saw a major part of its alternative places closed by authorities due to real-estate developments and political regime change's. People start to get organised by creating associations for opening cultural and nightlife places. For example, an abandoned and hidden roof of a public infrastructure formerly occupied by people on the margins of society has been recently re-qualified to a summer bar with daily cultural activities. A new use involving a new population, led to the displacement of the former. If the bar aims to promote local culture and generate social cohesion in the neighbourhood, it has not been received in that way by the newcomers asking for its closure. Indeed, formerly known for its abandoned old fabrics, squats and popular buildings, the area gained in attractivity with the construction of new high standing buildings.

For further investigation, we will consider the emerging tools to regulate the process of gentrification, the definition of specific cultural and nightlife zones or new shapes of institutions resulting from the partnership between the State and the civil society.

Keywords: Urban policy, Gentrification, Governance, Geneva, Culture.