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Spatial dislocation and affective displacement: youth perspectives on gentrification in London

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Spatial dislocation and affective displacement: youth perspectives on gentrification in London

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Abstract

Analyses of contemporary processes of gentrification have been primarily produced from adult perspectives with little focus on how age affects or mediates urban change. However, in analysing young people's responses to transformations in their neighbourhood we argue that there is evidence for a more complex relationship between 'gentrifiers' and residents than existing arguments of antagonism or tolerance would suggest. Using a participatory video methodology to document experiences of gentrification in the east London borough of Hackney, we found that young people involved in this study experienced their transforming city through processes of spatial dislocation and affective displacement. The former incorporated a sense of disorientation in the temporal disjunctions of the speed of change, while the latter invoked the embodiment of a sense of not belonging generated within classed and intercultural interactions. However, there are expressions of ambivalence rather than straightforward rejection. Benefits of gentrification were noted including conditions of alterity and the possibility to transcend normative behaviours that they found uncomfortable. Young people demonstrated the capacity to re-imagine their relationship with the complex spaces they call home. The findings suggest a need to reframe debates on gentrification to include a more nuanced understanding of its differential impact on young people.

Key Words: Affect, Displacement, Gentrification, London, Youth

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Spatial dislocation and affective displacement: youth perspectives on gentrification in London

Contemporary urban change has led to arguments that the city is being subject to spatial sorting as former industrialized or inner-city neighbourhoods are displaced by a 'middle class' in processes of gentrification that appear to be accelerating globally (see, for example, August 2014; Moos 2013; Arbaci & Rai 2013; Butler et al 2013; Hodkinson 2012; Watt 2013; Butler & Hamnett 2009; Butler et al 2008; Smith & Williams 2007 [1986]; Wyly & Hammel 2004; Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn 2000). At times the analysis of gentrification has become somewhat mired in internal debates as to the critical nature of the field, and the limits of its depiction as a process of exclusionary displacement (Schlichtman & Patch 2014; Butler et al 2013; Macleod & Johnstone 2012; Doucet et al 2011; Lees et al 2010; Freeman 2006; Slater 2008; Wyly & Hammel 2004).

Usefully, these debates have highlighted the need for more contextualized, empirically informed perspectives on gentrification (Freeman 2008; Watt 2008). For example, while there are increasing numbers of grounded studies on processes of urban change (e.g. Wessendorf 2014; Glick-Schiller et. al. 2011; Watson 2006), less is known about how age affects or mediates spatial negotiations that have brought to the fore a range of social divisions within cities. The majority of work on gentrification has been dominated by adult perspectives (with some exceptions such as Authier & Lehman-Frisch 2013, Watt 2013, Lees 2003 and Karsten 2002).

Youth voices in the contestation of urban life have been significantly absent in geographical research according to Skelton and Gough (2013; see also Fenge et. al. 2011). There are indications that young people, one of the largest user groups of public space in the city, can feel unheard, marginalized or misrepresented in the consultations over, and representations of, city spaces (see Butcher 2009; Butcher & Thomas 2003; Fitzpatrick et. al. 2000). Travlou (2003, see also Malone 1999) for example, has argued that young people's spatially focused leisure time within their neighbourhoods makes them highly knowledgeable about their local area, and acutely susceptible to

negative or positive experiences as a result of processes of urban change such as gentrification. Young people also play a vivid role in perceptions of anomie, inflected with inter-generational opposition and a discourse of shifting cultural values as they contest space use, having to negotiate and adapt to spaces of adult and/or commercial dominance (Jackson 2012; Jensen & Christensen 2012; Clayton 2012; Wacquant 2007). Their presence contributes to debates on the decline of 'community' (Wallace 2014), and the experience of the urban as disorderly and insecure has at times focused on the 'problem' of youth that can be solved by gentrification (Vasta 2010; Wilson & Grammenos 2005).

In documenting youth experiences of urban transformation in the east London borough of Hackney, this paper attempts to reframe debates on gentrification, increasing the volume of youth voices in its analysis and intervening in debates surrounding the need for a more nuanced understanding of its differential impact. Within Hackney an influx of upmarket shops, demolition orders, new apartment blocks and creative industries now populate an area that in the past has been popularly depicted as an archetype of inner city dystopia. A more detailed description of these changes will be provided below, but in analysing young people's responses to this shifting landscape we argue that there is evidence for a more complex relationship between gentrifiers and local residents. There are expressions of ambivalence towards the impact of gentrification rather than straightforward rejection or immutable antagonism. Young people appear to have the capacity to re-imagine their relationship with the complex space they have grown up in and call home.

In particular we argue that the young people involved in this study are experiencing the shifting city through processes of spatial dislocation and affective displacement. The former incorporates a sense of disorientation in the temporal disjunctions of the speed of change, while the latter involves the embodiment of a sense of 'otherness', of no longer belonging, generated within classed and intercultural interactions. The following sections will elaborate on these arguments, providing an overview of existing work on youth and gentrification followed by the context of the study in east London.

Youth and Gentrification

Research from fields as diverse as sociology (e.g. Sampson 2008) to psychology (e.g. Formoso et. al. 2010), has noted that the context in which children and young people live, play and learn, can impact on their wellbeing, with evidence of a connection between negative environmental experiences and their inability to develop a sense of place (Abbott-Chapman & Robertson 2009). There has been some argument that processes of gentrification can ameliorate the negative outcomes of poor urban environments by de-concentrating poverty through an influx of wealthier residents and better facilities (e.g. Formoso et. al. 2010). However, this process implies one of the most ubiquitous criticisms of gentrification, that of the displacement of existing residents.

Young people, regulated by unequal power relations in the home and the city, have little negotiation in this displacement, which can also be accompanied by long periods of precarity (Watt 2013). Displacement, including spatial dislocation, establishes particular risks for marginalisd youth in particular, setting in motion multiple stressful transitions ranging from: the loss of play and leisure areas; families forced out of an area due to rent increases or evictions; diversion of resources due to increased housing costs that could otherwise be invested in children (such as day-care, education and extra-curricula activities); and the diversion of parental engagement due to the need to work longer hours or commute further (Visser et al 2014; Formoso et. al. 2010).

Displacement, however, is not just the decanting of residents as a result of demolition orders and the pressure of increasing rents, but also occurs as a result of disjunctions in the affective dimensions of belonging that come with urban transformation. Affective displacement for our purposes equates with no longer 'feeling at home', that is, no longer 'fitting in' (Butcher 2010). As Pagani et al (2011: 338) argue, with secure attachment to place, 'curiosity, empathy and identification can occur' (see also Bartos 2013). On the other hand, being 'out of sync' with other users of a particular cultural space can generate a sense of discomfort, felt but often unarticulated, or even shame and embarrassment at getting things wrong within a new cultural

context (Butcher 2011; Probyn 2004). Intertwined with issues of power and privilege, embodied, affective responses to change become instrumental in social conflict when engendering exclusion, vulnerability and resentment (Herbert 2008; Phillips and Smith 2006; Wise 2005).

Despite the density of debates surrounding affect, there are three areas of relevance in particular for this study: its inter-subjective nature, the production of collective affect (atmosphere), and its intensity. It has been argued that the 'closeness of urban life' generates the inter-subjective entanglements of bodies, and bodies and the built environment (Simonsen & Koefoed 2015: 522; see also Dirksmeier & Helbrecht 2015; Yeoh 2015; Kraftl 2013; Conradson and Latham 2007; Harker 2005; Ahmed 2004). In addition, as Thrift (2004: 62) has argued, affect is not only the property of an encounter, but serves to structure it, 'so that bodies are disposed for action in a particular way'. However, as Butcher (2011) has argued, culture must also be taken into account in analyzing affective responses, becoming intertwined with 'collective affect', that is, the production and manipulation of 'atmospheres' that are implicated in collaborations or conflicts with others (Simonson & Koefoed 2015; Anderson 2009). Differentiated from individualized emotions, the atmospheres of collective affect can 'press upon' the residents of particular spaces (Anderson 2009). This can be demonstrated in the transformation of neighbourhoods into hostile or welcoming places (Yeoh 2015). The ambience of a place such as Broadway Market (discussed below), now visibly populated by young professionals colloquially known as 'hipsters', or the imposing blocks of new 'affordable luxury' condominiums that replace social housing estates, generated atmospheres of exclusion for the young people involved in this study.

Atmosphere is also implicated in the intensity of change and subsequent responses to it (Thrift 2004). As an affective event, transformation in Hackney has seen new signifiers, that is, new bodies that represent processes of change (Harker 2005), rapidly crowding out the extant and leaving residents with little time to adjust. This has particular implications for categories of youth. The body of the young, white creative professional has come to represent processes of gentrification and the remodeling of places like Hackney as hubs for the new digital, creative economy. The affective

(leading to the physical) displacement of other bodies from the space of the new economy is described more fully in the findings below.

Much of the existing work on affect and place noted above has emerged from research focused on inter-ethnic encounters in culturally diverse spaces. However, the inter-generational encounter is also one of difference in which affect and atmosphere need to be taken into account (Mannay 2014). As Bartos (2013) has argued, it is in childhood that a sense of place begins to take shape, extending from children's emotional and sensory engagement with their surroundings (see also Abbott-Chapman & Robertson 2009). Youth activities are often bound by neighbourhood structures such as access to facilities and social relationships. The potential loss of familiar places, routines, and social networks embedded in these structures is particularly salient given the predominance of research that indicates young people derive well-being from group identification and solidarity (see, for example, Harris 2013; Colombo & Rebughini 2012).

Significantly, displacement of young people occurs within urban interventions based largely on adult understandings of space use and aesthetics, normatively framed by a desire for 'safe', well governed cities. This has seen the creation of what Waltzer (1986) describes as 'single minded spaces' (cited in Rogers & Coaffee 2005) that tend to privilege particular forms and disallow movement between the different uses of a space that young people may engage with (Worpole & Knox 2007). There are acts of re-appropriation, for example, young people in this study noted the use of void spaces on estates, such as decks under buildings for games, or stairwells for meeting friends. However, this agency is held in check by a shrinkage of public space for young people in cities (Travlou 2003), and their stigmatization as 'anti-social' for being in the wrong place at the wrong time (see Hodkinson 2012 for his arguments on contemporary enclosures).

Inherent in this tension within urban change are the unequal power relations that mark young people's relationships with the city. For example, in Kennelly and Watt's (2012) research with young people in east London, the outcomes of 'renewal', such as the closure of cheap retail outlets in the face of competition from a new shopping centre, threatened both their already minimal capacity to consume and their sense of belonging. However, the

category of youth, which to this point we recognize has been used somewhat homogenously, like gentrification also needs to be thought through in more diverse ways. While some young people exist in various states of precarity, others appear as desirable and catered for in contemporary city life. Different discursive landscapes surround these categories of youth.

On the one hand, the 'creative city' is imagined as servicing an entrepreneurial youthfulness, for example, the hi-tech start-up, the young artist, or the fashion designer. On the other hand, there is a definition of youth in Hackney that has rested largely on the mediatised intersection of ethnic diversity, deprivation, masculinity, and criminality. The threads of this discourse, pre-dating the contemporary marketing of Hackney, coalesced after street riots in 2011 into a forceful stigmatization in which those taking part were deemed to be 'thugs', destroying their own community (Wallace 2014; Seamark et al 2011) [1] . Portrayed as intimidating, unsightly, unpredictable, a dangerous underclass, a problem, either miscreants or in need of protection, or just in the way, this depiction of young people contributes to friction in a city that can be regarded as both a site of pleasure and insecurity.

This discursive landscape surrounding some young people generates tension between place and the imagination of it, and, according to writers such as Garbin and Millington (2002), then becomes implicated in the impetus for regeneration projects that in effect attempt to remove certain types of youth and youth behaviours from public space. Young bodies are coded according to a particular imaginary with gentrification posed as 'cleansing, beneficial and city-serving' (Wilson & Grammenos 2005: 297), designing out perceived disruptive presence. Planning and design within this normative rubric becomes then a means to address urban dysfunction, particularly its equation that the sum of poverty, criminality and cultural diversity equals disorder. However, according to Smithsimon (2010: 718), this approach negates a key function of public space, that is, to make 'the reality of inequality and poverty *visible*' (his italics). Within contemporary processes of

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[1] During CHaSH team discussions, media stereotyping was a recurring issue and source of irritation for the peer researchers. A rationale for using film was to enable young people to create alternative images.

(re)ordering city space, some have argued that working class residents of gentrifying suburbs have merely become a nostalgic 'idealized ethnic "community-scape"' (Wilson & Grammenos 2005: 307; also Butler 2003).

Yet the lived experience of young people can present confounding variables to this description of gentrification's impact, making ambiguous boundaries between inclusion and exclusion. For example, rather than the granting of a permanent stigma as suggested by Garbin and Millington (2012: 2070), the relationship between young people and their neighbourhoods can be complicated by the idea that the 'grittiness' of a place can also be its attraction, that which makes it feel like home. From a corporate perspective, there is a tension in the desire to manage youth in urban centres but also a need to attract them as consumers (Butcher & Thomas 2003). And while studies decry the loss of 'unpredictable encounter' in the decline or commercialization of public space (e.g. Karsten 2002), others highlight the continuous capacity of young people to blur the line between public and private through the finding of interstitial spaces within which to play (Spinney 2010; Worpole & Knox 2007; Butcher & Thomas 2003). There is also a need to recognize the pleasure to be had by young people in the aesthetics and facilities of a renewed city as noted below. The following discussion will pick up the threads of these points, expanding how both an analysis of spatial dislocation and affective displacement enables a more nuanced understanding of the impact of gentrification from the perspective of young people growing up in a place like Hackney.

A Place Like Hackney

Theoretically drawing on the field of urban affective geographies as outlined above (see also Rose et. al. 2010; Jiron 2008; Montserrat & Degen 2008; Wise 2005), the *Creating Hackney as Home (CHAsH)* project used a participatory visual methodology incorporating film production, the use of video diaries, and discussion, both online and in workshops[2]. Working with a community partner, *Immediate Theatre*, five Peer Research Assistants

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[2] See www.hackneyashome.co.uk/about/approach

(PRAs)[3], 16-19 years old, were employed in April 2013 to conduct research on the theme of 'home' within the context of their changing borough. The PRAs all grew up in Hackney social housing estates, and came from BME (black and minority ethnic) backgrounds. They were responsible for film and video diary production over the course of the following year, supported by mentoring from the research team. An initial workshop was held to discuss the study's objectives and refine research questions. The PRAs then undertook research around their chosen approach to the topic of home, using different genres (from documentary to spoken word performance) to produce films focusing on different aspects of the theme.

The resulting research data consisted of: material collected in the process of making the films, the films themselves [INSERT: https://www.youtube.com/user/HackneyAsHome INTO ONLINE VERSION] and responses to them when screened online and to various 'publics' including four groups of young people within Hackney, stakeholders including youth workers, local residents and Hackney Council, and in two public screenings[4]; material collected as part of the PRA's critical reflections made throughout the project, both video and written diaries; interviews and material collected by the PRAs as part of their ongoing research on Hackney; material collected by the PI and RA including debriefings with PRAs, meetings with stakeholders, participant observation, and thick description of particular sites undergoing rapid change within Hackney, for example, Dalston Junction and Broadway Market.

Marked by high levels of urban regeneration, the borough of Hackney has become iconic of the intensity of change in parts of contemporary London. Demands from competing stakeholders have led to juxtaposing expectations of space use and a concomitant potential for everyday conflict

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[3] There were initially six PRAs employed but one left the project after the third month. The team are referred to in this paper as: Monét, Shekeila, Matthew, Michael, Tyrell and Josh.

[4] Targeted screenings were held throughout 2013-14: the Hackney Youth Parliament; the Dalston youth hub; London youth peer facilitators; and two Immediate Theatre youth groups in Dalston and Clapton (Hackney wards). Two major public screenings were held in September 2013 and March 2015. The films have also been used by other stakeholders, such as Hackney Council and in higher education teaching, for which we do not have direct feedback other than that they were used to generate discussion. The films are creative commons, to be used by anyone, and it was an objective of the project to track how and in what capacity they were screened as part of evaluating the reach of visual methods.

between residents, and between residents and local authorities. However, despite a growing population of middle class and creative professionals in Hackney, it still maintains high levels of cultural diversity and social inequalities (LBH 2014; Mayhew et. al. 2011; Census 2011). According to the borough's own statistics, it is the second most deprived local authority in England with all of its local government wards in the top 10% most deprived in the country (LBH 2014). It also has a young population, with 46% of residents under 29 years of age (25% under 20 years, LBH 2014).

Present policies of regeneration in Hackney could be seen as part of a history of urban change that has affected east London over decades: from slum clearances in the nineteenth century, to the Docklands redevelopment in the twentieth century, then driven by proximity to the City's global financial district and redevelopment in the lead up to the 2012 Olympic Games[5]. The local council has also positioned the borough as a centre for creative industries in London, attracting businesses, particularly hi-tech start-ups, into the area.

The resulting transformation is widely described as gentrification: upwardly shifting socio-economic demographics in parts of the borough; a 'hipster'[6] phenomenon bringing with it certain forms of social and cultural capital; a changing retail mix towards high-end consumer goods; and patterns of increasing house prices and rents. These factors have led to concerns over the displacement of existing residents. Like other parts of London, housing in the borough is marked by a lack of affordability and overcrowding that the council has itself recognized as problematic, stating that the situation 'could push many residents out of the borough as affordable accommodation will be out of the reach of the majority of applicants' (LBH 2008: 15). While the council plans to build over 16,000 new homes in the next 10 years (LBH 2014), there is an argument that redevelopment has exacerbated polarization and exclusion, disproportionally affecting young people (Kennelly & Watt 2011).

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[5] Hackney was one of five London Olympics host boroughs, with the games village and main stadium at its eastern boundary.
[6] Generally regarded as fashionable, young urban professionals often perceived as working in broadly defined creative industries (see Wessendorf 2014).

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Displacement in Hackney has entailed physically decanting residents in a process of spatial dislocation from social housing now on valuable land. But it can also entail, as we argue in this paper, affective displacement engendered in the new classed and intercultural interactions in Hackney that generate discomfort and subsequent exclusion. Similarly, the speed of change, rather than its form alone, contributes to a sense of displacement, resulting in disorientation and changing access to space. However, it is in the exploration of these processes, both spatial and affective displacement, that a more complicated relationship between young people and gentrification is made visible.

Spatial Dislocation

> They're moving out all of the poorer people and making the houses too expensive for the poorer people to actually, to continue living there… (local resident, interviewed by Matthew, 27/04/13).

The new apartment blocks of Dalston Square in Hackney are a monumental indication of an area in flux. Accompanying the new housing are fashionable café's, bars and public spaces that in recent years have begun to crowd out the cheaper cafés and corner stores. The hallmarks of gentrification are entrenched, including a ubiquitous concern about displacement that marked the narratives of the PRAs and the people they interviewed, both youth and adults. Matthew, for example, grew up in Dalston and watched its transformation from his council estate bedroom window. He described the process of redevelopment as a zero-sum game: if someone comes in, someone else has to leave.

> There is a lot of good changes, there is a lot of them… with the new development and new, like, shops and things like that, all these new places are getting more upper-class and trendy, but, it just makes you think 'who are they catering for?'. I mean there are lots of people who are living in council flats and [you're just] thinking they can't afford to go to these places, so it seems as if Hackney are catering to other

people to come in, and for people to come in, somebody will have to leave, and you're thinking 'who is gonna leave?'. Well, it's gonna be the people who financially cannot support themselves well enough to stay where they've been living all their life. And I just don't think that's fair. But, that just shows what power can do. If you're powerful then you're the one that can make these decisions. (Matthew, diary, 10/05/13).

Matthew recognizes the inherent disparities in the mechanisms of power that are driving change in his neighbourhood. But he also demonstrates how the sense of discomfort and concern about displacement could be simultaneously held with expressions of benefits and pleasure in some aspects such as improved facilities. This ambivalence was widely expressed in the PRAs' reflections and interviews with local residents:

Changing in a good way, in some ways… I guess it's changing in a good way cause, like, more people will come and they'll say 'aw, it's a good place to live', but in some ways… the price has risen on everything… so people that lived there before might find it a bit offensive that it's changing so much so quickly… (interviewed by Tyrell, 22/04/13)

For this resident, change was magnified by temporal dislocation generated in the intensity of transformation. Names are changed and the familiar replaced with the new, seemingly overnight. Matthew, for example, registered a sense of shock at the discovery of a beauty spa in the Dalston Square redevelopment.

I'm literally noticing new things every day that I'd never noticed. […] Like, literally, Oh My Gosh! Dalston … has a spa. A spa. A *spa*! Wait… I'm even like wondering how I've never seen it until now? Because it looks like it's been open for a bit of time, and… I was walking through, I don't know what they call it now, Dalston Square or whatever… where the library is and that little café area, then I just

looked to the left, (…) I just never looked at the left of that site, and there was literally a spa right there. (…) it's just really weird because it literally came out of nowhere, like literally one day it was there (…). I'm just thinking now about what else is gonna change… because, like, there's a lot more construction next to it. (…) I don't know, I can't complain too much, it looks good (…). It makes the area look better… but always thinking about who is it actually for, that's the main thing (Matthew, diary, 08/10/13).

While increased security and more 'modern' facades were at times regarded as beneficial side effects of gentrification, the question of 'who is it actually for', and an associated precarity of housing tenure, still appeared as a source of tension dominating everyday conversations, media debates and council concern[7].

Penny: Like growing up in Hackney I have seen the major changes that are happening and that are still occurring now. I think because of the lack of space that young people have within that community, within Hackney … and them changing it to flats and things like that there ain't enough space for young people (…).

Adam: I don't think it's about just the space cos I do work in Hackney as well … and a lot of the problems that most people come out and say, they all say it's because the flats, they all say it's because of the space (…) It's mostly about money, it's always about money, like earning and surviving and having money (youth workers, screening & discussion, 07/02/14).

For Josh, who liked to go to the gym, the access to 'healthy shops' that came with gentrification was a positive change from the fast food outlets that dominated Hackney's high streets (e.g. kebab and fried chicken cafes), but he

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[7] In 2015, Hackney Council began a borough-wide consultation to gather residents' opinions on the process and direction of change (https://consultation.hackney.gov.uk/ communications-and-consultation/hackney-a-place-for-everyone/consult_view)

also drew from his observations a link between 'mindset' and changing urban environments.

> Personally, I think that's really good how we got loads of organic shops coming up or lots of white barbers and stuff like that… cos if that happens, then there will be more individuals coming out of the closet, yeah, and not more sheeps, we want more shepherds… we want more individuals to come out, we want them to change and really… that's them adapting to the new surroundings. People might not like it, people may disagree with the new shops and stuff like that, however, I think it is very good, and I think Hackney needs a change, good or bad, Hackney needs to change something like that (Josh, diary, 21/05/13),

This sense of aspiration, wanting more 'shepherds' rather than 'sheep', a desire for individuality, also inflected Matthew's assessment of the redevelopment in Dalston Square. Despite reflections questioning whom the apartments were for and whether he could afford it, Matthew could imagine himself occupying one.

> I think it looks really nice, like, I'd definitely want to live in one of them when I'm getting my own apartment, probably very expensive though, but I'm broke of expensive tastes though [chuckling]. Hopefully I won't be when I'm older. That's the plan… (Matthew, diary, 28/04/13).

While Matthew's sense of aspiration is tempered by apprehension, for others there was an indeterminate sense of loss at times centred on affective nostalgia, that marked their experiences of spatial dislocation in Hackney. For example, the loss of Georgian architecture, as well as housing, was at the centre of a campaign to stop the demolition of a former theatre and terraces

on Dalston Lane that made way for the Dalston Square apartment blocks[8].

This campaign tended to be led by long-term, middle class residents (Wessendorf 2014; Davison et. al 2012), but their opposition on the grounds of the design of the new buildings was not shared by participants in the CHAsH study. In juxtaposition several young people noted they preferred the 'modern' style of the new apartments.

While the aesthetics of regeneration continue to be debated, perhaps more importantly the campaign raised the issue of the increasing invisibility of Hackney's history and diversity. This fading out of the past and particular communities contributed to the severing of points of orientation and the generation of both spatial and affective dislocation (discussed further below). It could be argued that the current discourse of invigorating the area as a centre for creative industries neglects the cultural history of the borough including, for example, the 'Four Aces' club in the former Colosseum theatre. This was once a centre of black music in the 1960s, then a legendary rave venue, the 'Labyrinth', in the 1980s[9]. The Colosseum was controversially demolished in 2007 to make way for the Dalston Junction transport interchange and the Dalston Square apartments (Davison et. al. 2012)[10]. Similarly, a computer generated image of the plans for a renewed pedestrianized shopping precinct in Hackney Central had to be withdrawn by the council as the diversity of local residents was effaced by a representation featuring primarily young, white professionals (Hodgson 2013). Also withdrawn were plans by the council to remove the name of the C.L.R. James Library[11] when it was moved to the Dalston Square redevelopment.

Among the young people involved in the CHAsH project there was little attentiveness to these campaigns. However, there was an awareness of the

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[8] At time of writing, the OPEN Dalston group continue to lobby for the preservation of other buildings in the area, http://opendalston.blogspot.co.uk

[9] See Winstan Whitter's (2008), *Legacy In the Dust: The Four Aces Story'* www.legacyinthedust.net. The venue opened as the North London Colosseum and Amphitheatre in 1886.

[10] The venue was closed in 1998 and left abandoned resulting in damage to the building and the subsequent need to demolish it. Criticism of the Council's actions came from campaign groups and prominent local residents. The council was able to maintain some social housing and a new library in part of the redevelopment (Davison et. al 2012).

[11] The library was originally named after the Trinidadian-born writer and political activist,C. L. R. James.

connection between power and visibility furthering their sense of dislocation. Several were required to move home, in one case three times over the course of the year, due to housing precarity; movement that was itself invisible except to family and key workers. According to writers such as Wallace (2014), the discourse of the benefits of gentrification for young people, for example, the provision of employment and access to facilities, makes invisible markers of precarity and their insertion into the market economy as consumer-citizens in a neo-liberal city. In addition, while differences in the condition of housing were made visible in their comparisons between estates where they lived and the new buildings, the mechanisms of power that enabled these differences remained unseen. Tyrell described the flickering advertising hoarding outside his brother's bedroom window and notes that it is only because their apartment was not 'top class' that this was allowed to happen.

> Why would they put this in someone's house? Obviously, this house is not rated top class, that's probably why they put it here… So underprivileged people in Hackney live here, like myself, but underprivileged I wouldn't say, just living in hard times, but … it's still bad (…). They built a new [venue] over there which they could've built a flat there, that's what I think they could've put a flat there, (…) they could've moved us there but they just built [that] place, […] … I don't know why they did it, so I can't … I have to question why? (Tyrell, diary, 18/08/13).

Team discussions also highlighted their acute awareness of the differences in terms of how they felt they were perceived in public space, hyper-visible in their youthful, black selves; comparing themselves to other cohorts of young white people who appeared to generate less friction, and who they perceived as being allowed to stay put rather than be moved on. These markers of power, feelings of loss and (in)visibility begin to suggest the second aspect of change that must be negotiated by young people in gentrifying neighbourhoods, that of affective displacement. This became particularly apparent in the classed and intercultural relationships between them and newer residents, including the much stereotyped 'hipster'.

Affective Displacement

While spatial dislocation focuses on the physical removal of young people as a result of gentrification, affective displacement could be just as effective at generating invisibility. Expressed as discomfort, of no longer belonging to certain streets or public areas that had once felt like 'home', responses of affective displacement were codified in particular according to socio-economic and racial differences. While Hackney has historically had a white population, ranging from wealthy to working class (Willes 2012), it is the settlement of increasing numbers of residents from professional, creative or higher income brackets that has transformed parts of Hackney in recent years. The difference between established and new residents is noted by respondents in their use of adjectives such as 'trendy' or 'professional' in conjunction with 'white'. Shekeila outlined a connection between a critical mass of these new residents and affective states of (dis)comfort that equated with shifting feelings of belonging, or not.

> It's about class and race as well because I've seen a lot more white people come into Hackney as the borough's been changing over the past two, three years, which is why they feel more comfortable, because they feel like it's their area now. That's why some people (…) feel like they don't like Hackney anymore because it's changing but not for them (team discussion, 28/04/13).

Encounters with new neighbours and their unfamiliar practices, in streets that now emanated new atmospheres experienced through the senses, the smell of coffee in high-end cafes for example, generated for Monet feelings of irritation and anger.

> Yeah, they're trying to make it some fairy tale now and it's not. Hackney was a, I don't know, it could look a certain way and have a different set of atmospheres, but Dalston … they got rid of KFC for god's sake! Who closes down KFC! (…) So I've got to walk past coffee every bloody day. And, yeah, everything is just up-market. I guess it's

good. I hate new builds. Me and my Nan's going to have to move into a new build with private renting which is annoying (Monet, final debrief, 22/07/14).

Embedded within this discomfort was the lack of knowledge at times of how to use these transformed spaces. As Matthew noted after visiting a Vietnamese restaurant and having a bill brought to the table (rather than paying at the counter as he would do in a fast food chain). 'I don't feel completely out of place but it just feels different 'cos it's something I'm not used to' (diary, 28/08/13). Dislocating place and belonging, newness created exclusions as Matthew explored in his filming of the facilities in a new youth centre: 'it kind of seems as if nobody really wants to go there because they don't see it as home yet, which is kind of understandable since it's new'.

Infractions of social expectations, appearance for example, also generated the discomfort that comes with not belonging, resulting at times in practices of avoidance. Hamza, interviewed by Tyrell for his film, noted that he no longer feels he belongs in Broadway Market, a part of Hackney that was once his home.

Not any more, no. Not at all, not in this area to be honest, because I think I'm the only one here in tracksuit bottoms in the whole road. Not how like it was before.

While social housing tower blocks and low-rise estates remain at its edges, Broadway Market now represents a concentration of young, creative professionals and middle class residents with whom the use of space must be negotiated. From Wessendorf's (2013) research, this cohort is regarded as not engaging in the 'ethos of mixing' that generally marks the borough's diverse public spaces. Instead they tend to socialize in particular venues, are less likely to have local family ties, and do not engage in community spaces such as schools and youth centres. They are more likely to be mobile, moving out of the borough after a few years. This gave rise to expressions of resentment, both at a perceived loss of place and perceived judgments inflected by race and class.

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I felt uncomfortable on a racist note (…), yeah like you just see the one odd black person, and they're usually in a mixed couple. So yeah, I'm just there in my ghetto-self, just chilling in the park, blacker than black. I just felt a bit out of place but at the same time you realize no one is actually looking at you. I mean they will look at you, but then they will just look away, but it's just something that's always above my head (Monet, team discussion, 28/04/13).

This contestation is particularly evident in Broadway Market, where Tyrell focused his research. Illustrating his sense of displacement, he noted a perception at times that changing demographics in the area resulted in his being judged in a particular way, namely, being 'looked down on' (differing, we would argue, from the judgments of peers, discussed below).

Broadway Market has become… the culture is completely lost, I don't see any other culture than European culture, and I haven't seen much going on for Black History Month and it's quite shocking (Tyrell, diary, 15/10/13).

Illustrating the process of affective displacement, Tyrell described his discomfort at others' misuse of what was once his home. White people drinking, littering and being noisy contributed to his assessment that it is 'a shit area', but there is some relief that he is moving out soon. His observations of 'Blacks dressing up as trendy people to fit in' created a sense of dissonance.

They're all trendy people… I walked past there now, I just came at my house, walked past theirs and some black woman in there as well. I was thinking "raaa, she's trendy and she's black". You don't really see that. (…) All them trendy people go sit there, they dress fuckin'… I mean they dress trendy' (diary, 02/09/13).

However, again a sense of ambivalence is embedded in his observation, as he noted aspects of the area that he likes, including a shared love of fashion. Tyrell's expression of appreciation in terms of style reflects the finding of some commonality, even at a distance, with his 'trendy' neighbours. There is then a doubling of affective displacement as he also no longer always 'fits in' with his peers because of the way he dresses; at times eschewing the tracksuits, baggy jeans and 'hoodies' that tend to mark out the masculine identity of his peers in the area, in favour of skinnier jeans and a peacoat. The pressure from within friendship networks to conform to particular codes of appearance was also noted by Josh.

> So as a young kid if you try and dress differently they call you, like there's a big homophobic like prejudice in Hackney, and if you try and dress differently then they will just call you gay, that's primitive behaviour that I was talking about … (team discussion, 28/04/13).

In this sense, it could be argued that the process of change in Hackney, with its associated shifts in demographics, could provide conditions for young people to transcend extant normative behaviours that they find uncomfortable. In other words, with shifting built environments comes shifts in cultural frames of reference within which the young people in this study operated, allowing for the possibility for alterity as well as resistance to it.

Josh and Tyrell's remarks cohere with arguments that the affective state of belonging and attachment to place is culturally accumulated over time through routine practice (such as dress) and relationship networks, and reinforced through judgment (Butcher 2011). For Josh, regeneration in Hackney appeared to give some possibility of respite from the difficulties of negotiating, as a young black man, the tensions that emanate from the judgments of his peers.

> I would prefer if Hackney was, like, Camden. I don't know why… it seems more vibrant, it seems more peaceful. Here it seems more primitive… it seems more rushy, not rushy in the fact that it's a busy place… the atmosphere seems really tense. Maybe that's just for

me… 'cos I'm a young Black male and a lot of that comes with that (Josh, diary, 04/06/13).

Josh's reference to 'atmosphere' highlights the significance of this affective register in generating a sense of belonging or exclusion. His comments also reinforce the findings that it is not only newer residents that produce the discomfort of affective displacement for young people in this neighbourhood. There is an awareness of the spatial boundaries of territory that continue to exist alongside gentrification. The presence of 'The LF' (London Fields gang) created unease for several of the young people involved in this study and prevented them from accessing the area at certain times[12]. Tyrell reflected on why The LF did not appear to target white people, but conversely several participants in the study noted that a benefit of gentrification was an increased sense of security. This was at times perceived as stemming from the presence of more 'English professionals' generating a sense of safety within public space if not necessarily belonging.

> *Respondent:* I'd say it's getting safer 'cos there's a lot more professionals moving into Hackney now, a lot of … young English professionals moving in, they're buying up all the properties in Hackney, so it's getting kind of affluent in some areas, but it's also deprived in some areas... So yeah, I'd say it is getting safer; I wouldn't say it's safe, 100%, but it is getting safer. […]
> *Josh*: So to live in Hackney would be more ideal for the white, trendy, sort of hipster that are just moving into our area right now?
> *Respondent*: Most definitely. Because the demographic of Hackney is changing, some say for the better, some say for the worse, I'm in-between, I'm sitting on the fence on this one. (interviewed by Josh, 31/07/13)

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[12] Hackney has in the past been regarded as a centre for high levels of gang activity, however, youth workers and police report a significant decline [e.g, www.hackney.gov.uk/ Assets/Documents/Reduce-Child-Poverty-and-improve-Family-Well-being.pdf, accessed 10 March 2015].

This increased sense of security suggests a more complicated process at play than the straightforward antagonism, or tolerance at best between new and existing residents indicated in some gentrification research (e.g. Bacqué et al 2014; Tissot 2014). There may be signs of resistance in Hackney in the occasional piece of graffiti targeting 'hipsters', and in the type of preservation campaigns outlined above. However, these antagonisms must be contextualized by the minimal contact between new and existing residents. When contact did occur for Tyrell for example, encountering people in Broadway Market as part of the project, he expressed surprise that they would engage with him positively[13], suggesting that perceptions of judgment could be mitigated.

In other examples, encounters with difference did not necessarily entail exclusion but rather a discomfort that also contained a reflexive quality leading to processes of adaptation (Butcher, forthcoming). Variables of disposition and transitions through the life course marked many of the young people's experiences in this study and are difficult to disentangle when assessing the impact of gentrification (Tyler et. al. 2013). Matthew, for example, demonstrated a curiosity and reflexive ability to cross thresholds into new spaces that perhaps other young people did not possess. He ventured into new restaurants, for example, equating his own changing preferences to the changes in Hackney more broadly as he experimented with the new; Singapore noodles from Brick Lane and Vietnamese from Kingsland Road.

However, there were recognized structural limits to the possibilities of reflexivity and adaptation as Matthew illustrates in his experience at a 'pop up street food' venue, where hot dogs cost £6.

> I do like seeing those type of places because it has like a certain trendy vibe to it, but at the same time, it's not like I've got the money to go to those type of places so … I don't know, I kind of like it but don't like it at the same time … so, that's just me. (Matthew, diary, 24/07/13)

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[13] Tyrell's photo essay and podcast of his research with 'hipsters' can be found here: http://www.hackneyashome.co.uk/tyrell/tyrell-hipster-portraits-131113

Indicative of the ambivalence of gentrification, the desire to share in a particular 'trendy' atmosphere is mitigated by the reality of a price tag that generates the discomfort of affective displacement, signaling he could no longer remain in place.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to reframe debates on displacement and gentrification by their examination through the experiences of young people living in an east London borough. Using an affective lens it has illustrated that displacement under conditions of gentrification is more than the physical decanting of residents; the generation of atmospheres of exclusion and judgment can be as effective at removing young people from public space. It could be argued that the affective, embodied, register is heightened given the difficulty at times for participants in the study to articulate processes of change over which they have no control.

There is a need, therefore, to include in gentrification debates a more nuanced understanding of the differential impact on young people of urban transformation. Rather than straightforward antagonism, there is inconsistency and contradiction in their responses to urban change, with both gains and losses in their calculations of the impact of gentrification. Gains included the possibility for increased security, accessing new resources and generating practices that reflected transforming subjectivities. Losses, however, included multiple stress factors that generated insecurity, including the threat of spatial dislocation (eviction or homelessness) and a diminishing sense of belonging through affective displacement.

Expressions of discomfort were predicated on observations of a sense of loss at no longer fitting in as the culture of particular areas in Hackney shifted with the advent of new demographics. They can no longer afford to buy goods at local shops that are renovated and there were perceptions of judgment, feeling 'looked down upon', a residual population stigmatized by past representations of Hackney as a place of poverty and crime. In the stated question of 'who the changes are for', there was recognition of their differential access to sources of power, what others have referred to as

disadvantage 'being in your face every day' (Wessendorf 2014), and an inability to intervene in processes of managing change in the Borough.

Yet, this experience of gentrification is inflected by several variables including disposition, context such as education and employment, peer and family relationships and existing stresses within families. Site-specific conditions were created in the cultural frames of reference that informed spatial practices, economic and social circumstances, planning processes, design and urban governance. And while power relations, inequality and the contestation of space are clearly themes of this research, these tropes have a history preceding this current process of urban redevelopment. As noted above, young people in the borough already faced existing barriers and were required to understand the limits of territory and power to be able to move safely through their environment. Place-making by young people is an ongoing process incorporating negotiations with other space users including commercial entities, local authorities and other young people. The current changes are perhaps regarded as just another extension of this ongoing work, although the intensity of change and control over its direction, as well as its classed and racial barriers, are creating new forms of discomfort and subsequent affective displacement for this generation.

This paper's focus on spatial dislocation and affective displacement highlighted a complicated relationship between existing and new residents. While the term 'class' was rarely used by the PRAs, they were sensitive to inequality, perceived injustice and judgement. These were the parameters with which the relationship with young professionals and other predominantly higher income white residents were assessed, generating simultaneously resentment and regard. Coping with the outcomes of displacement, physical and affective, was therefore at times more complex than just directing blame towards council policy or gentrifiers. There was at times an increased sense of security because of the presence of more 'professionals' in the area, as well as an awareness of the differences between how those 'professionals' are perceived as opposed to young, black people. But there was at times also a desire to access aspects of a similar lifestyle, or pleasure expressed in being able to access the spaces that these newer residents also enjoyed.

Therefore, in response to arguments of the ineluctable power of market driven urban redevelopment, it is possible at times, as the participants in this study indicated, to possess an ability to imagine the re-versioning of space and their place within it. As others have reported, and this study supports, young people do not necessarily internalize stigma associated with their 'territory' (see, e.g., Jensen & Christensen 2012).   Structurally it is also unclear if the context in Hackney can be simply divided into 'marginal' versus 'the middle', when it can be argued that a key cohort driving cultural change in the borough (creative industries and, indeed, even academia, see for example, Schlichtman & Patch 2014) are themselves often in states of precarious employment, although with a wider, supportive base of cultural capital. Such residents can be attracted to Hackney for its diversity and engage in community politics to protect it from gentrification (see e.g. Hodkinson 2012).

Yet, while displacement (spatial and affective) may not be a totalizing framework, social structures and power dynamics still condition the possibilities for young people, as choices and access are hampered by lack of social, cultural and financial capital (Wadsley & Butcher 2015). There are signs of belonging but there is also a need to move beyond arguments of 'cosmopolitan hope' (Yeoh 2015; also Kraftl 2008) when moments of reflexivity generated in encounter are underpinned by feelings of no longer belonging. Given this context, documenting the impact of the mechanisms and deployment of power relations within processes of gentrification from young people's perspectives becomes part of broadening understandings of the diverse responses to urban change. This has particular implications for intervening in debates centred on inter-generational justice and the rights of young people to belong in a place they call home.

Acknowledgements

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