

The Sacred and the Urban: The Case for Social-Justice Gentrifiers

Colin E. Suchland

Dr. Clarence Lo, Thesis Supervisor

Abstract

Building on research of both social movements and urban sociology, this study extends three core proposals: 1) that groups of “social-justice gentrifiers” have in recent decades purposely and collectively settled in urban American neighborhoods; 2) that these groups are differentiated from the “traditional gentry” by the centrality of religious and moral convictions in their choice of living spaces; and 3) that these groups – though not always affiliated with structured social-action networks – constitute a recognizable social movement operating at the level of individual neighborhoods. Additionally, this study suggests a broader project to evaluate the impact of “social-justice gentrifiers” on the processes of urban redevelopment and community change.