Royal Holloway Geography for Schools Lecture Series

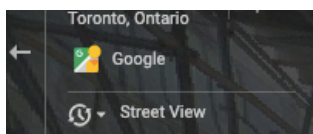# Gentrification & The Global City
Dr Oli Mould

How can we spot gentrification, and what does it mean to you?

We probably all know what gentrification is on one level, but identifying, analysing and explaining it quite another. There are many different ways to 'measure' gentrification – from financial statistics on rent, to maps of social demographics to artistic representations – and so these two activities will give you a taster of how you can go about 'spotting' gentrification based on the ideas from the lecture (i.e. rent gaps and physical changes to the urban landscape).

Activity 1:

Go to Google Street view and land on a city of your choosing. It could be where you live, or perhaps a big global city like London. Chose somewhere that is relatively busy and has a lot of buildings and shop fronts. Take a stroll around using the directional buttons you see on the road.

Once you've familiarised yourself, use the time machine function on the top left of the screen to chart the development of the area (pictured here to the left). Has the street view changed? Has there been any new buildings built? What kind of other signs of gentrification do you notice? Or are there any at all?

The street view function lets you go back in time only a few years, so go to https://www.historypin.org/en/ and see if you can go even further back. What has

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changed over a longer period of time? Can you see anything that has stayed the same? Why might that be?

Activity 2:

Watch these two short films about gentrification. One is a comedy sketch from Saturday Night Live that satirizes middle class life in the now hyper-gentrified parts of Brooklyn. The other is a melancholy grime poem about London.

Brooklyn: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wAsBta25OGQ

London: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e98KnhIHE5M

What are the 'themes' of the two videos? Are you able to spot any similarities between them in what they are saying about the gentrification process? What kind of artistic cues (shots, costumes, words etc.) have been used to convey what kinds of gentrification? How is the rent gap represented in each? Which one do you prefer?