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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

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

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

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

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

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3 context (Butcher 2011; Probyn 2004). Intertwined with issues of power and
4 privilege, embodied, affective responses to change become instrumental in
5 social conflict when engendering exclusion, vulnerability and resentment
6 (Herbert 2008; Phillips and Smith 2006; Wise 2005).
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10 Despite the density of debates surrounding affect, there are three
11 areas of relevance in particular for this study: its inter-subjective nature, the
12 production of collective affect (atmosphere), and its intensity. It has been
13 argued that the 'closeness of urban life' generates the inter-subjective
14 entanglements of bodies, and bodies and the built environment (Simonsen &
15 Koefoed 2015: 522; see also Dirksmeier & Helbrecht 2015; Yeoh 2015; Krafft
16 2013; Conradson and Latham 2007; Harker 2005; Ahmed 2004). In addition,
17 as Thrift (2004: 62) has argued, affect is not only the property of an
18 encounter, but serves to structure it, 'so that bodies are disposed for action in
19 a particular way'. However, as Butcher (2011) has argued, culture must also
20 be taken into account in analyzing affective responses, becoming intertwined
21 with 'collective affect', that is, the production and manipulation of
22 'atmospheres' that are implicated in collaborations or conflicts with others
23 (Simonsen & Koefoed 2015; Anderson 2009). Differentiated from
24 individualized emotions, the atmospheres of collective affect can 'press upon'
25 the residents of particular spaces (Anderson 2009). This can be demonstrated
26 in the transformation of neighbourhoods into hostile or welcoming places
27 (Yeoh 2015). The ambience of a place such as Broadway Market (discussed
28 below), now visibly populated by young professionals colloquially known as
29 'hipsters', or the imposing blocks of new 'affordable luxury' condominiums that
30 replace social housing estates, generated atmospheres of exclusion for the
31 young people involved in this study.
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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

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3 (leading to the physical) displacement of other bodies from the space of the
4 new economy is described more fully in the findings below.
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6 Much of the existing work on affect and place noted above has
7 emerged from research focused on inter-ethnic encounters in culturally
8 diverse spaces. However, the inter-generational encounter is also one of
9 difference in which affect and atmosphere need to be taken into account
10 (Mannay 2014). As Bartos (2013) has argued, it is in childhood that a sense of
11 place begins to take shape, extending from children's emotional and sensory
12 engagement with their surroundings (see also Abbott-Chapman & Robertson
13 2009). Youth activities are often bound by neighbourhood structures such as
14 access to facilities and social relationships. The potential loss of familiar
15 places, routines, and social networks embedded in these structures is
16 particularly salient given the predominance of research that indicates young
17 people derive well-being from group identification and solidarity (see, for
18 example, Harris 2013; Colombo & Rebughini 2012).
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28 Significantly, displacement of young people occurs within urban
29 interventions based largely on adult understandings of space use and
30 aesthetics, normatively framed by a desire for 'safe', well governed cities. This
31 has seen the creation of what Waltzer (1986) describes as 'single minded
32 spaces' (cited in Rogers & Coaffee 2005) that tend to privilege particular
33 forms and disallow movement between the different uses of a space that
34 young people may engage with (Worpole & Knox 2007). There are acts of re-
35 appropriation, for example, young people in this study noted the use of void
36 spaces on estates, such as decks under buildings for games, or stairwells for
37 meeting friends. However, this agency is held in check by a shrinkage of
38 public space for young people in cities (Travlou 2003), and their stigmatization
39 as 'anti-social' for being in the wrong place at the wrong time (see Hodkinson
40 2012 for his arguments on contemporary enclosures).
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50 Inherent in this tension within urban change are the unequal power
51 relations that mark young people's relationships with the city. For example, in
52 Kennelly and Watt's (2012) research with young people in east London, the
53 outcomes of 'renewal', such as the closure of cheap retail outlets in the face
54 of competition from a new shopping centre, threatened both their already
55 minimal capacity to consume and their sense of belonging. However, the
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3 category of youth, which to this point we recognize has been used somewhat
4 homogenously, like gentrification also needs to be thought through in more
5 diverse ways. While some young people exist in various states of precarity,
6 others appear as desirable and catered for in contemporary city life. Different
7 discursive landscapes surround these categories of youth.
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11 On the one hand, the 'creative city' is imagined as servicing an
12 entrepreneurial youthfulness, for example, the hi-tech start-up, the young
13 artist, or the fashion designer. On the other hand, there is a definition of youth
14 in Hackney that has rested largely on the mediated intersection of ethnic
15 diversity, deprivation, masculinity, and criminality. The threads of this
16 discourse, pre-dating the contemporary marketing of Hackney, coalesced
17 after street riots in 2011 into a forceful stigmatization in which those taking
18 part were deemed to be 'thugs', destroying their own community (Wallace
19 2014; Seamark et al 2011)¹. Portrayed as intimidating, unsightly,
20 unpredictable, a dangerous underclass, a problem, either miscreants or in
21 need of protection, or just in the way, this depiction of young people
22 contributes to friction in a city that can be regarded as both a site of pleasure
23 and insecurity.
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27 This discursive landscape surrounding some young people generates
28 tension between place and the imagination of it, and, according to writers
29 such as Garbin and Millington (2002), then becomes implicated in the impetus
30 for regeneration projects that in effect attempt to remove certain types of
31 youth and youth behaviours from public space. Young bodies are coded
32 according to a particular imaginary with gentrification posed as 'cleansing,
33 beneficial and city-serving' (Wilson & Grammenos 2005: 297), designing out
34 perceived disruptive presence. Planning and design within this normative
35 rubric becomes then a means to address urban dysfunction, particularly its
36 equation that the sum of poverty, criminality and cultural diversity equals
37 disorder. However, according to Smithsimon (2010: 718), this approach
38 negates a key function of public space, that is, to make 'the reality of
39 inequality and poverty *visible*' (his italics). Within contemporary processes of
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56 ¹ During CHaSH team discussions, media stereotyping was a recurring issue and source of
57 irritation for the peer researchers. A rationale for using film was to enable young people to
58 create alternative images.
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3 (re)ordering city space, some have argued that working class residents of
4 gentrifying suburbs have merely become a nostalgic 'idealized ethnic
5 "community-scape"' (Wilson & Grammenos 2005: 307; also Butler 2003).
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8 Yet the lived experience of young people can present confounding
9 variables to this description of gentrification's impact, making ambiguous
10 boundaries between inclusion and exclusion. For example, rather than the
11 granting of a permanent stigma as suggested by Garbin and Millington (2012:
12 2070), the relationship between young people and their neighbourhoods can
13 be complicated by the idea that the 'grittiness' of a place can also be its
14 attraction, that which makes it feel like home. From a corporate perspective,
15 there is a tension in the desire to manage youth in urban centres but also a
16 need to attract them as consumers (Butcher & Thomas 2003). And while
17 studies decry the loss of 'unpredictable encounter' in the decline or
18 commercialization of public space (e.g. Karsten 2002), others highlight the
19 continuous capacity of young people to blur the line between public and
20 private through the finding of interstitial spaces within which to play (Spinney
21 2010; Worpole & Knox 2007; Butcher & Thomas 2003). There is also a need
22 to recognize the pleasure to be had by young people in the aesthetics and
23 facilities of a renewed city as noted below. The following discussion will pick
24 up the threads of these points, expanding how both an analysis of spatial
25 dislocation and affective displacement enables a more nuanced
26 understanding of the impact of gentrification from the perspective of young
27 people growing up in a place like Hackney.
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42 **A Place Like Hackney**

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44 Theoretically drawing on the field of urban affective geographies as outlined
45 above (see also Rose et. al. 2010; Jiron 2008; Montserrat & Degen 2008;
46 Wise 2005), the *Creating Hackney as Home (CHAsH)* project used a
47 participatory visual methodology incorporating film production, the use of
48 video diaries, and discussion, both online and in workshops². Working with a
49 community partner, *Immediate Theatre*, five Peer Research Assistants
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58 ² See www.hackneyashome.co.uk/about/approach
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3 (PRAs)³, 16-19 years old, were employed in April 2013 to conduct research
4 on the theme of 'home' within the context of their changing borough. The
5 PRAs all grew up in Hackney social housing estates, and came from BME
6 (black and minority ethnic) backgrounds. They were responsible for film and
7 video diary production over the course of the following year, supported by
8 mentoring from the research team. An initial workshop was held to discuss the
9 study's objectives and refine research questions. The PRAs then undertook
10 research around their chosen approach to the topic of home, using different
11 genres (from documentary to spoken word performance) to produce films
12 focusing on different aspects of the theme.
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20 The resulting research data consisted of: material collected in the
21 process of making the films, the films themselves [INSERT:
22 <https://www.youtube.com/user/HackneyAsHome> INTO ONLINE VERSION]
23 and responses to them when screened online and to various 'publics'
24 including four groups of young people within Hackney, stakeholders including
25 youth workers, local residents and Hackney Council, and in two public
26 screenings⁴; material collected as part of the PRA's critical reflections made
27 throughout the project, both video and written diaries; interviews and material
28 collected by the PRAs as part of their ongoing research on Hackney; material
29 collected by the PI and RA including debriefings with PRAs, meetings with
30 stakeholders, participant observation, and thick description of particular sites
31 undergoing rapid change within Hackney, for example, Dalston Junction and
32 Broadway Market.
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41 Marked by high levels of urban regeneration, the borough of Hackney
42 has become iconic of the intensity of change in parts of contemporary
43 London. Demands from competing stakeholders have led to juxtaposing
44 expectations of space use and a concomitant potential for everyday conflict
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50 ³ There were initially six PRAs employed but one left the project after the third month. The
51 team are referred to in this paper as: Monét, Shekeila, Matthew, Michael, Tyrell and Josh.

52 ⁴ Targeted screenings were held throughout 2013-14: the Hackney Youth Parliament; the
53 Dalston youth hub; London youth peer facilitators; and two Immediate Theatre youth groups
54 in Dalston and Clapton (Hackney wards). Two major public screenings were held in
55 September 2013 and March 2015. The films have also been used by other stakeholders,
56 such as Hackney Council and in higher education teaching, for which we do not have direct
57 feedback other than that they were used to generate discussion. The films are creative
58 commons, to be used by anyone, and it was an objective of the project to track how and in
59 what capacity they were screened as part of evaluating the reach of visual methods.
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3 between residents, and between residents and local authorities. However,
4 despite a growing population of middle class and creative professionals in
5 Hackney, it still maintains high levels of cultural diversity and social
6 inequalities (LBH 2014; Mayhew et. al. 2011; Census 2011). According to the
7 borough's own statistics, it is the second most deprived local authority in
8 England with all of its local government wards in the top 10% most deprived in
9 the country (LBH 2014). It also has a young population, with 46% of residents
10 under 29 years of age (25% under 20 years, LBH 2014).

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16 Present policies of regeneration in Hackney could be seen as part of a
17 history of urban change that has affected east London over decades: from
18 slum clearances in the nineteenth century, to the Docklands redevelopment in
19 the twentieth century, then driven by proximity to the City's global financial
20 district and redevelopment in the lead up to the 2012 Olympic Games⁵. The
21 local council has also positioned the borough as a centre for creative
22 industries in London, attracting businesses, particularly hi-tech start-ups, into
23 the area.

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30 The resulting transformation is widely described as gentrification:
31 upwardly shifting socio-economic demographics in parts of the borough; a
32 'hipster'⁶ phenomenon bringing with it certain forms of social and cultural
33 capital; a changing retail mix towards high-end consumer goods; and patterns
34 of increasing house prices and rents. These factors have led to concerns over
35 the displacement of existing residents. Like other parts of London, housing in
36 the borough is marked by a lack of affordability and overcrowding that the
37 council has itself recognized as problematic, stating that the situation 'could
38 push many residents out of the borough as affordable accommodation will be
39 out of the reach of the majority of applicants' (LBH 2008: 15). While the
40 council plans to build over 16,000 new homes in the next 10 years (LBH
41 2014), there is an argument that redevelopment has exacerbated polarization
42 and exclusion, disproportionately affecting young people (Kennelly & Watt
43 2011).

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56 ⁵ Hackney was one of five London Olympics host boroughs, with the games village and main
57 stadium at its eastern boundary.

58 ⁶ Generally regarded as fashionable, young urban professionals often perceived as working in
59 broadly defined creative industries (see Wessendorf 2014).
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3 Displacement in Hackney has entailed physically decanting residents in
4 a process of spatial dislocation from social housing now on valuable land. But
5 it can also entail, as we argue in this paper, affective displacement
6 engendered in the new classed and intercultural interactions in Hackney that
7 generate discomfort and subsequent exclusion. Similarly, the speed of
8 change, rather than its form alone, contributes to a sense of displacement,
9 resulting in disorientation and changing access to space. However, it is in the
10 exploration of these processes, both spatial and affective displacement, that a
11 more complicated relationship between young people and gentrification is
12 made visible.
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20 Spatial Dislocation

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24 They're moving out all of the poorer people and making the houses
25 too expensive for the poorer people to actually, to continue living
26 there... (local resident, interviewed by Matthew, 27/04/13).
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31 The new apartment blocks of Dalston Square in Hackney are a monumental
32 indication of an area in flux. Accompanying the new housing are fashionable
33 café's, bars and public spaces that in recent years have begun to crowd out
34 the cheaper cafés and corner stores. The hallmarks of gentrification are
35 entrenched, including a ubiquitous concern about displacement that marked
36 the narratives of the PRAs and the people they interviewed, both youth and
37 adults. Matthew, for example, grew up in Dalston and watched its
38 transformation from his council estate bedroom window. He described the
39 process of redevelopment as a zero-sum game: if someone comes in,
40 someone else has to leave.
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49 There is a lot of good changes, there is a lot of them... with the new
50 development and new, like, shops and things like that, all these new
51 places are getting more upper-class and trendy, but, it just makes you
52 think 'who are they catering for?'. I mean there are lots of people who
53 are living in council flats and [you're just] thinking they can't afford to
54 go to these places, so it seems as if Hackney are catering to other
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3 people to come in, and for people to come in, somebody will have to
4 leave, and you're thinking 'who is gonna leave?'. Well, it's gonna be
5 the people who financially cannot support themselves well enough to
6 stay where they've been living all their life. And I just don't think that's
7 fair. But, that just shows what power can do. If you're powerful then
8 you're the one that can make these decisions. (Matthew, diary,
9 10/05/13).

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16 Matthew recognizes the inherent disparities in the mechanisms of power that
17 are driving change in his neighbourhood. But he also demonstrates how the
18 sense of discomfort and concern about displacement could be simultaneously
19 held with expressions of benefits and pleasure in some aspects such as
20 improved facilities. This ambivalence was widely expressed in the PRAs'
21 reflections and interviews with local residents:
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28 Changing in a good way, in some ways... I guess it's changing in a
29 good way cause, like, more people will come and they'll say 'aw, it's a
30 good place to live', but in some ways... the price has risen on
31 everything... so people that lived there before might find it a bit
32 offensive that it's changing so much so quickly... (interviewed by
33 Tyrell, 22/04/13)
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40 For this resident, change was magnified by temporal dislocation generated in
41 the intensity of transformation. Names are changed and the familiar replaced
42 with the new, seemingly overnight. Matthew, for example, registered a sense
43 of shock at the discovery of a beauty spa in the Dalston Square
44 redevelopment.
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50 I'm literally noticing new things every day that I'd never noticed. [...]
51 Like, literally, Oh My Gosh! Dalston ... has a spa. A spa. A *spa!*
52 Wait... I'm even like wondering how I've never seen it until now?
53 Because it looks like it's been open for a bit of time, and... I was
54 walking through, I don't know what they call it now, Dalston Square or
55 whatever... where the library is and that little café area, then I just
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3 looked to the left, (...) I just never looked at the left of that site, and
4 there was literally a spa right there. (...) it's just really weird because it
5 literally came out of nowhere, like literally one day it was there (...). I'm
6 just thinking now about what else is gonna change... because, like,
7 there's a lot more construction next to it. (...) I don't know, I can't
8 complain too much, it looks good (...). It makes the area look better...
9 but always thinking about who is it actually for, that's the main thing
10 (Matthew, diary, 08/10/13).
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18 While increased security and more 'modern' facades were at times regarded
19 as beneficial side effects of gentrification, the question of 'who is it actually
20 for', and an associated precarity of housing tenure, still appeared as a source
21 of tension dominating everyday conversations, media debates and council
22 concern⁷.
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28 *Penny*: Like growing up in Hackney I have seen the major changes
29 that are happening and that are still occurring now. I think because of
30 the lack of space that young people have within that community, within
31 Hackney ... and them changing it to flats and things like that there ain't
32 enough space for young people (...).
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36 *Adam*: I don't think it's about just the space cos I do work in Hackney
37 as well ... and a lot of the problems that most people come out and
38 say, they all say it's because the flats, they all say it's because of the
39 space (...) It's mostly about money, it's always about money, like
40 earning and surviving and having money (youth workers, screening &
41 discussion, 07/02/14).
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48 For Josh, who liked to go to the gym, the access to 'healthy shops' that came
49 with gentrification was a positive change from the fast food outlets that
50 dominated Hackney's high streets (e.g. kebab and fried chicken cafes), but he
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56 ⁷ In 2015, Hackney Council began a borough-wide consultation to gather residents' opinions
57 on the process and direction of change ([https://consultation.hackney.gov.uk/](https://consultation.hackney.gov.uk/communications-and-consultation/hackney-a-place-for-everyone/consult_view)
58 [communications-and-consultation/hackney-a-place-for-everyone/consult_view](https://consultation.hackney.gov.uk/communications-and-consultation/hackney-a-place-for-everyone/consult_view))
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3 also drew from his observations a link between 'mindset' and changing urban
4 environments.
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8 Personally, I think that's really good how we got loads of organic
9 shops coming up or lots of white barbers and stuff like that... cos if
10 that happens, then there will be more individuals coming out of the
11 closet, yeah, and not more sheeps, we want more shepherds... we
12 want more individuals to come out, we want them to change and
13 really... that's them adapting to the new surroundings. People might
14 not like it, people may disagree with the new shops and stuff like that,
15 however, I think it is very good, and I think Hackney needs a change,
16 good or bad, Hackney needs to change something like that (Josh,
17 diary, 21/05/13),
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26 This sense of aspiration, wanting more 'shepherds' rather than 'sheep', a
27 desire for individuality, also inflected Matthew's assessment of the
28 redevelopment in Dalston Square. Despite reflections questioning whom the
29 apartments were for and whether he could afford it, Matthew could imagine
30 himself occupying one.
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37 I think it looks really nice, like, I'd definitely want to live in one of them
38 when I'm getting my own apartment, probably very expensive though,
39 but I'm broke of expensive tastes though [chuckling]. Hopefully I won't
40 be when I'm older. That's the plan... (Matthew, diary, 28/04/13).
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46 While Matthew's sense of aspiration is tempered by apprehension, for others
47 there was an indeterminate sense of loss at times centred on affective
48 nostalgia, that marked their experiences of spatial dislocation in Hackney. For
49 example, the loss of Georgian architecture, as well as housing, was at the
50 centre of a campaign to stop the demolition of a former theatre and terraces
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3 on Dalston Lane that made way for the Dalston Square apartment blocks⁸.
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5 This campaign tended to be led by long-term, middle class residents
6
7 (Wessendorf 2014; Davison et. al 2012), but their opposition on the grounds
8
9 of the design of the new buildings was not shared by participants in the
10
11 CHAsH study. In juxtaposition several young people noted they preferred the
12
13 'modern' style of the new apartments.

14 While the aesthetics of regeneration continue to be debated, perhaps
15
16 more importantly the campaign raised the issue of the increasing invisibility of
17
18 Hackney's history and diversity. This fading out of the past and particular
19
20 communities contributed to the severing of points of orientation and the
21
22 generation of both spatial and affective dislocation (discussed further below).
23
24 It could be argued that the current discourse of invigorating the area as a
25
26 centre for creative industries neglects the cultural history of the borough
27
28 including, for example, the 'Four Aces' club in the former Colosseum theatre.
29
30 This was once a centre of black music in the 1960s, then a legendary rave
31
32 venue, the 'Labyrinth', in the 1980s⁹. The Colosseum was controversially
33
34 demolished in 2007 to make way for the Dalston Junction transport
35
36 interchange and the Dalston Square apartments (Davison et. al. 2012)¹⁰.
37
38 Similarly, a computer generated image of the plans for a renewed
39
40 pedestrianized shopping precinct in Hackney Central had to be withdrawn by
41
42 the council as the diversity of local residents was effaced by a representation
43
44 featuring primarily young, white professionals (Hodgson 2013). Also
45
46 withdrawn were plans by the council to remove the name of the C.L.R. James
47
48 Library¹¹ when it was moved to the Dalston Square redevelopment.

49 Among the young people involved in the CHAsH project there was little
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51 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.

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3 connection between power and visibility furthering their sense of dislocation.
4 Several were required to move home, in one case three times over the course
5 of the year, due to housing precarity; movement that was itself invisible except
6 to family and key workers. According to writers such as Wallace (2014), the
7 discourse of the benefits of gentrification for young people, for example, the
8 provision of employment and access to facilities, makes invisible markers of
9 precarity and their insertion into the market economy as consumer-citizens in
10 a neo-liberal city. In addition, while differences in the condition of housing
11 were made visible in their comparisons between estates where they lived and
12 the new buildings, the mechanisms of power that enabled these differences
13 remained unseen. Tyrell described the flickering advertising hoarding outside
14 his brother's bedroom window and notes that it is only because their
15 apartment was not 'top class' that this was allowed to happen.
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26 Why would they put this in someone's house? Obviously, this house is
27 not rated top class, that's probably why they put it here... So
28 underprivileged people in Hackney live here, like myself, but
29 underprivileged I wouldn't say, just living in hard times, but ... it's still
30 bad (...). They built a new [venue] over there which they could've built
31 a flat there, that's what I think they could've put a flat there, (...) they
32 could've moved us there but they just built [that] place, [...] ... I don't
33 know why they did it, so I can't ... I have to question why? (Tyrell,
34 diary, 18/08/13).
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43 Team discussions also highlighted their acute awareness of the differences in
44 terms of how they felt they were perceived in public space, hyper-visible in
45 their youthful, black selves; comparing themselves to other cohorts of young
46 white people who appeared to generate less friction, and who they perceived
47 as being allowed to stay put rather than be moved on. These markers of
48 power, feelings of loss and (in)visibility begin to suggest the second aspect of
49 change that must be negotiated by young people in gentrifying
50 neighbourhoods, that of affective displacement. This became particularly
51 apparent in the classed and intercultural relationships between them and
52 newer residents, including the much stereotyped 'hipster'.
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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

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3 good. I hate new builds. Me and my Nan's going to have to move into
4 a new build with private renting which is annoying (Monet, final
5 debrief, 22/07/14).
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10 Embedded within this discomfort was the lack of knowledge at times of how to
11 use these transformed spaces. As Matthew noted after visiting a Vietnamese
12 restaurant and having a bill brought to the table (rather than paying at the
13 counter as he would do in a fast food chain). 'I don't feel completely out of
14 place but it just feels different 'cos it's something I'm not used to' (diary,
15 28/08/13). Dislocating place and belonging, newness created exclusions as
16 Matthew explored in his filming of the facilities in a new youth centre: 'it kind of
17 seems as if nobody really wants to go there because they don't see it as
18 home yet, which is kind of understandable since it's new'.
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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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5 I felt uncomfortable on a racist note (...), yeah like you just see the
6 one odd black person, and they're usually in a mixed couple. So yeah,
7 I'm just there in my ghetto-self, just chilling in the park, blacker than
8 black. I just felt a bit out of place but at the same time you realize no
9 one is actually looking at you. I mean they will look at you, but then
10 they will just look away, but it's just something that's always above my
11 head (Monet, team discussion, 28/04/13).
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18 This contestation is particularly evident in Broadway Market, where Tyrell
19 focused his research. Illustrating his sense of displacement, he noted a
20 perception at times that changing demographics in the area resulted in his
21 being judged in a particular way, namely, being 'looked down on' (differing, we
22 would argue, from the judgments of peers, discussed below).
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28 Broadway Market has become... the culture is completely lost, I don't
29 see any other culture than European culture, and I haven't seen much
30 going on for Black History Month and it's quite shocking (Tyrell, diary,
31 15/10/13).
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36 Illustrating the process of affective displacement, Tyrell described his
37 discomfort at others' misuse of what was once his home. White people
38 drinking, littering and being noisy contributed to his assessment that it is 'a
39 shit area', but there is some relief that he is moving out soon. His
40 observations of 'Blacks dressing up as trendy people to fit in' created a sense
41 of dissonance.
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47 They're all trendy people... I walked past there now, I just came at my
48 house, walked past theirs and some black woman in there as well. I
49 was thinking "raaa, she's trendy and she's black". You don't really see
50 that. (...) All them trendy people go sit there, they dress fuckin'... I
51 mean they dress trendy' (diary, 02/09/13).
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3 However, again a sense of ambivalence is embedded in his observation, as
4 he noted aspects of the area that he likes, including a shared love of fashion.
5 Tyrell's expression of appreciation in terms of style reflects the finding of
6 some commonality, even at a distance, with his 'trendy' neighbours. There is
7 then a doubling of affective displacement as he also no longer always 'fits in'
8 with his peers because of the way he dresses; at times eschewing the
9 tracksuits, baggy jeans and 'hoodies' that tend to mark out the masculine
10 identity of his peers in the area, in favour of skinnier jeans and a peacoat. The
11 pressure from within friendship networks to conform to particular codes of
12 appearance was also noted by Josh.
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21 So as a young kid if you try and dress differently they call you, like
22 there's a big homophobic like prejudice in Hackney, and if you try and
23 dress differently then they will just call you gay, that's primitive
24 behaviour that I was talking about ... (team discussion, 28/04/13).
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30 In this sense, it could be argued that the process of change in Hackney, with
31 its associated shifts in demographics, could provide conditions for young
32 people to transcend extant normative behaviours that they find uncomfortable.
33 In other words, with shifting built environments comes shifts in cultural frames
34 of reference within which the young people in this study operated, allowing for
35 the possibility for alterity as well as resistance to it.
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40 Josh and Tyrell's remarks cohere with arguments that the affective
41 state of belonging and attachment to place is culturally accumulated over time
42 through routine practice (such as dress) and relationship networks, and
43 reinforced through judgment (Butcher 2011). For Josh, regeneration in
44 Hackney appeared to give some possibility of respite from the difficulties of
45 negotiating, as a young black man, the tensions that emanate from the
46 judgments of his peers.
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53 I would prefer if Hackney was, like, Camden. I don't know why... it
54 seems more vibrant, it seems more peaceful. Here it seems more
55 primitive... it seems more rushy, not rushy in the fact that it's a busy
56 place... the atmosphere seems really tense. Maybe that's just for
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3 me... 'cos I'm a young Black male and a lot of that comes with that
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5 (Josh, diary, 04/06/13).
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8 Josh's reference to 'atmosphere' highlights the significance of this affective
9 register in generating a sense of belonging or exclusion. His comments also
10 reinforce the findings that it is not only newer residents that produce the
11 discomfort of affective displacement for young people in this neighbourhood.
12 There is an awareness of the spatial boundaries of territory that continue to
13 exist alongside gentrification. The presence of 'The LF' (London Fields gang)
14 created unease for several of the young people involved in this study and
15 prevented them from accessing the area at certain times¹². Tyrell reflected on
16 why The LF did not appear to target white people, but conversely several
17 participants in the study noted that a benefit of gentrification was an increased
18 sense of security. This was at times perceived as stemming from the
19 presence of more 'English professionals' generating a sense of safety within
20 public space if not necessarily belonging.
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31 *Respondent:* I'd say it's getting safer 'cos there's a lot more
32 professionals moving into Hackney now, a lot of ... young English
33 professionals moving in, they're buying up all the properties in
34 Hackney, so it's getting kind of affluent in some areas, but it's also
35 deprived in some areas... So yeah, I'd say it is getting safer; I wouldn't
36 say it's safe, 100%, but it is getting safer. [...]

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41 *Josh:* So to live in Hackney would be more ideal for the white, trendy,
42 sort of hipster that are just moving into our area right now?
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44 *Respondent:* Most definitely. Because the demographic of Hackney is
45 changing, some say for the better, some say for the worse, I'm in-
46 between, I'm sitting on the fence on this one. (interviewed by Josh,
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48 31/07/13)
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55 ¹² Hackney has in the past been regarded as a centre for high levels of gang activity,
56 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,
57 accessed 10
58 March 2015].
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3 This increased sense of security suggests a more complicated process at play
4 than the straightforward antagonism, or tolerance at best between new and
5 existing residents indicated in some gentrification research (e.g. Bacqué et al
6 2014; Tissot 2014). There may be signs of resistance in Hackney in the
7 occasional piece of graffiti targeting 'hipsters', and in the type of preservation
8 campaigns outlined above. However, these antagonisms must be
9 contextualized by the minimal contact between new and existing residents.
10 When contact did occur for Tyrell for example, encountering people in
11 Broadway Market as part of the project, he expressed surprise that they would
12 engage with him positively¹³, suggesting that perceptions of judgment could
13 be mitigated.
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21 In other examples, encounters with difference did not necessarily entail
22 exclusion but rather a discomfort that also contained a reflexive quality
23 leading to processes of adaptation (Butcher, forthcoming). Variables of
24 disposition and transitions through the life course marked many of the young
25 people's experiences in this study and are difficult to disentangle when
26 assessing the impact of gentrification (Tyler et. al. 2013). Matthew, for
27 example, demonstrated a curiosity and reflexive ability to cross thresholds into
28 new spaces that perhaps other young people did not possess. He ventured
29 into new restaurants, for example, equating his own changing preferences to
30 the changes in Hackney more broadly as he experimented with the new;
31 Singapore noodles from Brick Lane and Vietnamese from Kingsland Road.
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39 However, there were recognized structural limits to the possibilities of
40 reflexivity and adaptation as Matthew illustrates in his experience at a 'pop up
41 street food' venue, where hot dogs cost £6.
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47 I do like seeing those type of places because it has like a certain
48 trendy vibe to it, but at the same time, it's not like I've got the money to
49 go to those type of places so ... I don't know, I kind of like it but don't
50 like it at the same time ... so, that's just me. (Matthew, diary, 24/07/13)
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58 ¹³ Tyrell's photo essay and podcast of his research with 'hipsters' can be found here:
59 <http://www.hackneyashome.co.uk/tyrell/tyrell-hipster-portraits-131113>
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3 Indicative of the ambivalence of gentrification, the desire to share in a
4 particular 'trendy' atmosphere is mitigated by the reality of a price tag that
5 generates the discomfort of affective displacement, signaling he could no
6 longer remain in place.
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10 Conclusion

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

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3 disadvantage 'being in your face every day' (Wessendorf 2014), and an
4 inability to intervene in processes of managing change in the Borough.
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6 Yet, this experience of gentrification is inflected by several variables
7 including disposition, context such as education and employment, peer and
8 family relationships and existing stresses within families. Site-specific
9 conditions were created in the cultural frames of reference that informed
10 spatial practices, economic and social circumstances, planning processes,
11 design and urban governance. And while power relations, inequality and the
12 contestation of space are clearly themes of this research, these tropes have a
13 history preceding this current process of urban redevelopment. As noted
14 above, young people in the borough already faced existing barriers and were
15 required to understand the limits of territory and power to be able to move
16 safely through their environment. Place-making by young people is an
17 ongoing process incorporating negotiations with other space users including
18 commercial entities, local authorities and other young people. The current
19 changes are perhaps regarded as just another extension of this ongoing work,
20 although the intensity of change and control over its direction, as well as its
21 classed and racial barriers, are creating new forms of discomfort and
22 subsequent affective displacement for this generation.
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34 This paper's focus on spatial dislocation and affective displacement
35 highlighted a complicated relationship between existing and new residents.
36 While the term 'class' was rarely used by the PRAs, they were sensitive to
37 inequality, perceived injustice and judgement. These were the parameters
38 with which the relationship with young professionals and other predominantly
39 higher income white residents were assessed, generating simultaneously
40 resentment and regard. Coping with the outcomes of displacement, physical
41 and affective, was therefore at times more complex than just directing blame
42 towards council policy or gentrifiers. There was at times an increased sense
43 of security because of the presence of more 'professionals' in the area, as
44 well as an awareness of the differences between how those 'professionals'
45 are perceived as opposed to young, black people. But there was at times also
46 a desire to access aspects of a similar lifestyle, or pleasure expressed in
47 being able to access the spaces that these newer residents also enjoyed.
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3 Therefore, in response to arguments of the ineluctable power of market
4 driven urban redevelopment, it is possible at times, as the participants in this
5 study indicated, to possess an ability to imagine the re-versioning of space
6 and their place within it. As others have reported, and this study supports,
7 young people do not necessarily internalize stigma associated with their
8 'territory' (see, e.g., Jensen & Christensen 2012). Structurally it is also
9 unclear if the context in Hackney can be simply divided into 'marginal' versus
10 'the middle', when it can be argued that a key cohort driving cultural change in
11 the borough (creative industries and, indeed, even academia, see for
12 example, Schlichtman & Patch 2014) are themselves often in states of
13 precarious employment, although with a wider, supportive base of cultural
14 capital. Such residents can be attracted to Hackney for its diversity and
15 engage in community politics to protect it from gentrification (see e.g.
16 Hodkinson 2012).

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

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