MAPPING THE GENTRIFICATION OF CANADIAN CITIES 1961-2021

Alan Walks and Sean Grisdale

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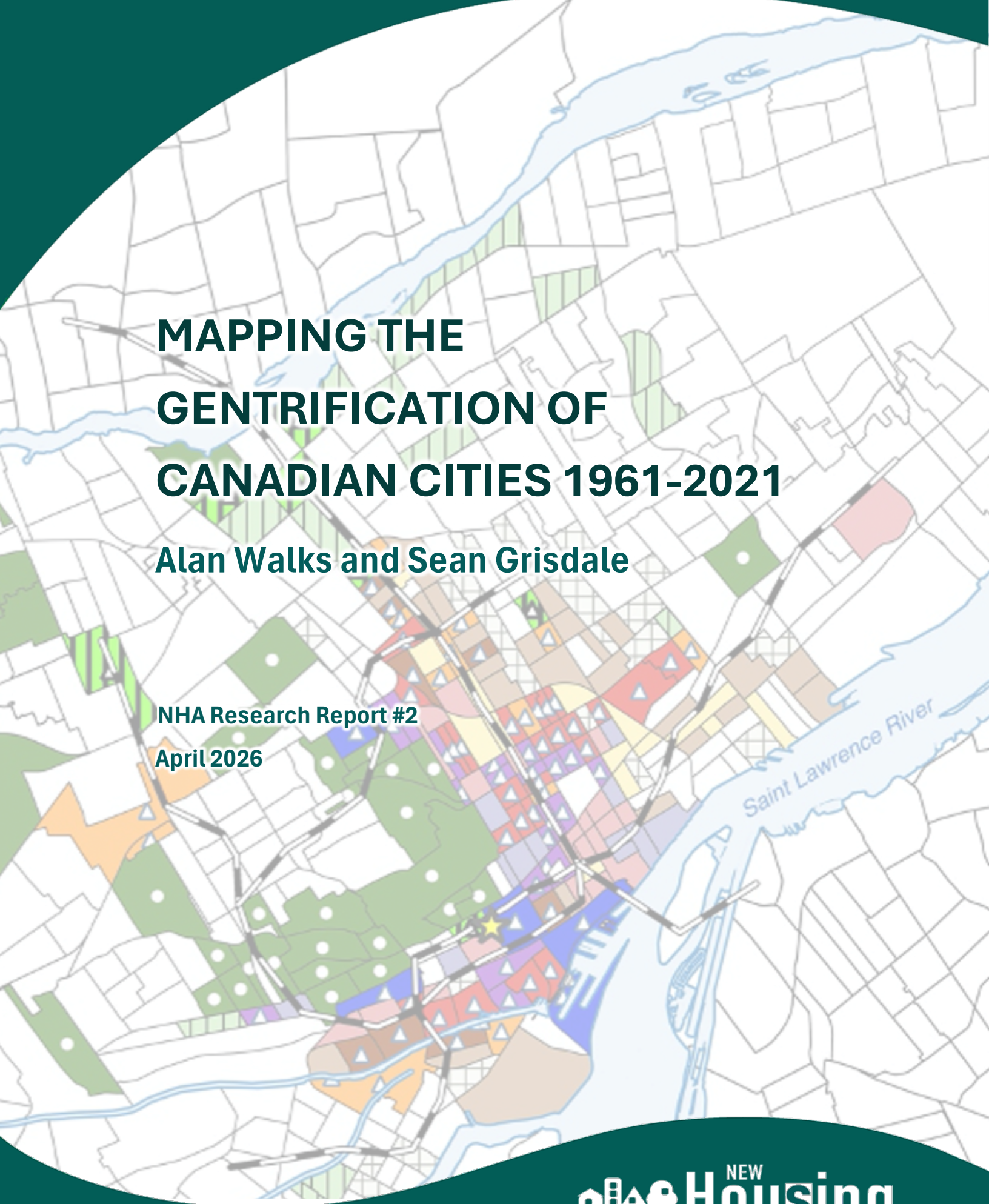

NEW Housing Alternatives

Mapping the Gentrification of Canadian Cities 1961 - 2021

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About New Housing Alternatives

New Housing Alternatives (NHA), University of Toronto, is an interdisciplinary research partnership that is co-led by Prof. Susannah Bunce and Prof. Alan Walks, and funded by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Partnership Grant. Through the collaborative research of academic and community partners, the NHA examines the problems with Canada's current housing system and identifies ways to transform this system through an exploration of housing alternatives. Our overarching goal is to conduct policy and community-relevant research to help transform Canada's housing system into one that is affordable, equitable, grounded in human rights, and honours and promotes Indigenous people's land rights. Because this report was drafted by scholars whose data in part derives from work completed through the NHA partnership, this report draws on research supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

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Mapping the Gentrification of Canadian Cities 1961 – 2021

Executive Summary

This report assesses the status of gentrification in the inner cities of 11 Canadian metro areas as of 2021. Our findings update and expand on the research of Walks and Maaranen (2008) who used census data to map gentrification in Canada's three largest metropolitan areas (Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver) between 1961 and 2001. The report updates this analysis by adding mapping of the advance of gentrification in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver between 2001 and 2021. We also expand the analysis by assessing gentrification between 1961 and 2021 in an additional 8 Canadian cities, including the next six largest metropolitan areas (Calgary, Ottawa, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Quebec City, Hamilton), as well as the coastal capital cities of Halifax and Victoria. In doing so, this report maps out where gentrification in each of these cities is located, where it began, and how it spread. Statistical tables document the number and proportion of neighbourhoods (census tracts) within the inner cities of each study city that have experienced gentrification, and whether this remained incomplete as of 2021 or was by then complete.

All cities assessed in this report saw gentrification expand into new parts of the inner city between 2001 and 2021. In most cities, gentrification remains incomplete in the majority of neighbourhoods identified as experiencing gentrification in the last two decades, as average incomes remain below the metro average in these areas. However, the analysis shows that with time gentrification eventually creates exclusive high-incomes neigbourhoods that raise housing and land values beyond the means of most people, remove much-needed affordable rental housing from the inner city, and displace lower-income households.

Gentrification is now the main form of neighbourhood change occurring within the pre-World War II inner cities of Canada's four largest cities (Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver and Calgary). While Toronto has the highest proportion of inner-city neighbourhoods that are gentrifying (61%), Vancouver has the highest proportion of inner-city neighbourhoods that have completed the gentrification process (31%) and in Vancouver a larger proportion of inner-city neighbourhoods were already elite or middle-class neighbourhoods such that there is a smaller proportion of its neighbourhoods that could be candidates for gentrification.

Gentrification is a more recent, but growing, phenomenon within the inner cities of the remaining seven mid-sized cities assessed in this study. For the most part, gentrification is more recent and generally weaker in most of Canada's mid-sized cities, and the process remains incomplete in the majority of inner-city neighbourhoods in these cities. While these cities may offer lessons for slowing gentrification and preventing the displacement of lower-income households, these findings also demonstrate a growing divergence between the cost of shelter and local incomes in these areas that needs addressing.

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Mapping the Gentrification of Canadian Cities 1961 - 2021

Introduction

The gentrification of inner-city neighbourhoods creates problems for the availability of affordable rental housing across metropolitan areas, as well as rising land and housing values more generally. It often portends the eviction of low-income households from the very neighbourhoods where they are best able to access employment, schools, transit, and necessary social services. Yet the timing and geography of gentrification remains under-studied, while mid-sized cities have received even less scholarly attention. In 2008, Richard Maaranen and one of the current authors (Alan Walks) conducted an empirical study of gentrification in the largest metropolitan areas of Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver between 1961 and 2001(Walks and Maaranen 2008). Analyzing Canadian census data from 1961 through to 2021, this report updates that analysis to see how gentrification has proceeded in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver in the two decades since 2001, while also expanding this analysis to look at gentrification in an additional 8 large to mid-size cities, including Calgary, Edmonton, Ottawa-Gatineau, Winnipeg, Quebec City, Hamilton, Halifax and Victoria.

Our findings show that gentrification is the dominant form of neighbourhood change in the inner cities of Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver and Calgary, and that it is a significant and growing trend in the remaining 8 cities. We start by outlining the definitions of gentrification and neighbourhood change that inform our analysis in this paper while also summarizing more recent literature looking at new trends and technologies that are influencing the nature of gentrification since the turn of the millennium. We then outline our methodology for the analysis, building on previous work documented in Walks and Maaranen (2008), before describing our findings. Next, we discuss the implications of our findings and conclude with some thoughts on future directions of study. While the present study provides important historical context for understanding the gentrification process in Canada's smaller cities, we suggest that future work would benefit from studying trends at a smaller scales of analysis such as the dissemination area and through qualitative research.

Studying Gentrification

There is by now an extensive literature about the origins, processes, theories, and geographies of gentrification (Lees, Slater, and Wyly, 2008). Ruth Glass is not only credited with coining the term 'gentrification' but also detecting the first instances of gentrification in London, UK (Glass 1964). Glass argued that gentrification involves neighbourhood changes on three different fronts: social (as professionals with higher incomes displace working-class residents), tenure (as rental units are de-converted to home ownership), and cost of dwelling (as rents, house prices, and land values increase as gentrification progresses). Chester Hartman's research in San Francisco showed that similar processes were occurring in the late 1960s in that city (Hartman 1974), and soon scholars were noticing gentrification in many inner-city neighbourhoods of large cities in the Global North.

Gentrification is a process associated with revaluation of inner city areas in the post-World War II era, in which landowners have been able to capitalize on what Smith (1979) calls the "rent gap." For

Smith, the rent gap describes the difference between current rents flowing through land (also known as "capitalized land rent") and potential rents that can likely be achieved following reinvestment in the land (commonly captured by the concept of “highest and best use”). In the 1970s, Smith observed that rent gaps were largely driven by sustained disinvestment by landowners in the deindustrializing and often racialized areas of the inner city. While this was driving down rents in inner city neighborhoods, these areas, with their proximity to amenities and to the downtown core also carried latent desirability for artists and middle-class workers increasingly being employed in post-industrial and white-collar office work downtown. However, Smith (1996) also later noted that rent gaps could be opened up in the other direction, not only through disinvestment, but through increases in the upper limit of potential land rents. That is, the potential “highest and best use” of land could be driven up through phenomena like nearby investments in infrastructure or amenities, or through changes in zoning that opened up land to uses that were previously restricted (Teresa, 2019).

In Canada, as in some cities in the United States (US), early forms of gentrification in the 1960s and 1970s were often called ‘white painting’ given that an early telltale sign involved the painting over of coal soot-ridden exteriors of otherwise congenial Victorian-era homes (Bourne 1967; Ley 1996). But this stage lasted only a short time, as sand blasting and other forms of cleaning soon took over while coal was phased out as a home heating fuel. Stage models of gentrification were developed to understand such evolutions in the 1970s and 1980s, with the literature at the time typically suggesting four stages to the process (Clay 1979; Gale 1984; Ley 1986, 1992). In the ‘pioneer’ stage, artists and other counter-culture types who may even have lower incomes than existing residents move into a neighbourhood and start to make the neighbourhood trendy. In a second stage, students and marginal professionals follow the artists and their demand for inner-city space begins to raise rents and displace the working class, while also attracting the attention of flippers and contractors. In the third stage, rental units are de-converted to home ownership as middle-class professionals displace tenants and significant capital investment chases high profit margins. In the fourth stage even the middle-class is priced out as house prices and land values continue rising. Lees (2003) suggests a fifth stage of ‘super’ gentrification arose subsequently, in which some fully gentrified neighbourhoods (such as Brooklyn Heights in New York City) become re-renovated for a very high-income global elite who then displace even the upper-middle class professionals who came to cluster in these areas.

Initially, gentrification (typically) took years to move through these different stages, albeit at different speeds depending on the local context. Up to that point, the inner cities of most metropolitan areas in the Global North had been suffering from the combined effects of deindustrialization and suburbanization of the middle class for most of the post-war era. This was the basis for claiming that gentrification represented only “islands of renewal in seas of decline” in the early 1980s (Berry, 1985). This had changed, however, by the 2000s. From this point gentrification of the inner city became a more globalized and generalized phenomenon (Smith, 2002), not only reversing the metaphor to “seas of renewal” (Lees, Slater and Wyly 2008), but drastically shortening the time spent in each stage, or even subverting the stage model altogether (Hackworth and Smith 2001). Especially in those “global cities” benefiting from financialization, such as New York City and London, neighbourhoods that had previously experienced only limited upgrading were increasingly targeted for major capital investments, often at the behest of the state, while rapidly displacing existing

working class residents and fashioning new neighbourhoods for high-net-worth households (Hackworth and Smith 2001).

In the 1990s, the instant creation of new high-income residential neighbourhoods in former industrial areas - which before then had few actual residents – also led to the coining of the term “new-build gentrification”, often aligned with the development of new high-density housing in condominium form (Davidson and Lees 2005). More recently, Aalbers (2019) argues that since the 2008 global financial crisis, we can distinguish a fifth wave of gentrification shaped by the dynamics of financialized capitalism. These dynamics include high rates of speculation and leverage in housing markets, the rise of large, global, corporate landlords and platform capitalist firms like Airbnb, the consolidation of transnational ownership of inner-city housing and the normalization of gentrification by the state. Short-term rental platforms like Airbnb are said to have raised the potential profits from inner-city redevelopment and facilitated new rent gaps not dependent upon disinvestment (Wachsmuth and Weisler, 2018; Grisdale, 2021).

In Canadian cities, early examples of gentrification were typically observed close to subway stations, hospitals and universities, and include the Plateau de Montreal and Vieux Montreal down to the port (Podmore 1998; Germaine and Rose 2000), the neighbourhoods of Cabbagetown (originally called Don Vale), Yorkville, and Riverdale in Toronto (Dantas 1988; Sabourin 1994), and the Fairview Slopes and Kitsilano areas of Vancouver (Ley 1986; Mills 1988, 1993). By the early 1990s, gentrification was even occurring during times of recession and in neighbourhoods that had previously not been targeted for investment, prompting Ley (1996) to suggest that virtually any inner-city neighbourhood could potentially be subject to gentrification from that point on. The subsequent encroaching gentrification into Parkdale, one of Toronto’s poorest and most divested inner-city neighbourhoods, confirmed this potential for the larger cities (Slater 2004; Whitzman and Slater 2006), while the work of Millward (1988) and Figueroa (1995) demonstrated how gentrification had selectively emerged in smaller cities. Of course, gentrification is but one sub-set of the process of neighbourhood upgrading, and it is important not to confuse all forms of upgrading with gentrification (Bunting 1987; Millward 1988).

Walks and Maaranen (2008) sought to use the insights from Ruth Glass (1964) to fashion a rigorous definition and empirics of gentrification, which distinguishes the process of gentrification from other, different, forms of neighbourhood change. The latter includes upgrading of traditionally elite/upper-middle-class neighbourhoods of homeowners, which should not be confused with the process of gentrification which necessarily involves the displacement of working-class populations and the deconversion of rental properties. Gentrification is such a pernicious process in part because of this displacement, and as it eats away at the stock of affordable rental housing that inner city areas have traditionally provided (Walks and Maaranen 2008; see Mah’s (2021) excellent work on Detroit). The result of this is most directly visible in the form of evictions, but also occurs more covertly as local shifts in prices for the cost of housing and other amenities exclude the possibility for certain people to stay in their neighbourhood (Marcuse, 1985). Upgrading of elite neighbourhoods, meanwhile, typically does not involve wholesale working class displacement nor rental deconversion, because high-income professionals have always made up the majority of the resident populations in elite neighbourhoods, and they typically contain little affordable rental stock (and if they do contain rental housing, it is often in the form of purpose-built rental units).

The methodology also sought to differentiate gentrification from a temporary drop of social status and house prices, often associated with the aging of early suburban neighbourhoods built for the middle class; gentrification necessarily involves a neighbourhood where the working class could afford to live, usually with an affordable and plentiful rental housing stock. Those instances in which a neighbourhood was built for the middle class, but through aging saw its social status and income levels drop temporarily below the metropolitan area for at least a decade before witnessing renewed upgrading, were labelled "recapture", which distinguished this form of neighbourhood change from gentrification. Those neighbourhoods that were experiencing gentrification but which continued to house working class populations, such that the mean income never rose above the metropolitan average, were called 'incomplete' gentrification. These are differentiated from those neighbourhoods that appear to have evolved through most of the stages of gentrification to become a high-income neighbourhood, at which point its gentrification is defined as 'complete'. Walks and Maaranen's (2008) initial research tracked gentrification in the three largest cities up until 2001.

Post-Millenium Gentrification

While gentrification unfolds in diverse ways within different Canadian cities, a number of new dynamics have emerged since 2001 with significant bearing on the pace, characteristics and geography of this process over these two decades. Prices for housing and land have ballooned in Canadian cities since the early 2000s (Walks and Simone 2022), especially within many inner-city areas. However, a range of processes have been researched as drivers of this dynamic. As Aalbers (2019) indicates with his concept of fifth-wave gentrification, the 2008 global financial crisis has generally represented a significant turning point in the dynamics of housing around the world.

First, as different cities have pursued densification, often on the basis of green or sustainable development principles, the condominium has come to assert a definitive place in the Canada's 21st century urban development. While this is most visible in larger cities, such as Montreal and especially Toronto and Vancouver, Canada's mid-sized cities have also experienced turns towards inner city intensification through market-based development of private high-rise housing over the last two decades. In this way, new-build gentrification or "condo-fication" has arguably become the main form in which gentrification has occurred during this time (Lehrer and Wieditz, 2009; Lehrer and Pantalone, 2018; Grisdale and Walks, 2022).

The move towards densification and urban "revitalization" has also been attended by renewed efforts to build out new green infrastructures in Canadian cities under the rubric of 'smart growth' (Bunce 2004). In turn, the last 20 years have seen a turn towards transit-oriented forms of development that aim to pair market driven high-rise development forms with new transit and parks infrastructures. As this development has rarely included new forms of affordable housing or efforts to prevent displacement of adjacent locals, new build gentrification is also often a form of "transit-induced" (Jones and Ley, 2016; Lewis, 2022; Mayers et al, 2024; Bardaka, 2024), "environmental" (Bunce 2018; March, 2025; Ezvan, 2025) or "green" gentrification (Quinton et al, 2022; Sax, Nesbitt and Hagerman, 2023; Frendo, 2025), with residents displaced to make way for new, privately developed infrastructures and housing. This is often undertaken in concert with waterfront development (Bunce 2009, 2018). Research also shows how existing affordable, purpose-built rental stock in densifying and transit accessible areas has attracted investment from financialized firms

putting housing pressure on existing lower income and racialized tenants as firms seek higher income tenants through renovations and evictions (August and Walks, 2018; St-Hilaire, Brunila and Wachsmuth, 2023; August and Mah, 2025; Lewis and Panou, 2026; Lewis, Panou and Maaranen, 2026). While certain of these mechanisms are new, there is a history of gentrification being led by state investments in transportation infrastructure and housing (Smith 1996).

Additionally, the substantial roll out of the digital economy over this time has significantly reshaped the boundaries of both the real estate and tourism sectors, facilitating the expansion of gentrification as a "global urban strategy" (Smith, 2002). This has included the rise of short-term rental platforms like Airbnb which have heightened the pace of tourism-induced gentrification, also known as touristification, and raised the profitability of inner-city land (and hence, rent gaps) (Wachsmuth and Weisler, 2018; Grisdale, 2021; Cocola-Gant, 2023; Bosma and van Doorn, 2024). Meanwhile, the emergence of property technologies (aka 'proptech') (Galster, 2024) and landlord technologies like digital assessment and investment tools, online real estate websites and social media intermediaries, pricing (price fixing) technologies (like RealPage's YieldStar service), digital doorperson/butler services and other property management systems. Research continues to show how these technological developments have bearing on processes of neighbourhood change and gentrification, whether by heightening surveillance, exclusion and eviction of lower income and marginalized tenants or generally intensifying the pace of commodification in housing and land markets (Sadowski, 2020; Fields and Rogers, 2021; Fields, 2022; Wainwright, 2023; McElroy and Vergerio, 2022; Galster, 2024; McElroy, 2024). It is as yet unclear how the incorporation of large language models (LLMs) into the broader economy will have bearing on these processes but it is likely that they will be employed in the service of further intensification.

New forms of mobility are also at play in processes of neighbourhood change since 2000. Over the last decade, Canada has seen its international student population triple, with research on "studentification" identifying complex overlaps between gentrification and patterns of student population growth and institutional investment adjacent to universities (Smith, 2005; Hubbard, 2009; Moos et al, 2019; Revington and August, 2020; Sotomayor and Zheng, 2024). At the same time, the rise and normalization of work-from-home arrangements are liable to play a factor in dynamics of neighbourhood change moving forward (Ding and Hwang, 2022; McCollum, 2025), with reports of heightened housing pressures on small and mid-sized cities like Halifax (McGugan, 2022) as salaried workers are increasingly unmoored from locating in large urban centres like the GTA, we are seeing the rise of practices like 'digital nomadism' and 'geoarbitrage,' though the consequences of these dynamics remain subjects for further enquiry (López-Gay et al, 2021; Holleran, 2022; Peña and Pérez, 2025; Sciuva, 2025). Indeed, the implications of some of these latter post-pandemic phenomena are not likely to be visible in the data for Canadian cities until the 2026 Census is conducted and released.

Research over the last 20 years also shows that processes of gentrification have gone hand in hand with processes of socio-spatial polarization. Since the early 2000s, the Neighbourhood Change Research Project (NCRP) based at the University of Toronto has produced a body of research documenting growing trends of socio-spatial polarization within Canadian cities, including Toronto (Hulchanski, 2010; Walks 2020), Vancouver (Ley and Lynch, 2012, 2020), Montreal (Rose and Twigge-Molecey, 2013; Leloup and Rose 2020), Halifax (Grant and Ramos 2020; Prouse et al, 2014), Hamilton (Harris, Dunn and Wakefield, 2015; Harris 2020), Winnipeg (Distasio and Kaufman, 2015;

Distasio and Zell 2020), and Calgary (Townshend, Miller and Evans, 2018; Townshend, Miller and Cook 2020)[1].

The 'Three Cities model' developed by the NCRP and first advanced in Hulchanski (2010) looks at the shifting geography of spatial patterning in cities by race and class. This research shows that cities like Toronto exhibit spatial clustering of people by income into three distinct "cities within a city", with tracts forming part of City 1 (those 'gaining ground') seeing income ratios substantially rise since 1970, while tracts in City 2 (those 'holding ground') have been relatively stable over this time, and tracts in City 3 ('those 'losing ground') have seen their relative incomes greatly decline over time (Walks 2020). In large cities like Toronto, areas characterized as part of City 1 have been found to be defined by white, higher income consolidation in both the outer suburbs and the inner city near transit networks. Meanwhile, the "in-between" City 2 which once occupied the inner suburbs has been shrinking, and City 3 defined by declining incomes and racialized populations has been growing, particularly in the city's inner suburbs (Hulchanski, 2010; Walks 2020).

While the Three Cities model exemplifies patterns of neighbourhood change occurring in large, rich cities like Toronto, Vancouver and Calgary, it was found to have more limited explanatory power in cities experiencing less rapid growth and lower levels of income inequality, like Montreal (Rose and Twigge-Molecey 2013), Winnipeg (Distasio and Kaufman, 2015) and Halifax (Prouse et al, 2014; Grant and Ramos 2020). Analysis in Grant, Walks and Ramos (2020) finds that while socio-spatial polarization has occurred in Halifax and is manifesting in the suburbanization of poverty and some consolidation of higher incomes in the inner city, this process has been less extreme than in larger cities, while showing less of an overlap with processes of immigration and racialization. Similarly, both Prouse et al (2014) and Kaida et al (2020) have argued the Three Cities Model is not an entirely adequate framework for studying socio-spatial polarization in smaller Atlantic cities like Halifax, Moncton, Charlottetown and St. Johns, as census tracts are too large to capture relative change across neighbourhoods that are less dense. This fact must be taken into consideration as a limit in our own analysis of gentrification. Furthermore, like Victoria, another smaller, coastal capital city, Halifax has a higher proportion of transient and ageing in place populations, including military and university populations, that add confounding factors to studies of neighbourhood change on the Three Cities model.

In a separate analysis, Breau, Shin and Burkhart (2018) identify a spatial patterning along a "rich-poor-rich" gradient characterized neighbourhood change in all three of Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver, whereby the outer suburbs and inner city have consolidated into relatively higher income areas while their increasingly racialized post-war, inner suburbs have seen relative incomes decline. Indeed, where gentrification of the inner city by high income groups is present in Canadian cities, it has gone hand in hand with the suburbanization of poverty in a pattern whereby a "a new socio-spatial order within cities has been developing, with stronger and more rigid divisions based on greater inequality" in a process that is highly correlated with race and immigration status (Grant,

[1] See Grant, Walks and Ramos (2020) for a comprehensive summary of this project.

Walks and Ramos 2020, p. 6; see also Pham 2024). Breau, Shin and Burkhart (2018) found these patterns less pronounced in mid-size cities like Edmonton, Winnipeg and Quebec City – though they do identify pockets of increasing poverty in these cities (Breau et al, 2018). In Winnipeg (Distasio and Kaufman, 2015; Distasio and Zell 2020), Hamilton (Harris, Dunn and Wakefield, 2015; Harris 2020) and to some extent Edmonton (Breau, Shin and Burkhart 2018), dynamics characteristic of City 3 ('losing ground' neighbourhoods) have deepened in some inner city areas, while Quebec City has seen relatively little change in the distribution of income across neighbourhoods over time (Breau et al, 2018).

Meanwhile, the precise geographies of division can be very distinct in different cities. In Calgary and Ottawa-Gatineau, incomes are found to be polarized along an east-west divide, while in Edmonton (Breau et al, 2018) and Winnipeg (Distasio and Kaufman, 2015) there is more of a north-south divide, with areas in City 3 consolidating in the inner city and extending from north/northwest of the river in both cities. Drawing on a similar methodology looking at Canada's eight largest cities (Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Calgary, Ottawa-Gatineau, Edmonton, Quebec City and Winnipeg), Ilic and Sawada (2021) note how the middle-income cohort within each city has been steadily eroded since 1971 in every city except Vancouver and Quebec City, with a greater proportion of residents from the middle-income cohort entering the lower-income cohort over time.

These trends raise questions about how gentrification has progressed since this earlier research. The current report draws on the methodology developed by Walks and Maaranen (2008) to analyze the continued evolution of gentrification up through 2021. After discussing the methodology employed to track and compare gentrification, this report presents maps and tables showing the extent and development of gentrification as of the 2021 census. These data are directly comparable to the maps and tables showing the extent of gentrification in 2001 (Walks and Maaranen 2008). As these findings make plain, gentrification has by the early 2020s spread across many, and in some cases most, of the older neighbourhoods of many large Canadian cities, confirming Ley's (1996) warning about the continued march of gentrification across the central cities.

Methodology: Identifying Gentrification

This report identifies gentrification and other forms of neighbourhood upgrading drawing on the rigorous multi-part methodology originally developed in Walks and Maaranen (2008). That study took as its starting point the insights of Ruth Glass to track changes in key indicators across neighbourhoods. Glass (1964) noted that gentrification involved changes in three related, but different, sets of variables within neighbourhoods: the social status of residents, the tenure of the housing stock, and rising rents and land values that drove up the cost of dwelling. Glass (1964), and others who developed the stage models also noted that the initial pioneer stage often involved in-migration of artists, even before rents, incomes, housing tenure, and other indicators of social status began to change (Clay 1979; Gale 1984).

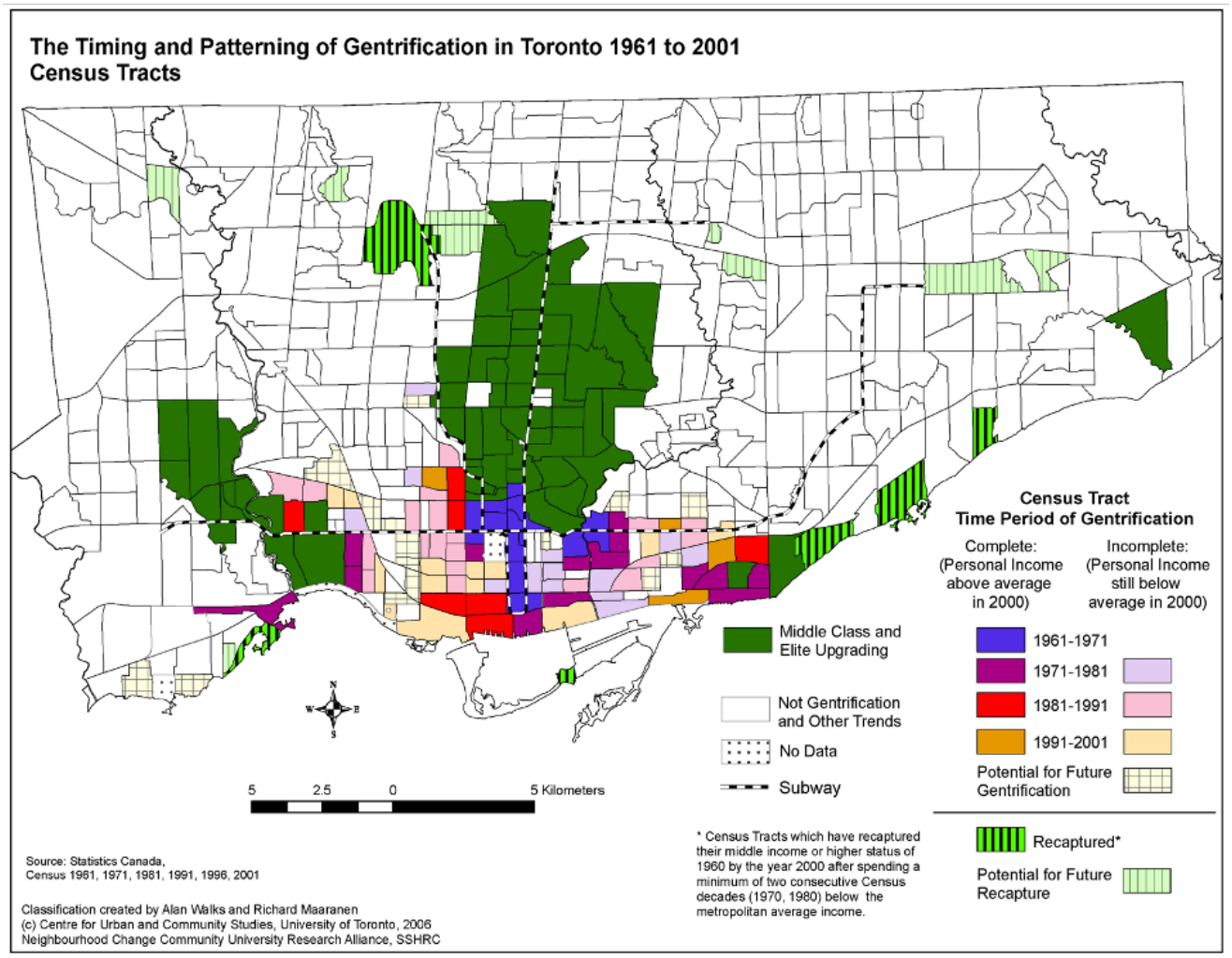
These were the insights that inspired the initial research on gentrification by Walks and Maaranen (2008), which this current report is extending up to the present and across new cities. Using census tracts as the units of analysis, that initial research included variables for change across each decade in the proportion of residents who are artists, change in social status, change in rent levels, change in

house prices, and change in housing tenure (proportion of housing units being rented out). Statistics Canada developed census tracts as spatial units that serve as proxies for neighbourhoods. Census tracts are spatial units in which populations are typically between 4,000 and 8,000 people, and which follow common roadways, railways, and water bodies (rivers and lakes). Census tracts take a neighbourhood-like form, especially within older built-up areas of cities where they often mirror the idea of extended city blocks. In very low-density rural or suburban areas, census tracts can be very large, but our analysis of gentrification does not, for the most part, include such outlying low-density areas.

Walks and Maaranen (2008) began by including key census data variables within census tracts within a principal components analysis (PCA), and using the latter to determine the extent and onset of gentrification. PCA is a statistical exercise which reduces multiple variables to a smaller number of principal components. In this case, the PCA identified blocks of census tracts that went through similar changes in the above variables over the decades between 1961 and 2001. The components of the PCA identified census tracts that showed similar patterns in these changes across decades, with certain components of these typically revealing an initial increase of artists in one decade, followed by changes in social status, housing tenure, and rents/house prices in subsequent decades. Some components therefore identified tracts where upgrading began in the 1960s and 1970s, while other components identified tracts where upgrading began in the 1980s, and 1990s. Other tracts, meanwhile, experienced downgrading/decline in particular decades, or showed little upgrading or downgrading, or mixed trends toward aspects of both in different decades.

The components that showed a trajectory of upgrading were then used to identify those tracts that became candidates for gentrification. These tracts were then further analyzed. Those tracts that began the period (that is, in 1961) with high levels of social status and above-average incomes, and which then demonstrated further upgrading, were labelled as ‘elite consolidation/upgrading’. Those tracts that began the period with high levels of social status and above-average incomes, but subsequently saw incomes and social status dip below the average for one or two decades before rising again in the 1980s or 1990s were labelled ‘elite/middle class recapture’. Those tracts whose trajectories changed course in similar fashion but not enough by 2001 to fit the criteria for ‘recapture’ are labelled as ‘potential future recapture’. In contrast to those patterns, the tracts that began the period with below-average indices of social status and below-average incomes and rents, but which subsequently upgraded in the ensuing decades, were then labelled as ‘gentrifying’. If one of the latter tracts ended the period (in 2001) with an average income above the metropolitan average, it was seen as an example of ‘complete gentrification’. If, on the other hand, a tract still had a mean income below the metropolitan average by 2001, even after experiencing rising income, social status, and rents in line with other tracts that were gentrifying, it was labelled as ‘incomplete gentrification’ (in 2001). The map in Figure 1 below shows how census tracts (as proxies for neighbourhoods) fit into these different categories as of 2001 in inner-city Toronto.

Figure 1: Timing and Patterning of Gentrification in Toronto up to 2001



Source: Walks and Maaranen, 2008

The current report draws on this methodology to further identify gentrification across the inner cities within census tracts, and to fill in the ensuing years between 2001 and 2021. For this research we did not conduct a new PCA. Instead, we used the average rate of change in social status, rents, and incomes from the original PCA conducted by Walks and Maaranen (2008), and compared the changes since 2001 to that average rate of change before 2001. Tracts were compared over time using consistent tract boundaries. While Walks and Maaranen (2008) harmonized census data to 2001 census tract boundaries using aerial interpolation, the current paper mobilizes the *Canadian Longitudinal Tract Database* (Allen and Taylor, 2018; Allen, n.d.) to apportion census data from previous years to 2021 tracts. Allen and Taylor's (2018) method combines both dasymetric areal interpolation and population weighting using census dissemination blocks to provide a more precise allocation of data to 2021 tracts than that provided by simple area-weighted interpolation techniques. This allows for tract data in 2001 to be apportioned to the 2021 census tract boundaries in those cases in which there are splits (including multi-way splits) or boundary changes, facilitating accurate comparison across censuses. Those tracts that show a rate of change in the study variables during the 2001-2021 period (comparing the 2021 census data and the 2001 census data), which

were above the average rate of change in the pre-2001 PCA, are then labelled as upgrading. Then, the specific sub-set of these upgrading tracts that began the period in 1961 with below-average incomes, rents, and social status indices are identified as gentrifying. This method allows for identification of those tracts that began gentrifying after 2001, in addition to those tracts already highlighted by Walks and Maaranen (2008) as starting the gentrification process before 2001.

Note that this analysis does not divide the 2001-2021 period into two decades (2001-2011 and 2011-2021) because the long form of the 2011 census, which would have included variables for income, occupation, rents, and housing tenure, was cancelled by the Stephen Harper-led Conservative federal government at the time (a decision that was reversed once the Justin Trudeau-led Liberal federal government was elected in 2015, so a proper long-form census was subsequently conducted in 2016 and 2021). While a voluntary online National Household Survey (NHS) was conducted in 2011 (instead of the long-form census) that allowed for some estimation of these variables at the national and provincial scales, there was not enough data collected through the NHS to provide robust estimates at the census tract level. Because of this, we could not use census tract data for 2011, and we instead chose to analyze change over the twenty-year period between the 2001 census and the 2021 census. This allowed us to classify census tracts as gentrifying in the '2000s', with those tracts ending the period (in 2021) with both average per-capita and average household incomes above the metropolitan average labelled as 'complete gentrification', while those tracts in which either of those income indices remained below the metropolitan average in 2021 are categorized as 'incomplete' gentrification.

Tracts that were already categorized in 2001 were also assessed to see if their category changed. In general there were three ways that this could occur. First of all, some of the tracts in which gentrification was still incomplete in 2001 had experienced continued upgrading such that by 2021 their gentrification status was now sufficiently complete, with their mean neighbourhood incomes above the metropolitan average. These tracts were then relabelled as complete gentrification. Second, as new housing has been built in various neighbourhoods over time, some census tracts have been split into two (or more) new census tracts. In many cases this means adding new tracts, and each of the splits could (and likely will) have subsequently changed over the period from the status of the original parent tract. This is particularly true in those neighbourhoods (census tracts) where new high-density condominium buildings have been developed, which implies completely new housing units and new populations. Third, those tracts whose initial growth of artists and social status suggested back in 2001 that they might experience "potential future gentrification" (and were labelled as such in 2001), as well as other neighbourhoods that had yet to show sufficient signs of gentrification (typically classified in the 'other' or 'mixed' trends categories) were examined to see if they had gentrified in/by the 2000s. In many cases, our methodology confirmed that, as expected, many of these tracts that were labelled as 'potential future gentrification' did in fact gentrify after 2001, and thus are labelled as gentrifying in the 2000s in our updated maps. For a small number of tracts, trajectories over time - including the 2000s - revealed a pattern of slow gentrification that may have begun earlier than the year 2000 and so were labelled as such (but for which the changes were not significant enough by 2001 to identify them as gentrification in Walks and Maaranen's earlier (2008) research). In other cases, tracts labelled 'potential future recapture' were also found to have moved into the 'recapture' category (or, in rare cases, into the 'other trends' category), and so have been re-classified herein. To make the various categories in our maps as clear as possible, tracts in which gentrification is by 2021 'complete' are identified with a triangle in the middle.

Findings Part 1: Mapping Gentrification in Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver

Our analysis suggests that gentrification continued its march across Canadian central-city neighbourhoods after 2001. In this first section, we compare the state of gentrification in 2021 to that evidenced in 2001 by Walks and Maaranen (2008) in the three largest cities. In all three cities, the number of tracts that could be categorized as 'complete' gentrification grew significantly, from 40 to 65 in Toronto, from 29 to 79 in Montreal, and from 12 to 32 in Vancouver (Table 1). The number of tracts in the 'incomplete category' also increased, while some of the tracts that had begun gentrifying in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s but which remained incomplete in 2001, had by 2021 moved into the 'complete' category. The 2021 census showed that a large number of new tracts began gentrifying in the 2000s (after 2001). Approximately 73 percent of these tracts gentrifying in the 2000s remained 'incomplete' in 2021 (80 tracts across all three cities), while the other 27 percent (29 tracts) had already (in less than 20 years) gone from not revealing solid evidence of gentrification as of 2001 to full-blown complete gentrification by 2021. The number of tracts showing some form of gentrification increased by about 50 percent in Montreal (from 105 to 158 tracts), by about 72 percent in Toronto (from 85 to 146 tracts), and by a whopping 294 percent in Vancouver (from 18 to 53 tracts). To be sure, some of this increase in the number of gentrifying tracts can be attributed to divisions (splits) of older census tracts into two or more new census tracts as higher-density housing development raised the local populations, but approximately three quarters of the increase in gentrifying tracts in Toronto and Vancouver, and about 90 percent of the increase in Montreal, is the result of neighbourhoods which previously had not gentrified now showing the signs of gentrification in the 2001-2021 period (and thus classified as complete or incomplete 2000s gentrification in Table 1). Just under one third of all gentrifying tracts in Toronto and Montreal (27 percent and 30 percent, respectively), and almost 40 percent of gentrifying tracts in Vancouver (39.6 percent), only began gentrifying in the most recent (post-2001) period.

Because of the extension and intensification of gentrification across each of these three central cities, a majority of tracts in each of these three inner cities are by 2021 shown to be gentrifying (Table 1). By 2021, 52.1 percent of Montreal's inner city neighbourhoods built up before World War II, 61.1 percent of Toronto's pre-war inner city neighbourhoods, and 51 percent of Vancouver's pre-war inner city neighbourhoods (tracts) were gentrifying (either complete or incomplete). The growth is most striking among neighbourhoods in which gentrification is complete: from 9.9 percent to 26.1 percent of Montreal's pre-war inner-city tracts, from 18.4 percent to 27.2 percent of Toronto's pre-war inner-city tracts, and from 16 percent to 30.8 percent of Vancouver's pre-war inner-city tracts. The proportion of pre-war inner-city tracts showing incomplete forms of gentrification also rose in each city: from 8 to 20.2 percent in Vancouver, from 20.7 to 33.9 percent in Toronto, and (slightly) from 25.9 to 26.1 percent in Montreal. This means that in all three inner cities, gentrification is by 2021 the *dominant* process of neighbourhood change. Other forms of neighbourhood change – including decline – are more prominent outside of the inner cities, mainly in the 'inner suburbs' built at the (then) edges after 1945 in all three central cities (see Pham 2024 for discussion of inner-suburban decline in Toronto).

Table 1: Gentrification & Upgrading Status in 2001 & 2021, Toronto, Montreal & Vancouver

	Toronto		Montreal		Vancouver	
Number (#) of Census Tracts, by Category	**2001**	**2021**	**2001**	**2021**	**2001**	**2021**
Gentrification (complete & Incomplete)	85	146	105	158	18	53
Complete Gentrification	40	65	29	79	12	32
1960s Gentrification - Complete	16	17	5	5	0	0
1970s Gentrification - Complete	13	24	14	19	7	12
1980s Gentrification - Complete	7	12	8	25	4	9
1990s Gentrification - Complete	4	5	2	13	1	6
2000s Gentrification - Complete	n/a	7	n/a	17	n/a	5
Incomplete Gentrification	45	81	76	79	6	21
1970s Gentrification - Incomplete	12	8	16	12	0	0
1980s Gentrification - Incomplete	20	23	35	21	2	3
1990s Gentrification - Incomplete	13	17	25	15	4	2
2000s Gentrification - Incomplete	n/a	33	n/a	31	n/a	16
Potential Future Gentrification	15	4	35	21	3	9
Other Upgrading	74	85	60	66	26	32
Elite Consolidation/Upgrading	59	65	33	37	13	20
Elite/Middle-Class Recapture	6	10	7	11	3	11
Potential Future Recapture	9	10	20	18	10	1
Decline	35	38	30	33	3	2
Other Neighbourhood Trends	310	311	276	276	55	35
Central City Total # Tracts	519	584	506	554	105	131
Pre-WWII Inner City (only) (# tracts)	217	239	293	303	75	104

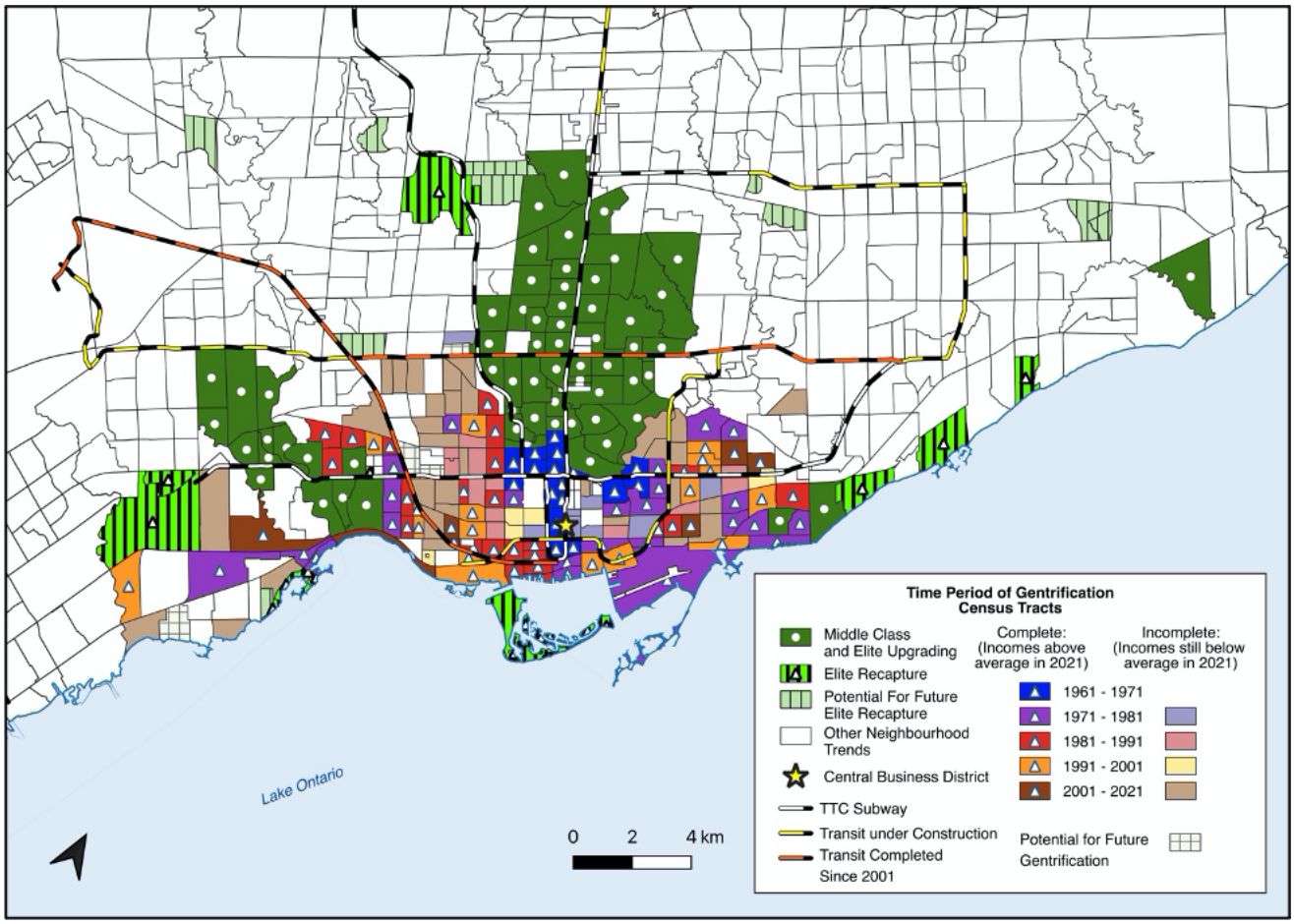
Notes: 2021 data calculated by the authors from analysis of the censuses of Canada 2001, 2006, 2016, and 2021. Data for 2001 from Walks and Maaranen 2008.

Toronto

Figure 2 shows the status of neighbourhood gentrification and upgrading in Toronto as of 2021. As noted, areas of elite consolidation/upgrading (which were always high-income neighbourhoods and therefore never candidates for gentrification) are noted in green, while colours blue (1960s), purple (1970s), red (1980s), orange (1990s), and brown (2000s) denote tracts that fit the criteria for gentrification, with muted colours indicating incomplete forms and solid bright colours with triangles indicating complete gentrification. Not only is gentrification ubiquitous across Toronto's inner-city landscape, but some of the tracts not already experiencing gentrification or some other form of upgrading fall into the category of 'potential future gentrification'. Gentrification proceeded after 2001 in Leslieville, East York, Beaconsfield Village/Little Portugal, Dufferin Grove, the Junction, Alderwood and New Toronto. Many of the tracts that began gentrifying in earlier periods are by 2021 fully gentrified. Additionally, many tracts which started gentrifying in the 2000s are adjacent to newly developed transit infrastructures. This includes the Union-Pearson Express (UP Express) train line, completed in 2015, the recently completed (2026) Eglinton Line 5 LRT, and the planned Ontario Line 3 subway.

Already by 2021 there is evidence of gentrification in the 2000s along Eglington Ave West where the new Line 5 has been built, particularly in the historically Black neighbourhoods of Eglinton West and Oakwood Village in Little Jamaica, suggesting transit induced gentrification pressures are influencing and will continue to influence dynamics in the remaining incompletely gentrified tracts in the inner city (see also Lewis and Panou 2026; Lewis, Panou and Maaranen 2026). Only a few occasional tracts within the inner city do not fit the category of gentrification, likely due to the higher concentrations of social and purpose-built rental housing which have enabled lower income people to remain in these areas. Notable among these are parts of South Parkdale, Regent Park and St. James Town and two tracts of CAMH supportive social housing southeast of Queen and Dovercourt and in Parkdale.

Figure 2: Status of Gentrification in Toronto, 2021



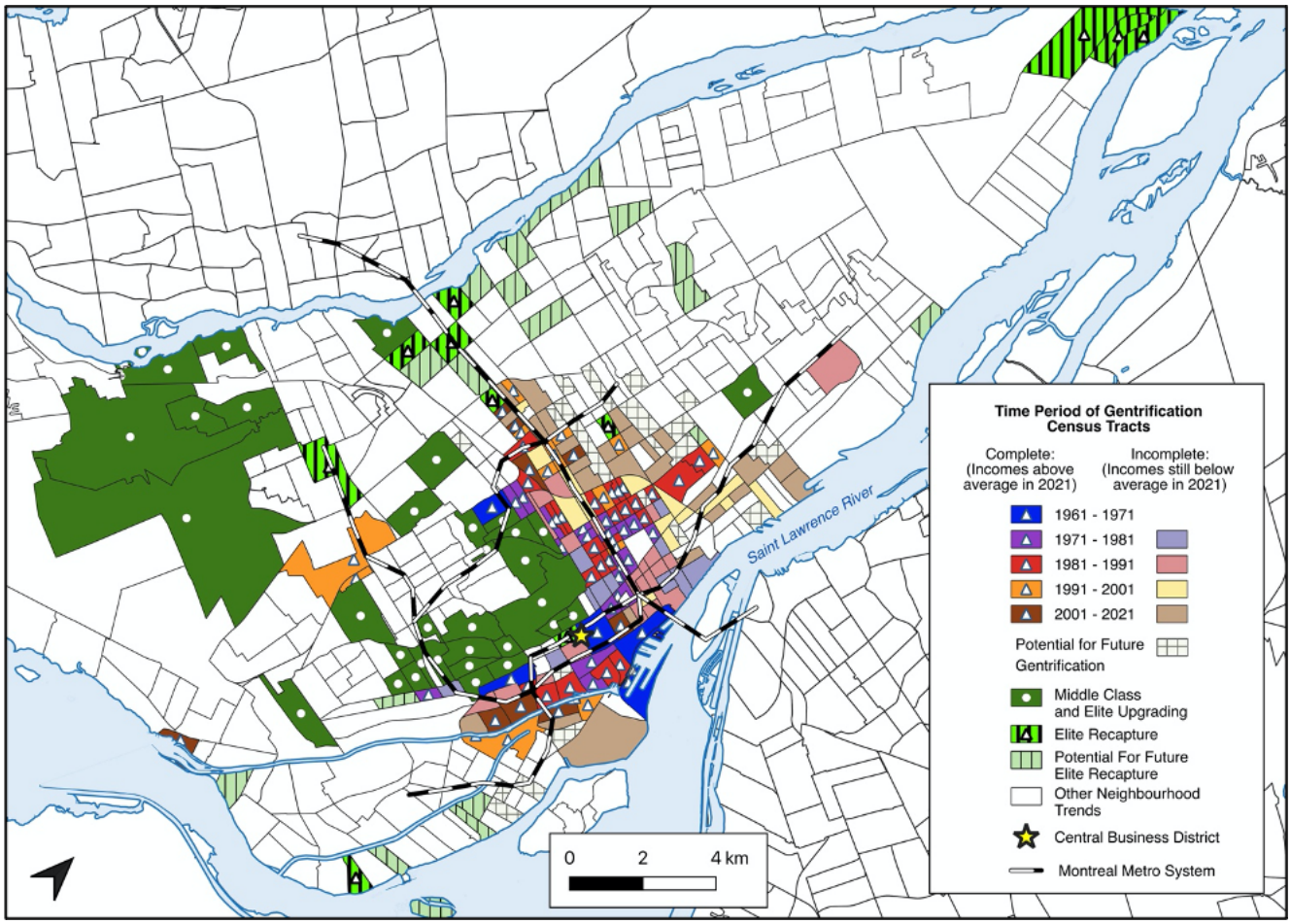
Source: Created by the authors

Montreal

While slightly more muted than Toronto, Montreal's inner city landscape is also revealing a clear trend toward gentrification (Figure 3). Many areas that began gentrifying earlier – in and around the Plateau Montreal, Mile End, Vieux Rosemont, and between the Mountain/McGill University and the Port of Montreal, are by 2021 fully gentrified (complete). Areas to the north-east of the downtown, in Sainte-Marie and the Village, remain as incomplete gentrification. Neighbourhoods that began

gentrifying in the 2000s include Little Italy, Mile-Ex, Lachine to the south of the island, parts of Saint-Henri and Point-Saint-Charles adjacent to Lachine Canal, and areas near the northern terminus of the Blue Line in some of the more traditionally French speaking areas north of Avenue Papineau, including Hochelaga, and parts of Rosemont, La Petite-Patrie, Villeray and Saint-Michel. Additional areas at the edges of these same neighbourhoods are also now showing signs of 'potential future gentrification', including areas surrounding the Blue Line terminus in Saint-Michel. A Blue Line extension is already under construction and expected to bring Metro service northeast of Saint-Michel towards Anjou by 2031. It is likely that gentrification pressures will continue in neighbourhoods adjacent to this line, while neighbourhoods around the new stations may become areas of potential or actual future gentrification.

Figure 3: Status of Gentrification in Montreal, 2021



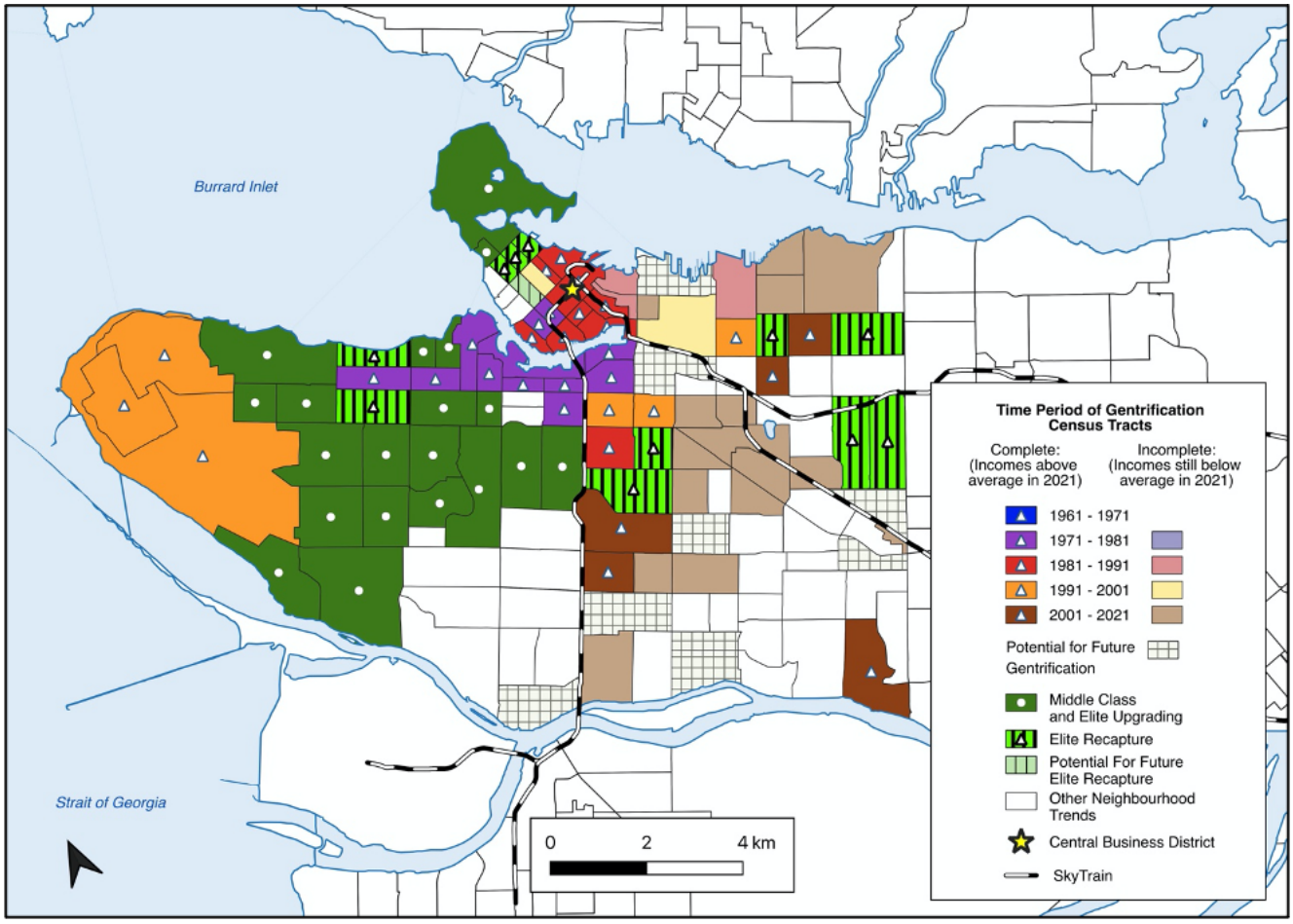
Source: Created by the authors

Vancouver

Vancouver, meanwhile, is Canada's most 'upgraded' inner city (Figure 4). Gentrification began earlier on the west side of the City of Vancouver near older elite areas, including in Kitsilano in 1970s, in much of the north and east side of downtown in the 1980s, and near UBC in the 1990s. After 2001, very little of the west side was still available for future gentrification, as much of it fit the criteria for

'elite upgrading', and the southern areas in the west side were built as, and have remained, stable and solid middle-class neighbourhoods. After 2001, gentrification instead began to colonize much of the east side of the City (east of Cambie Street). Mount Pleasant began gentrifying in the 1970s, and by the 1990s was largely gentrified (except for a few tracts currently showing 'potential future gentrification'). Incipient gentrification in the Downtown Eastside and Strathcona (still incomplete as of 2021) then spilled over into Commercial Drive and the Port of Vancouver area (from the 1980s and 1990s onwards), and then continued its march into many of the neighbourhoods east of Commercial Drive. Riley Park and Little Mountain by 2021 had fully gentrified, while areas nearby show signs of incomplete gentrification. Similar to Toronto, gentrification had by 2021 become the dominant form of neighbourhood change throughout the City of Vancouver, with 21 tracts located on the east side of the City showing signs of gentrification. Only a cluster of tracts in the South Vancouver/ Marpole area do not show the march of gentrification, although it should be noted that because many of these neighbourhoods were never low-income (like their high-income neighbours to the north in Kerrisdale and Granville) and were also built in the post-war period, many of these neighbourhoods cannot be potential candidates for gentrification.

Figure 4: Status of Gentrification in Vancouver, 2021



Source: Created by the authors

Findings Part II: Mapping Gentrification in Medium-Sized Canadian Cities

This section presents our findings from applying the methodology that we used to identify gentrification in the three largest cities to a set of eight medium-sized Canadian metropolitan areas: Calgary, Ottawa, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Quebec City, Hamilton, and two key coastal capital cities, Halifax, and Victoria. Because comparative analysis of gentrification had not been previously been undertaken by Walks and Maaranen (2008) using this methodology in these cities, in this section we present our identification of the status of gentrification as of 2021, without reference to earlier (2001) studies. Once again, we only considered tracts that were sufficiently built up before the end of the Second World War as part of the inner city, and only those tracts that were of working-class character in 1961 are candidates for gentrification (whereas neighbourhoods where higher-income households lived could only be considered as candidates for forms of upgrading – that is, elite/middle-class consolidation or recapture). In none of these eight medium-sized cities was gentrification detected in the 1960s – instead, the first instances date to the 1970s. Some wealthy cities, especially Calgary, experienced stronger gentrification of parts of their inner cities over the entire period, while others (such as Ottawa) were more likely to experience upgrading as consolidation of elite areas, while in other cities, including Quebec City, Winnipeg, and Hamilton, gentrification came later in the study period and resulted in more incompletely-gentrified neighbourhoods.

Table 2: Gentrification & Upgrading Status in 8 Medium-Sized Canadian Cities, 2021

Number (#) of Tracts, by Category	Calgary	Ottawa	Edmonton	Winnipeg	Quebec	Hamilton	Halifax	Victoria
Gentrification (Comp. & Incom.)	36	15	21	11	26	14	7	16
Complete Gentrification	11	3	3	2	4	3	0	2
1960s Gentrification - Complete	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1970s Gentrification - Complete	6	3	1	0	1	0	0	1
1980s Gentrification - Complete	2	0	0	2	2	1	0	0
1990s Gentrification - Complete	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
2000s Gentrification - Complete	1	0	1	0	1	2	0	0
Incomplete Gentrification	25	12	18	9	22	11	7	14
1970s Gentrification - Incomplete	1	0	2	0	2	1	1	5
1980s Gentrification - Incomplete	0	2	5	1	1	1	2	3
1990s Gentrification - Incomplete	11	2	2	2	2	0	2	2
2000s Gentrification - Incomplete	13	8	9	6	17	9	2	4
Potential Future Gentrification	4	10	13	19	7	17	4	3
Other Upgrading	7	20	5	7	7	4	8	8
Elite Consolidation/Upgrading	7	20	5	7	7	0	8	8
Elite/Middle-Class Recapture	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Potential Future Recapture	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
Other Neighbourhood Trends*	16	24	33	43	24	31	7	8
Pre-WWII Inner City (# tracts)	63	69	72	80	64	67	26	35

Notes: Calculated by the authors from analysis of the censuses of Canada 2001, 2006, 2016, and 2021.
(*) Other neighbourhood trends in Table 2 includes neighbourhood decline, as well as stability, at both higher and lower income levels.

Calgary

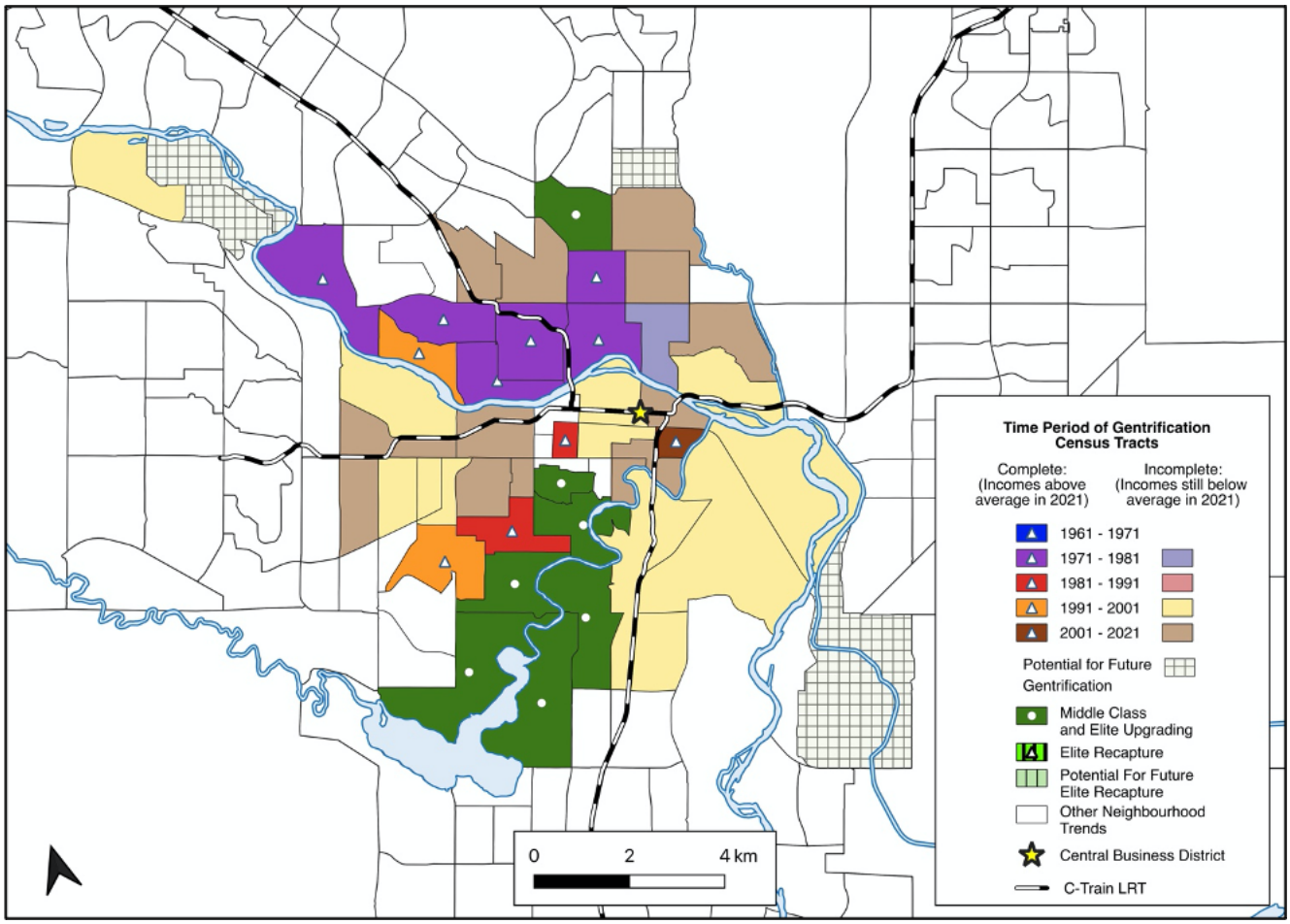
The Calgary census metropolitan area (CMA) is by 2021 the fourth-largest metropolitan area in Canada, having boomed since the 1970s on the back of the oil industry. Often vying for wealthiest city in Canada during this time, it has also become an increasingly socio-spatially polarized city (Townshend et al, 2018, 2020). By the early 2010s, Calgary was Canada's most unequal city by individual income and second to only Toronto in terms of neighbourhood income inequality. Low neighbourhood income also highly overlaps with racialization and immigration status across the city (Townshend et al, 2020). It is then not surprising that of the set of eight medium-sized cities in our analysis, Calgary shows the strongest push toward gentrification of its inner city (Figure 5). Of the 36 tracts in its inner city that show some form of gentrification, almost a third (30.6 percent) are by 2021 in the 'complete' gentrification category, indicating that these neighbourhoods (which formerly had been more working-class in character, with mean incomes below the metropolitan average) had by 2021 joined the cluster of neighbourhoods open to the upper middle class. The data show that gentrification began in the 1970s in neighbourhoods north and northwest of downtown along the Bow River and North Hill (the escarpment running along the north side of the river), including Crescent Heights, Rosedale, Mount Pleasant, Sunnyside, Hillhurst, St. Andrews Heights, and Mongomery. Many of these neighbourhoods took a long time to gentrify; however, by 2021 all but Crescent Heights (to the furthest east) have completed the process. After an initial foothold in the 1970s, gentrification then spread in the 1980s into a part of the Beltline north of 17th Avenue and the neighbourhood of South Calgary, both of which were completely gentrified by 2021.

The 1990s saw gentrification encroach into new areas of downtown including Eau Claire and an additional portion of the Beltline north of 17th Avenue, the Bridgeland-Riverside neighbourhood north of the eastern portion of the Bow River, and to neighbourhoods southeast of downtown between the Bow and Elbow Rivers like Inglewood, Erlton, Ramsay, Roxboro and Parkhill. To the west of downtown, parts of Altadore, Killarney/Glengarry, and the Currie Barracks (redeveloped as Garrison Woods), as well as areas next to the Bow River like Spruce Cliff and Wildwood, also began to gentrify in the 1990s. While one neighbourhood to the west of Bowness (Greenwood) also began to gentrify in the 1990s, Bowness has not shown signs of gentrification, though it still may be a potential candidate in the future. Of the tracts that began to gentrify in the 1990s, only one tract (comprising the neighbourhoods of Garrison Woods and parts of Altadore), an area which is adjacent to older elite areas like Mount Royal and Elbow Park, was fully gentrified by 2021. Garrison Woods is the notable location of a large state-led, subdivision project developed in the New Urbanist style on federal defence lands by the Canada Lands Company, and this may have contributed to the gentrification of that neighbourhood.

Areas that began to gentrify in the 2000s largely comprise much of the remaining neighbourhoods immediately to the east and west of downtown, as well as neighbourhoods near the University of Calgary (Banff Trail, Capitol Hill, Mount Pleasant, and Rosemont) and areas northeast of tracts that started to gentrify in the 1970s (Renfrew and Tuxedo Park). Gentrifying neighbourhoods to the west of downtown include Bankview, Sunalta, and parts of Glenbrook, Glendale, and Westgate, all of which are in proximity to the Blue Line C-Train extension which was started in 2009 and completed in 2012. To the east of downtown, gentrifying neighbourhoods include an additional portion of the Beltline north of 17th Avenue, Mission, Victoria Park and the recently rebranded (2007-08) East Village neighbourhood north of Victoria Park. While Victoria Park is the only area that has since completed

the gentrification process, these areas east of downtown have been subject to city-led efforts at revitalization that have seen the construction of public spaces like the new Central Library (completed in 2018) as well as new, high density condominium and rental housing. While a number of neighbourhoods close to the downtown, and west of downtown, continue to be lower-income neighbourhoods as of 2021, gentrification continues, and is present in the majority (59 percent) of census tracts within Calgary's older inner city areas.

Figure 5: Status of Gentrification in Calgary, 2021



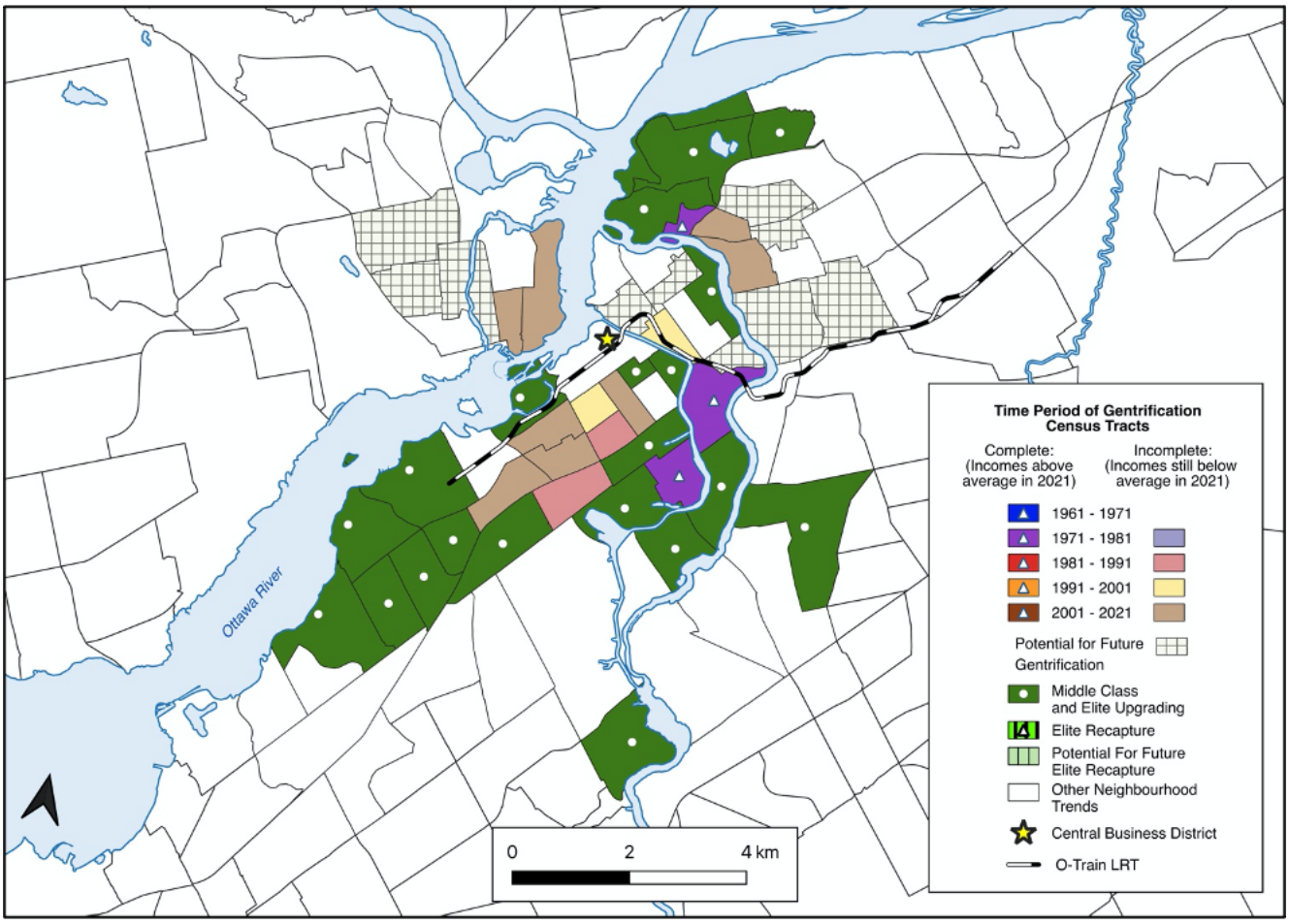
Source: Created by the authors

While gentrification in Calgary began early, in the 1970s, it is still a more recent phenomenon than in Toronto or Vancouver across the inner city. Of the 36 tracts that reveal some form of gentrification, a clear majority (27 tracts, or 75 percent) only began gentrifying as early as the 1990s. By 2021 17.5 percent of Calgary's inner-city neighbourhoods had completed the gentrification process.

Ottawa-Gatineau

Although encompassing the national capital, the inner city of the Ottawa region (which includes neighbourhoods across the Ottawa River in Hull and Aylmer, Quebec), reveals generally weaker forms of gentrification than those cities discussed so far (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Status of Gentrification in Ottawa-Gatineau, 2021



Source: Created by the authors

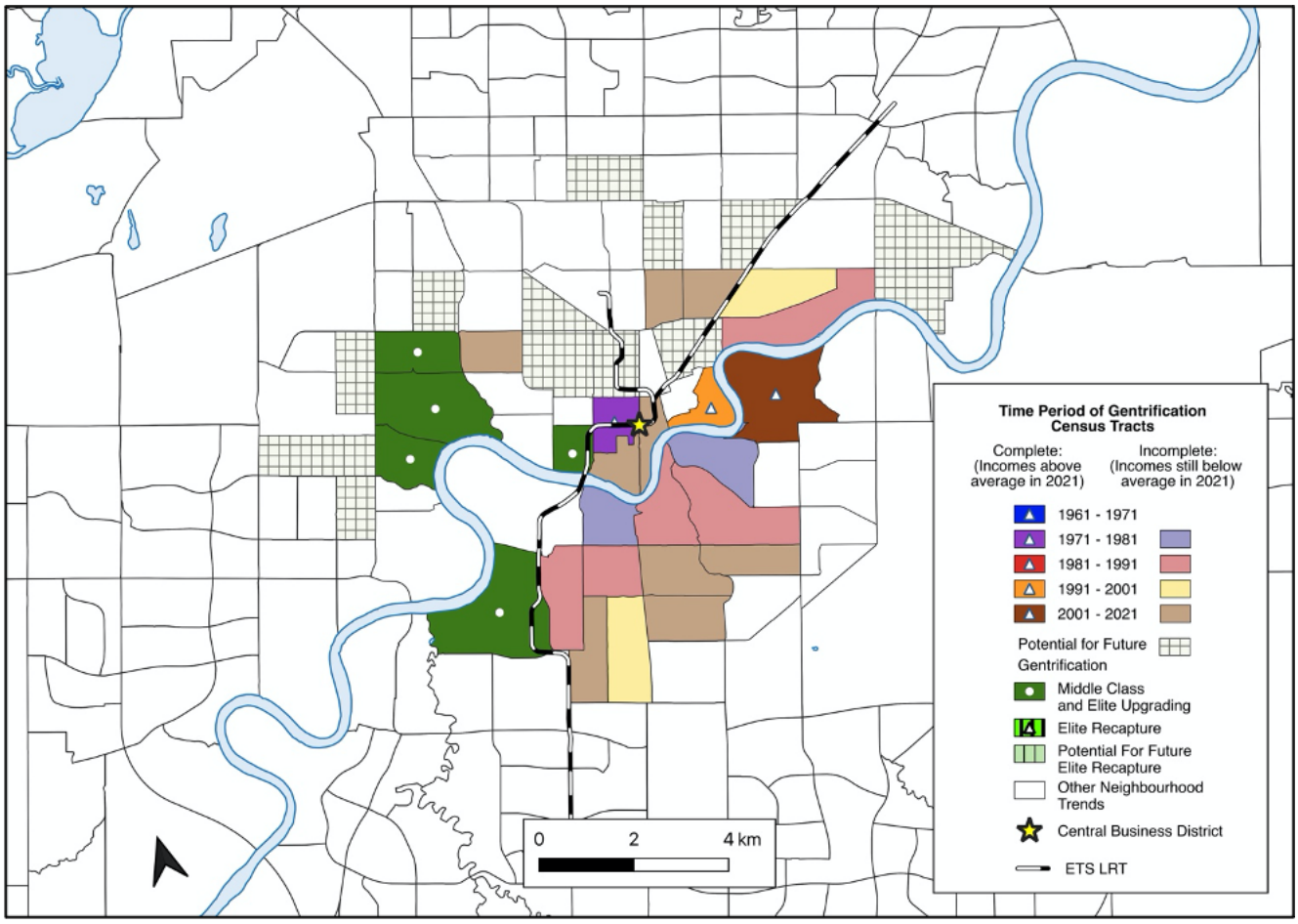
Instead of widespread gentrification, in Ottawa there is a clear trend toward the consolidation of established higher-income neighbourhoods, which have continued to upgrade over time. Ottawa has the inner-city area with the largest proportion (29 percent) of its neighbourhoods showing this type (elite consolidation) of neighbourhood change (Toronto is second with 27.1 percent of its inner-city tracts in this category). Such areas include the neighbourhoods of Manor Park and Rockliffe Park (where many embassies are located), parts of the Glebe, the Golden Triangle, and neighbourhoods west of downtown including Westboro. It is not surprising that many of the neighbourhoods that began gentrifying earlier are close to these areas, especially in and around the Glebe and the Lindenlea and New Edinburgh neighbourhoods close to Rockcliffe Park. Meanwhile, most of the neighbourhoods that began gentrifying more recently, including communities south of Downtown in the Lower Town, near the University of Ottawa, near Vanier, and across the river in Hull, still remain in

‘incomplete’ form as of 2021. The downtown of Hull, in particular, only began gentrifying in the 2000s, and it remains a low-income area. Saying this, a large number of tracts (10) show early signs of potential future gentrification, including at the edges of downtown Hull and to the east and south of Vanier.

Edmonton

Unlike Calgary, gentrification has a more focussed geography in Edmonton, Alberta’s capital city (Figure 7). Incipient forms of gentrification began in the 1970s around the downtown core along Jasper Avenue, near the established older elite neighbourhood formerly known as Oliver (recently renamed Wîhkwêntôwin), as well as parts of Garneau, Strathcona and Strathearn along the south side of the North Saskatchewan River north of the main retail street of Whyte Avenue. This early gentrification of the downtown remained limited and by 2021 only the downtown tract along Jasper Avenue has completed the gentrification process.

Figure 7: Status of Gentrification in Edmonton, 2021



Source: Created by the authors

By the 1980s gentrification also encroached into additional neighbourhoods proximate to Whyte Avenue (Bonnie Doon and South Central Edmonton to the northeast of Whyte Avenue, and Queen Alexandra, McKernan and Parkallen to south of Whyte Avenue near the University of Alberta), as well

as parts of the Highlands neighbourhood along the north side of the North Saskatchewan River near Concordia University of Edmonton. However, as of 2021 none of these areas have fully gentrified.

Starting in the 1990s, the neighbourhood of Riverdale, just north of the river from Strathearn, parts of Allendale and Pleasantview south of Whyte Avenue along Calgary Trail, and additional portions of Highlands north of the river, also started to demonstrate evidence of gentrification. Since the 2000s, gentrification has extended to the southeast of Whyte Avenue (into King Edward Park, Hazeldean and Ritchie, and the remaining parts of Allendale and Pleasantview) as well as areas in downtown and to the north of downtown. These include neighbourhoods around the Edmonton Exhibition Lands (like Parkdale), and the neighbourhood of Westmount, just to the east of the established elite tract of Glenora. However, as of 2021, among these neighbourhoods, only Riverdale has completed the process, and gentrification has been otherwise very limited surrounding Glenora. Of tracts that started gentrifying in the 2000s, only Forest Heights, across the river to the east of Riverdale, was completely gentrified by 2021.

A number of tracts (13 tracts, or 18.1 percent of Edmonton's inner-city neighbourhoods) show signs of potential future gentrification on the north side of the river, but it is too early to predict how these neighbourhoods will evolve. In all, 21 tracts, representing 29 percent of pre-war inner city neighbourhoods, show signs of gentrification (almost half of what is evident in Calgary, where 57.1 percent of inner city tracts are gentrifying), while the majority of gentrifying tracts (85.7 percent or 18 of 21 tracts) remain incomplete.

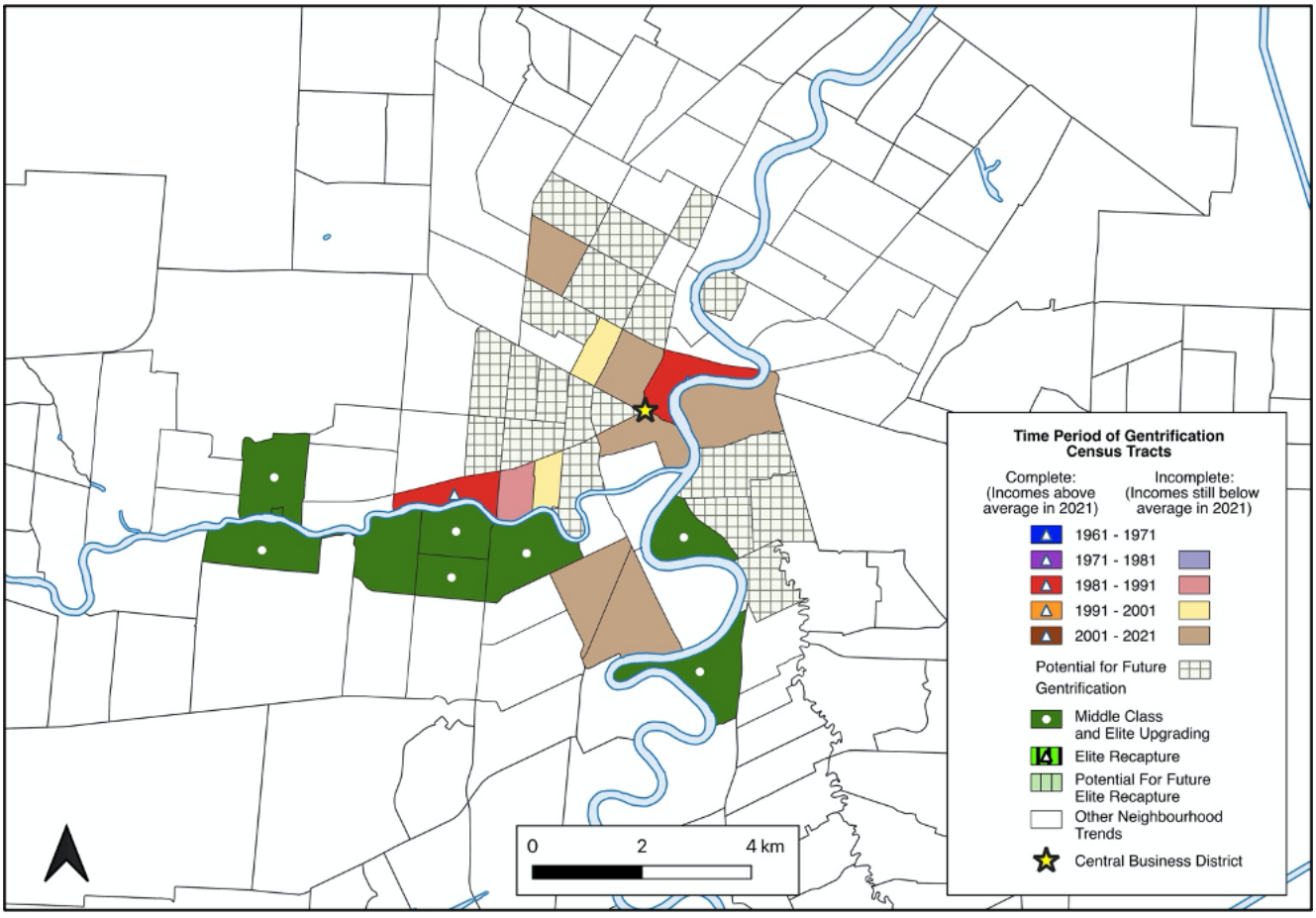
Winnipeg

Meanwhile, and unlike the experience of most other Canadian cities, gentrification in Winnipeg originally avoided the downtown. A key area of gentrification is observable in the Wolseley neighbourhood just north of the Assiniboine River from the established elite neighbourhoods of Tuxedo and River Heights in the older West End. However, there is one tract at the northern edge of Downtown Winnipeg that also began gentrifying in the 1980s and has since completed the gentrification process. This tract includes the Exchange District where the average income increased from one half of the CMA average in 1980 to 1.9 times the CMA average in 2010, a phenomenon which Lorch (2015) ascribes to a luxury condominium development that began to be constructed there in the early 2000s. The two tracts that started gentrifying in the 1980s may represent beachheads from which future gentrification will emanate (Lorch, 2015; Distasio and Zell, 2020). While previous research has identified Osbourne Village as a notable site of gentrification due to the loss of much of its rooming house stock (see Distasio and Kaufman, 2015), the tract was not identified as a gentrifying area in our analysis, possibly due to anomalies associated with the size of census tracts, which smooths over processes of changes occurring at smaller scales (Grant, Walks and Ramos, 2020). While Distasio and Zell (2020) identify a notable trend in the displacement of Indigenous people from the West Broadway neighbourhood (from 25% of the population in 1996 to less than 13% in 2016) our analysis shows this as an area of potential future gentrification. However, they note that it remains unclear whether this displacement is linked to rising incomes (Distasio and Zell, 2020).

The data shows that gentrification has come to Winnipeg more recently than many other cities (except Hamilton, see below). The first evidence of gentrification only began in the 1980s, and of the

11 tracts identified as gentrifying in Winnipeg, the majority (9 tracts, or 82 percent) remained in the 'incomplete' category. More than half of the gentrifying tracts (6 or 54.5 percent) only began to gentrify in the 2000s. While some of these tracts are found near areas already experiencing gentrification earlier, including the west end neighbourhoods already mentioned, the 2000s saw a new push toward gentrification of neighbourhoods in the downtown along Main Street and on the east side of the Red River in St. Boniface. However, these remained incomplete as of 2021. Overall, large areas of Winnipeg's older inner-city neighbourhoods remain untouched by gentrification, with only 11 of the city's 80 inner city tracts (13.8 percent) showing this form of neighbourhood change. In between these incipient forms of recent gentrification are tracts showing signs of potential future gentrification, such that much of the North End could be in danger of the negative effects of gentrification in the future. Indeed, more of the inner city is categorized as having potential for future gentrification (19 tracts or 23.8 percent) than is already experiencing gentrification.

Figure 8: Status of Gentrification in Winnipeg, 2021

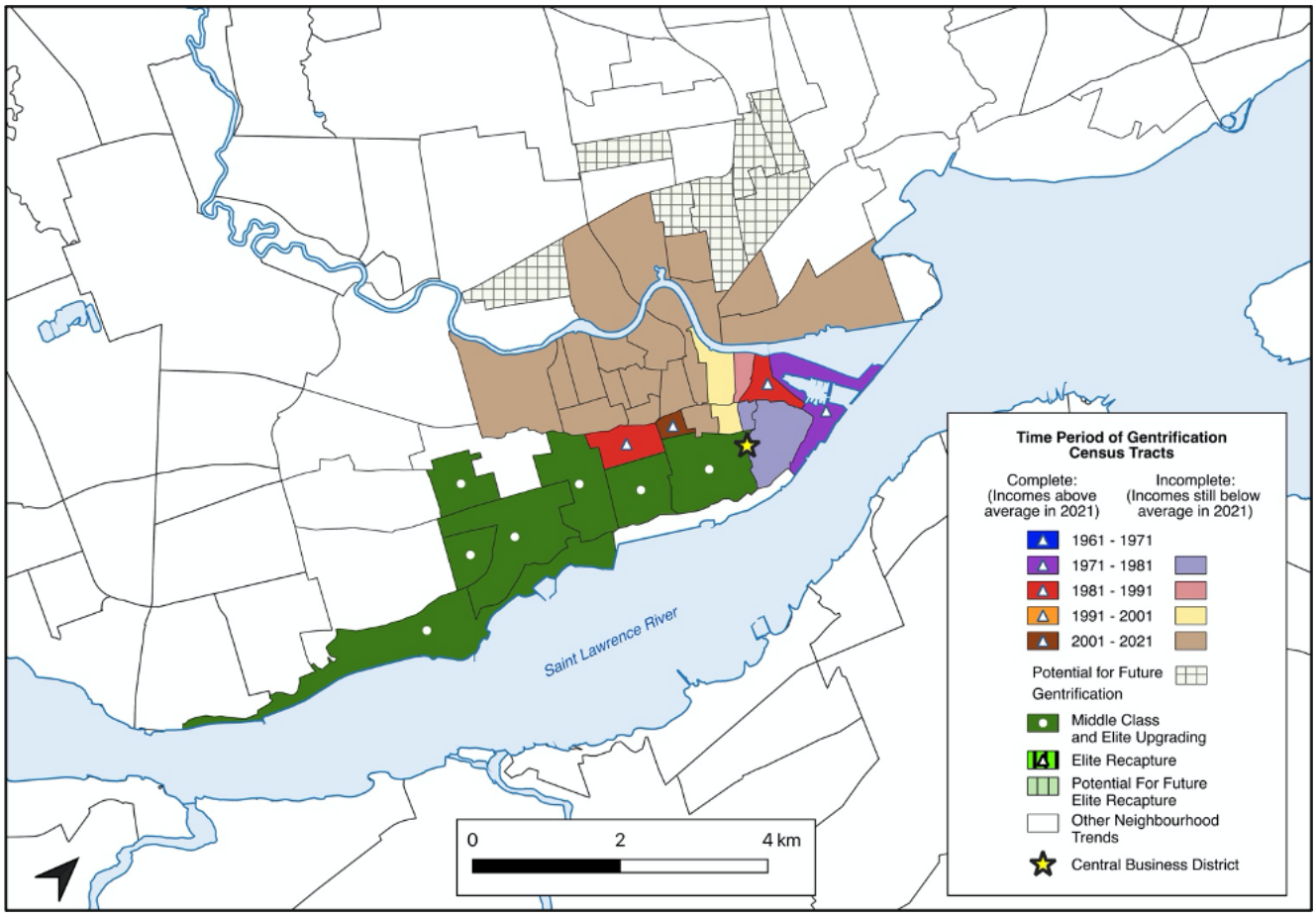


Source: Created by the authors

Quebec City

Quebec City reveals a highly clustered pattern of different forms of neighbourhood upgrading (Figure 9). There is an older established cluster of elite neighbourhoods that begins at the Plains of Abraham and continues south-west along Boulevard Rene-Levesque and Chemin Ste-Foy until Laval University. This swath of elite neighbourhoods continued to consolidate its position over the study period. Early forms of gentrification beginning in the 1970s and 1980s are identified in the older area along the St. Lawrence River just east and south of the old walled town, including part of Basse-Ville and the Port of Quebec, which has completely gentrified as of 2021. The area of Saint Roch to the west of the Port began gentrifying only in the 1990s and this spread to the Saint Saveur area further west in the 2000s. Apart from central Basse Ville, only two other tracts exhibited completed forms of gentrification in the city, one of which began in the 1980s and the other which began in the 2000s. These are the neighbourhoods of Montcalm and part of Saint-Jean-Baptiste in the older, walled part of town to the north edge of the city's elite areas. Together with Basse Ville, these encompass the extent of complete gentrification in Quebec City.

Figure 9: Status of Gentrification in Quebec (City), 2021



Source: Created by the authors

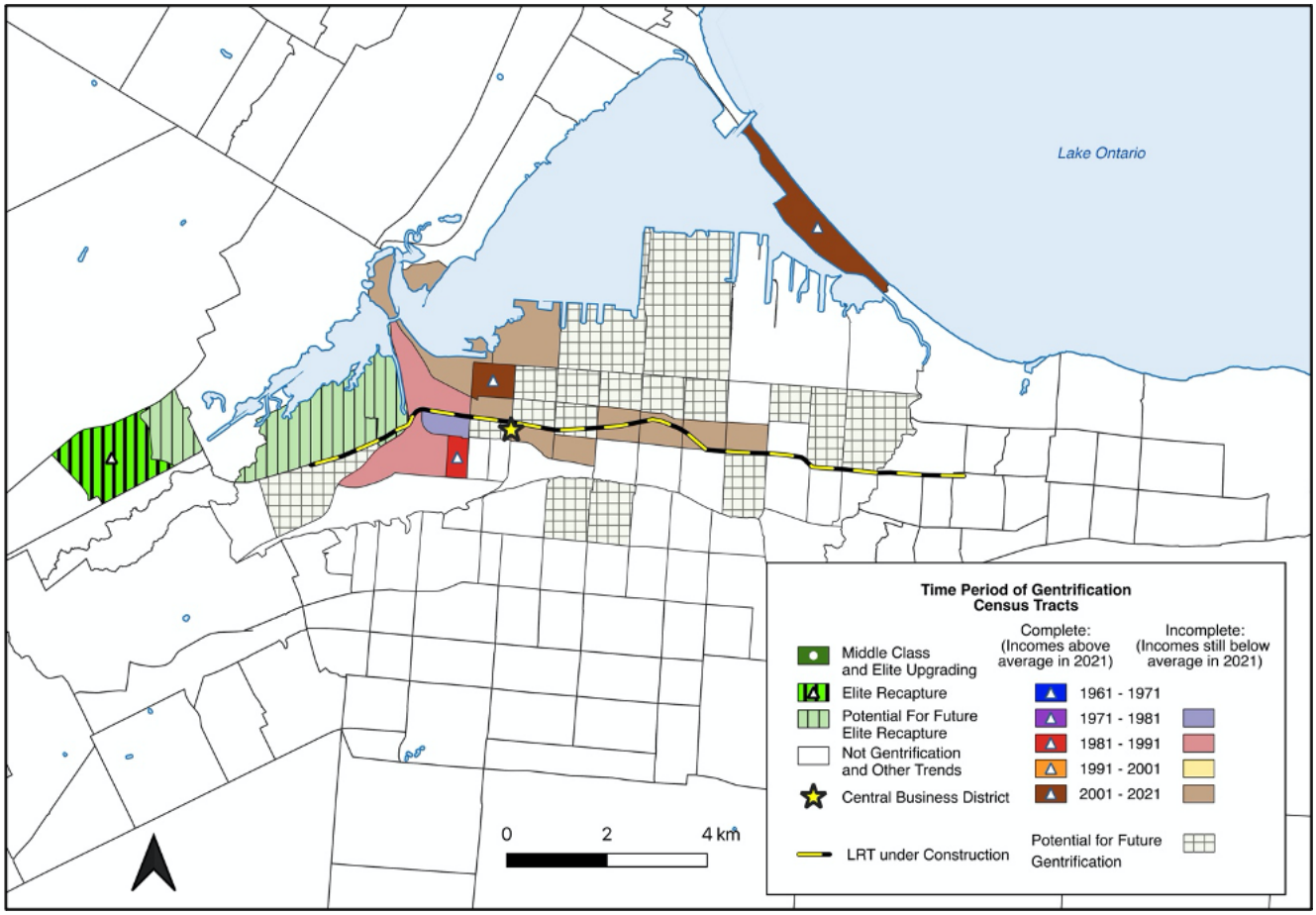
Southern areas of Limolou and Vanier (north of St. Charles River), historically poorer parts of Quebec City, also largely began gentrifying in the 2000s (18 of 26 gentrifying tracts, or 69 percent). Although a

large proportion of older inner-city neighbourhoods in Quebec City exhibit some evidence of gentrification, a high (84.6 percent) proportion of these remained 'incomplete' overall. In Quebec City, neighbourhoods with potential for future gentrification are solely concentrated adjacent to gentrifying tracts north of the St Charles River.

Hamilton

Hamilton exhibits some of the weakest, and also most recent, forms of gentrification among our set of Canadian cities (Figure 10). There are three neighbourhoods which serve as beachheads for gentrification. An early beachhead is observed along Locke Street north of Aberdeen Ave., in the Kirkendall North neighbourhood. Two tracts began gentrifying here in the 1980s, and by 2021 one of these (bordering Locke Street) had fully gentrified. This area is north of the older established high-income neighbourhood of Kirkendall South (which does not show up as green in Figure 10 because it remained stable over the study period).

Figure 10: Status of Gentrification in Hamilton, 2021

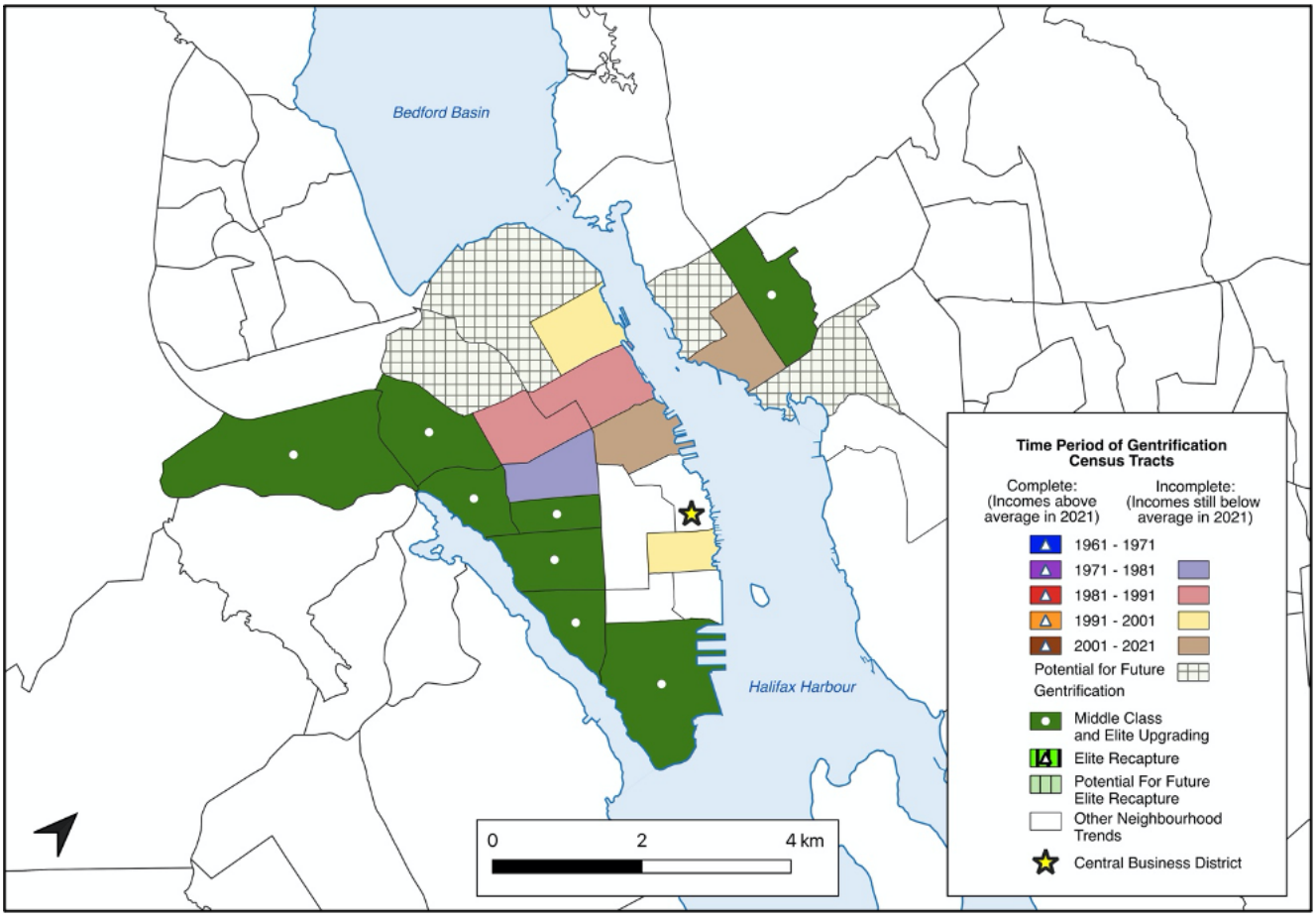


Source: Created by the authors

A second beachhead of gentrification in Hamilton emerged in the late 2010s when the Ontario government opened a new commuter GO Train station at West Harbour, near the intersection of Barton Street and James Street North. The new accessibility to the GO Train system this afforded

meant that neighbourhoods nearby this station became desirable, and the tract immediately bordering the station became one of the (two) neighbourhoods which not only began gentrifying in the 2000s but ended the period as fully gentrified. Many neighbourhoods bordering this tract also began experiencing gentrification in the 2000s, but remain in incomplete status as of 2021. There is a third beachhead, in this case quite literally located along the beach in the older small neighbourhood found under the Burlington Skyway bridge and extending east along Hamilton's waterfront trail. This tract also falls into the category of complete 2000s gentrification. Even more recently, the Ontario government announced it would fund a Hamilton LRT along King Street East (noted in Figure 10 as a future LRT line in pink). Once this was announced, Metrolinx began purchasing buildings along the route, and in some cases serving eviction notices. While it is not clear whether the latter occurred before the 2021 census, it is evident in Figure 10 that a number of tracts along this route began gentrifying in the 2000s, and tracts nearby show signs of potential future gentrification. This could provide evidence of transit-induced gentrification. Of all the cities analyzed in this report, Hamilton has the smallest proportion of its inner-city neighbourhoods (21 percent) identified as experiencing gentrification, and the most recent expression of gentrification, with 71 percent of gentrifying tracts only having started gentrifying in the 2000s. As of 2021, 79 percent of Hamilton's gentrifying tracts were still in 'incomplete' status.

Figure 11: Status of Gentrification in Halifax, 2021

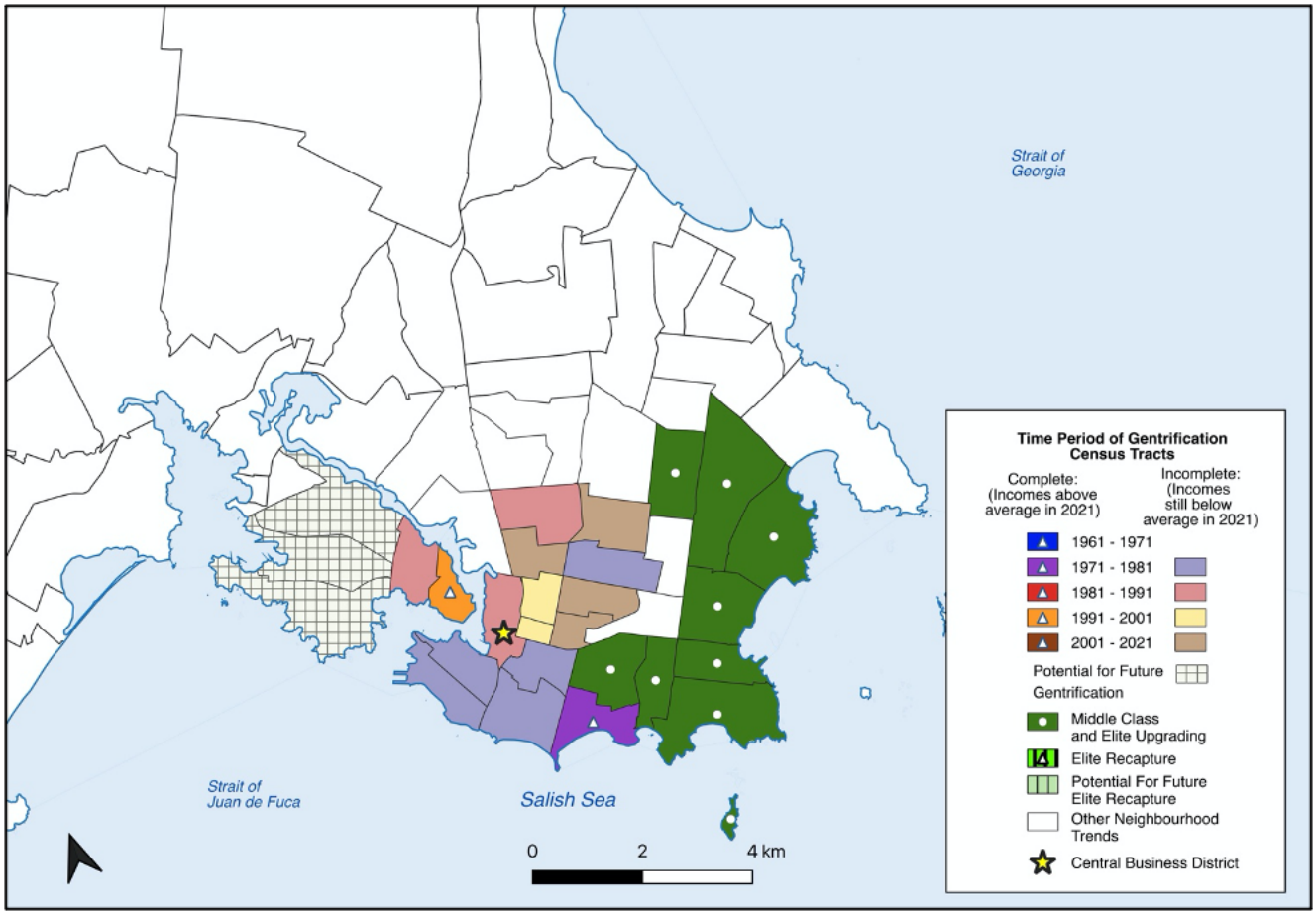


Source: Created by the authors

Halifax

The capital of Nova Scotia, Halifax reveals a history of continued if limited gentrification (Figure 11). There is an established cluster of elite neighbourhoods north of the Northwest Arm, containing Dalhousie University, Saint Mary's University, and Point Pleasant Park. This cluster continued consolidating over the study period, and neighbourhoods along the northern borders of this cluster began gentrifying in the 1970s and show a progression over the decades as gentrification slowly moved northward, and into the area of the North End north of the North Street Bridge to Dartmouth. The Hydrostone/Richmond neighbourhood, site of the Halifax Explosion of 1917, began gentrifying in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Meanwhile, gentrification slowly but eventually encroached on the Port of Halifax neighbourhood to the east of Downtown by the 2000s (starting in the Tower Road area in the 1990s). Across Halifax Harbour, neighbourhoods bordering Downtown Dartmouth and Lake Banook began experiencing gentrification in the 2000s. Halifax shows no neighbourhoods in which gentrification is fully complete. By 2021, just over a quarter (27 percent) of Halifax's inner-city neighbourhoods had experienced gentrification. The data also picked up signs of potential future gentrification in 4 tracts, two of them close to downtown Dartmouth, and two at the north of the peninsula.

Figure 12: Status of Gentrification in Victoria, 2021



Source: Created by the authors

Victoria

Similar to Halifax, British Columbia's capital city of Victoria also shows remarkable clustering of different forms of upgrading (Figure 12). A cluster of established elite neighbourhoods is found in the coastal municipality of Oak Bay on the east side of the peninsula, and in the Rockland neighbourhood along the City of Victoria's south-west border with Oak Bay. These areas all saw continued upgrading over the study period. Early gentrification began beside these elite areas in Fairfield along Dallas Road on the southern coast in the 1970s (complete by 2021) extending west to James Bay (but this is still incomplete as of 2021). Victoria's downtown began gentrifying in the 1980s (still incomplete), while the historically industrial and lower income neighbourhood of Victoria West (Dale and Newman, 2009) across the bay from Downtown, began experiencing gentrification in the 1990s, likely driven in part by the significant amount of high rise condominium being built there. These became the beachheads from which further gentrification expanded, first into Harris Green, Fernwood and North Park east of downtown in the 1980s and 1990s (all of which remain incomplete as of 2021), and across the bay westward in Victoria West. Almost half (46 percent) of tracts in Victoria's inner-city had experienced some form of gentrification by 2021, although most of this (87.5 percent of gentrifying tracts) show incomplete status by the end of the period.

Comparing the Extent of Gentrification in Canadian Cities, 2021

Which Canadian cities have experienced the most extensive gentrification of their available inner-city neighbourhoods? The methodology employed in this report to identify gentrification can be used to compare the extent of gentrification in its complete and incomplete forms across the study cities (Table 3). Toronto, at the heart of Canada's largest metropolitan region, shows the greatest proportion of pre-war inner city tracts that experienced some form of gentrification, at 61 percent. Toronto also shows the second-highest proportion (27 percent, after Vancouver's 31 percent) of gentrifying tracts that completed the gentrification process over the study period. Coupled with the 27 percent of other neighbourhoods that show elite upgrading, this also suggests a city that is increasingly being refashioned for ever-wealthier households. Meanwhile, Vancouver exhibits the highest amount of upgrading (81 percent of pre-war tracts reveal either gentrification, elite consolidation, or middle-class recapture over the entire study period). Because so much of Vancouver's inner-city areas were already middle-class or elite neighbourhoods, the proportion of tracts available for gentrification is lower in Vancouver than in Toronto and Montreal. Vancouver is once again shown to be Canada's most elite city, one that for many years has become increasingly unafforable to lower-income households.

Calgary shows the second-highest proportion of pre-war inner city tracts experiencing some form of gentrification, at 57 percent, although the proportion that fully gentrified (17.5 percent) is lower than the three-largest cities (in which more than a quarter of gentrifying tracts had fully gentrified by 2021), in part because gentrification in most neighbourhoods in Calgary is more recent. Montreal shows the third-highest proportion of its inner city as having gentrified, at 52 percent of pre-war tracts, and 26 percent fully gentrified.

Meanwhile, the other seven cities all reveal a more recent experience with gentrification, with the vast majority of gentrifying tracts still incomplete as of 2021. Victoria (at 46 percent) and Quebec City

(at 41 percent) have sizeable minorities of their inner city neighbourhoods exhibiting forms of gentrification, followed by Edmonton and Halifax (29 and 27 percent, respectively), and then Ottawa and Hamilton (22 and 21 percent). Winnipeg, at 14 percent, has the smallest proportion of its inner city experiencing gentrification, but the most tracts (19) indicating the potential for future gentrification, although Hamilton shows a higher *proportion* of tracts (its 17 tracts represent 25.4 percent of the inner city) indicating the potential for future gentrification. In these seven smaller cities, the vast majority of tracts are in the incomplete gentrification category, and in Halifax all of its gentrifying tracts. Excepting Halifax, complete forms of gentrification vary between 2.5 percent (Winnipeg) and 6.3 percent (Quebec City) in this 'group of seven' cities.

This research reveals a variegated geography and temporality of gentrification across these key Canadian cities. Of course, this is but one methodology, and other methods could identify slightly different patterns and levels.

Table 3: Proportion (%) of Pre-War Inner-City Tracts that are Gentrifying (Complete or Incomplete), as of 2021

CITY	Total Gentrifying	Complete	Incomplete
Toronto	61.1	27.2	33.9
Calgary	57.1	17.5	39.7
Montreal	52.1	26.1	26.1
Vancouver	51.0	30.8	20.2
Victoria	45.7	5.7	40.0
Quebec City	40.6	6.3	34.4
Edmonton	29.2	4.2	25.0
Halifax	26.9	0	26.9
Ottawa	21.7	4.3	17.4
Hamilton	20.9	4.5	16.4
Winnipeg	13.8	2.5	11.3

Notes: Calculated by the authors from the data presented above in Tables 1 and 2;
Because the percentages in this Table use the pre-war inner-city tract totals as the denominator, this Table does not also include estimates for elite upgrading or recapture, which use the full central tract totals. It should be noted that Vancouver has proportionally fewer inner-city tracts that are candidates for gentrification because it has a large number of tracts that have always housed higher-income populations, many of which show in this report as elite upgrading.

Conclusion: Mapping Gentrification in Canada's Cities

This report has shown that a sizeable proportion of inner-city neighbourhoods in Canada's largest cities have been experiencing gentrification, using a consistent and rigorous methodology. In some cases (Toronto and Montreal), gentrification goes as far back as the 1960s, but for most medium-sized Canadian cities gentrification has been more a recent phenomenon, growing most rapidly in the last two decades. Of the eleven cities analyzed in this report, the data shows that 4 of them have a majority of tracts in their inner cities experiencing gentrification. This is a problem, given that gentrification raises land values and rents, de-converts housing units from rental to ownership tenure, thus removing affordable rental housing from the market, and displaces tenants and lower-income households from those neighbourhoods that provide the best accessibility to jobs, amenities and important local services. Indeed, gentrification often proceeds in neighbourhoods close to new transit lines that would have provided improved accessibility for low-income households if they were not displaced in the process.

This report maps out the neighbourhoods that have experienced gentrification, as well as the decades of initial onset of gentrification, in each study city. Comparison of the results shows that Canada's three largest cities, as well as Calgary, reveal the greatest incidence of gentrification. It is these cities that are likely to provide the contexts showing the most negative aspects of gentrification, and for this reason would be good case study cities for further comparative exploration of the outcomes of gentrification. Other cities show weaker, more incomplete, forms of gentrification. These cities may contain some lessons for how to slow gentrification or prevent widespread displacement of lower-income households in the face of waves of gentrification. In turn, they could make good case study cities for exploring potential policy lessons for how to address the issue of gentrification from a Canadian perspective. Future research will need to explore both the outcomes and policy lessons rigorously and extensively if scholarship is to contribute to making Canadian cities more equitable and liveable in the future

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