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# The political consequences of gentrification: evidence from the 2011 London riots



Lecture by

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19<sup>TH</sup> OF NOVEMBER 2019, 5:20 P.M. | **N15 105**

**ABSTRACT** | *Gentrification is one of the most challenging and contentious issues faced by the world's major cities. We examine one of its most salient political consequences: its effect on social unrest. We develop a theoretical argument that links local gentrification to participation in social unrest, and examine its validity with reference to the 2011 London riots. To deal with the endogenous nature of gentrification we use an instrumental variable strategy that exploits exogenous variation in the fraction of each neighborhood that was destroyed during the Blitz. Contrary to the conventional wisdom that gentrification promotes unrest, we find that it reduced participation in the 2011 London riots by both changing the social composition of gentrifying neighborhoods and making the original residents who remain less likely to riot. Our findings are consistent with qualitative evidence from the UK and the US, and highlight the impact that urban geography can have on social order.*

**BIO** | GABRIEL LEON IS A SENIOR LECTURER IN THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL ECONOMY AT KING'S COLLEGE LONDON. HIS RESEARCH IS ON POLITICAL ECONOMY AND ECONOMIC HISTORY, AND FOCUSES ON CONFLICT, THE MILITARY AND INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE. HE HAS WORKED ON THE DIFFUSION OF VIOLENCE, ENGLISH POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT, THE CAUSES OF COUPS D'ETAT, THE DETERMINANTS OF MILITARY INTERVENTIONS IN POLITICS, AND THE IMPACT OF RIOTS ON DEMOCRATIC CHANGE. HE IS THE CONVENER OF THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF PEACE AND SECURITY RESEARCH GROUP IN THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL ECONOMY.

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