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**Social Mixing and the London East Village:
Exclusion, Habitus and Belonging
in a Post-Olympics Neighbourhood**

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Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Geography

Birkbeck, University of London

2020

Declaration: I confirm that the work submitted is my own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

Piero Corcillo

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Abstract

This research critically examines policy aims and outcomes related to social mixing in the London 2012 former Athletes' Village – now East Village – in Stratford (a Newham borough's district located in East London). It maps the development of the neighbourhood in the context of local and national housing policy, the regeneration of Stratford, the proposal to host the Olympics, the alignment to the IOC Olympic Legacy goals, place-making and branding strategies, and the lived experiences of residents across a range of tenures. The thesis contributes to existing literature that evaluates the housing legacy of the London 2012 Olympic Games. It also extends literature on socio-spatial exclusion – over class and ethnicity - and claims to belonging in urban space. Bourdieu's (1977) concepts of habitus, distinction, symbolic violence and field theory frame the data analysis. The research focuses on four neighbourhood dimensions: housing, semi-private space, public space and neighbourhood facilities. The work draws on data from semi-structured interviews, participant observation, documentary analysis, questionnaires and census data secondary analysis.

The thesis argues that various processes, practices and actors come together to produce an environment that panders to the dispositions of white middle-class individuals. Their habitus becomes dominant within the neighbourhood field. Therefore, the ambitions of social mixing are not met in practice. The themes and issues discussed demonstrate that East Village, which was presented as a key element of the legacy objective "Homes for all" (Growth Boroughs, 2009), is a space that actively reproduces the exclusion of BAME and working-class individuals, who make up the majority of the Stratford and Newham's population. East Village is a place for neoliberal individuals that are moved by the rationale to accumulate various forms of capital within the neighbourhood field; thus, generating categories of distinction. The management looks after all aspects of the neighbourhood's life. It provides the theatrical stage on which spectacles and events are played out, and the only director is the management itself.

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List of Abbreviations

ABC	Arts venues, Bars and Cafés
BAME	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic
BID	Business Improvement District
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CPO	Compulsory Purchase Order
EVML	East Village Management Company
EVRA	East Village Residents Association
EVS	East Village Survey
FOIR	Freedom of Information Request
GC	Gated Community
GLA	Greater London Authority
GLL	Get Living London
HCA	Home and Community Agency
IMR	Intermediate Market Rent
IOC	International Olympic Committee
LBBD	London Borough of Barking and Dagenham
LBH	London Borough of Hackney
LBHV	London Borough of Havering
LBN	London Borough of Newham

LBTH	London Borough of Tower Hamlets
LBR	London Borough of Redbridge
LBWT	London Borough of Waltham Forest
LDA	London Development Agency
LDU	London Development Unit
LLDC	London Legacy Development Corporation
MPC	Master-Planned Community
NS-SEC	National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification
ODA	Olympic Delivery Authority
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
PRS	Private Rented Sector
SBD	Secured By Design
QDD	Qatari Diar Delancey
QEOP	Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park
RPI	Retail Price Index
TELCO	The East London Community Organisation
TH	Triathlon Homes

Introduction

This research critically examines policy aims and outcomes related to social mixing in the London 2012 former Athletes' Village housing redevelopment – now East Village. The development is a mix of private (51%) affordable (25%) and social (24%) housing. The thesis contributes to existing literature that evaluates the housing legacy of the London 2012 Olympic Games. It also extends literature on socio-spatial exclusion in residential space. The research focuses on four key neighbourhood dimensions: housing, semi-private space, public space and neighbourhood facilities. These dimensions have been chosen as they are physical fields where categories of distinction are generated (Bourdieu, 1977), various forms of capital are accumulated (Bourdieu, 1986, b), sense of belonging is developed, and social interactions occur in urban space.

This thesis aims to answer the following research questions.

1. What processes and practices are visible in the fields of housing, semi-private space, public space and neighbourhood facilities, which inform the East Villagers' habitus?
2. How do the various resident social and ethnic groups develop a sense of community and belonging to East Village?
3. How far do the above-mentioned processes and practices go to encourage an environment that is socially inclusive? How is this experienced by the least powerful groups, such as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and working-class individuals?
4. To what degree are semi-private space, public space and neighbourhood facilities suitable arenas for encounters and interactions with social difference?
5. On the basis of these research findings, how far has neoliberal urban governance, related to mega-events' regeneration, deepened or ameliorated mechanisms of exclusion in the case of East Village?

The above research questions are answered, by drawing on data from semi-structured interviews, participant observation, documentary analysis, questionnaires and census data secondary analysis.

Setting the Scene

The London 2012 Olympic Park and Athletes' Village were built in Stratford. This area is located in the London Borough of Newham (LBN) in East London.

Thanks to the creation of the nearby Royal Docks in the 19th Century, the Stratford area became an important industrial and transport hub. A network of Docklands-associated food processing, manufacturing, chemical and furniture factories settled in the Lea Valley. Railway links that connect Stratford to central London and Essex, as well as a stop of the London Underground Central Line were constructed. Therefore, the population was mostly composed of working-class individuals employed in the Docks and related industries (Florio and Edwards, 2001). However, with the closing of the London Docklands in the 1960s, Stratford experienced a rapid de-industrialisation, with rising levels of unemployment and a large amount of former industrial land left without use. The regeneration of the Docklands in the 1980s did not involve the Stratford area, which remained in need of redevelopment. This area had therefore been neglected by urban policy for a long period of time (*ibid.*).

Plans for the regeneration of Stratford started well before the Olympic bid. Around 1995, the London Development Unit (LDU) – a central government office that dealt with urban regeneration projects in the UK Capital – prepared the so-called “Thames Gateway Strategy” – to draw investments from the east of London down to the River Thames, where there was a large amount of land available for development¹. The then Conservative Minister for the Environment, Michael Heseltine, advocated that the transformation of Stratford should be a key component of the Strategy. He recognised the strategic position of Stratford, which is very well connected to central London via the Central Line. Thus, he promoted plans for the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, namely, to divert the Eurostar to Paris from central London to Stratford. The LBN, where Stratford is located, was also very keen on building a new international station in the area. Thus, a place that had been neglected by national and local governments for decades, quite

¹ Notably, in 1986, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher abolished the Greater London Council. As a result of this, the LDU filled the urban planning strategy gap for the UK Capital (Interview with a former LDU officer).

suddenly became the object of large-scale urban regeneration plans (Florio and Edwards, 2001; Interview with a former LDU officer).

Alongside the development of the railway, the central government sold a large amount of land that it owned around Stratford railway station to real estate developers. The idea was that this would partly offset the costs of the railway. In 1996-97, this process culminated in a series of housing plans for Stratford City². However, concerns were raised by the government – especially in the Treasury – about the huge costs of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link. Another important concern was whether or not the Eurostar operator would agree to divert trains from central London to Stratford (Florio and Edwards, 2001). The LDU wrote many reports, arguing with the Treasury that there was important value in developing a station in Stratford, even though they could not guarantee that international trains would stop there. The Treasury approved the plans for the new station, but additional political and financial boosts were needed to continue developing the surrounding area. Meanwhile, the Greater London Authority (GLA) was created in 2000, and the London 2012 Olympic bid put forward Stratford in East London as a candidate to host that edition of the Summer Games. As the bid was successful, the government became much more involved in the regeneration of Stratford. It spent £9 billion of public money, and used its “muscles” to undertake the largest compulsory purchase scheme in the history of the UK (Interview with a former LDU officer). Land was expropriated to small businesses and social tenants in order to make space for the Olympic Park developments (Armstrong et al., 2011; Raco and Tunney, 2010)³.

The official aims for hosting the 2012 Olympics Games in East London were set out in the “Strategic Regeneration Framework” for the six Host Boroughs - Newham, Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest, Barking and Dagenham, and Greenwich - now Growth Boroughs (Growth Boroughs, 2009). This document contains the so-called “Aims of

² As discussed in Chapter 4, the former Athletes’ Village – now East Village - was originally part of the plans for Stratford City. When the Olympic bid was elaborated at the beginning of the 2000s, the housing development plans for that land became the plans for the London 2012 Olympic Village.

³ Issues related to Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) and the eviction of council tenants from Stratford are explored in a body of literature, which will be outlined in Chapter 1 (see Armstrong et al., 2011; Bernstock, 2014; Minton, 2012; Raco and Tunney, 2010; Watt, 2013).

Convergence”: the core promise related to the 2012 Olympic Legacy. The document states that “within 20 years the communities who host the 2012 Games will have the same social and economic chances as their neighbours across London” (Growth Boroughs, 2009: 2). The London Candidature File, namely the bidding dossier presented to the International Olympic Committee (IOC), which sets out the plans elaborated to host the 2012 Summer Olympics in the UK Capital, states:

The Olympic Park will be created in the Lower Lea Valley, 13 km east from the centre of London. This area is ripe for redevelopment. By staging the Games in this part of the city, the most enduring legacy of the Olympics will be the regeneration of an entire community for the direct benefit of everyone who lives there. (London 2012, 2004: 19)

As discussed in Chapter 1, the support of local communities was crucial for the success of the London bid. However, a former LDU officer expresses their scepticism regarding these ambitious promises:

“In the Convergence Report for the Host Boroughs there was all sort of ambitions with the Olympics with [regards to] community regeneration, which I thought were completely illusory, mythical! I thought we would end up, the government would end up in a difficult situation. All these expectations were being raised and at the end of the day [it] would be the [central] government, it wouldn’t be the mayor, it would be the government that would be challenged to deliver all this stuff, because you don’t regenerate communities by building an Olympic swimming pool, it’s just a fact”. (Former LDU officer)

This quote suggests that the government’s real aim was to generate economic growth through the Olympics. The neoliberal belief in the trickledown effect (Boykoff, 2013; Minton, 2012), whereby the upper classes are seen as the primary consumers and purveyors of good taste, was at the heart of this aim. Furthermore, the necessity to “market” the Games and to enable large-scale urban transformation, which would appeal to the local population, led to high-sounding claims about the development being equally beneficial for all its residents. Ambitious promises were also made with regards to the Athletes’ Village. The London Candidature File recognised that there is a great need for housing, and for affordable and social housing, particularly in East London. It indicated that after the 2012 Olympic Games, the Athletes’ Village would be reconverted into 3,600 housing units. Up to 50% of these would be affordable homes for rent and sale, while the other half would be turned into private homes for sale (London 2012,

2004: 207). The London Candidature File also highlighted that a public-private partnership (PPP), with a “public contribution and a private investment” (London 2012, 2004 213), would develop the Village, which was set to become a socially mixed neighbourhood, with a range of tenures and residents from various socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds (Meredith, 2012).

Structure of the Work

This work begins with two literature review chapters. Chapter 1 – East London: Before and After the Olympic Games - discusses the socio-economic and policy contexts in which the research took place. It describes the concept of Olympic Legacy (IOC, 2002, 2013), existing literature regarding the political economy of mega-events, and PPPs as their prominent form of governance (Boykoff, 2013; Harvey, 1988). The chapter continues by examining literature related to UK housing policies (Watt and Minton, 2016), and housing deprivation in East London (Thompson et al., 2017, Watt 2018a, 2018b). Following this, the promises that the public agencies involved in the Games made to local communities are discussed (Armstrong et al., 2011; Minton, 2012). The final sections provide an overview of literature that examines the London 2012 Olympic housing legacy (Bernstock, 2014; Gillespie et al, 2018) and the Athletes’ Village housing redevelopment (Bernstock, 2014; Farquhar, 2012; Hall, 2012).

Chapter 2 – Exclusion, Habitus and Belonging - discusses the topics of socio-spatial exclusion, social power and social mixing in urban space. These concepts, themes and issues are relevant to the case study of the London 2012 former Athletes’ Village housing redevelopment. The chapter starts by engaging with existing literature regarding patterns of socio-spatial exclusion and power (Butler and Watt, 2007; Mangan, 2004), and Bourdieu’s (1977, 1986a, b, 1991) concepts of habitus, distinction, symbolic violence and field theory. It continues by engaging with the concept of the classed and racialised “other” (Sibley, 1995), the work of social scientists that explore middle-class sense of belonging and attachment to place (Savage et al., 2005; Watt, 2009a), as well as working-class sense of belonging (Jeffery, 2018; McKenzie, 2015). The following sections critically evaluate literature regarding white middle-class disaffiliation, gated

communities (GCs) and master-planned communities (MPCs) (Atkinson and Blandy, 2013; Low, 2004) and the London middle-class (Bacqué et al., 2015; Butler and Robson, 2003). The following section explores social relations in socially mixed neighbourhoods (August, 2014; Barwick, 2018; Davidson, 2010), including post-Olympic neighbourhoods (Cohen, 2017; Olagnero and Ponzio, 2017). The chapter continues with an overview of the spatialisation of habitus, exclusion and interactions in public space, retail and leisure facilities (Neal et al., 2017; Zukin et al., 2015).

Chapter 3 – Research Methods - discusses the methods employed in the research: semi-structured interviews with key informants and residents, participant observation, documentary analysis, questionnaires, and census data secondary analysis. It begins by reiterating the research questions. After that, it discusses ethical considerations in relation to the fieldwork, the research paradigm, and data analysis. The chapter continues by discussing the advantages and disadvantages of using semi-structured interviews, participant observation, issues encountered in documentary analysis, and why self-completion questionnaires were designed, collected and distributed.

Chapters 4 to 7 constitute the empirical part of the thesis. Chapter 4 – The Neighbourhood – firstly discusses how the agencies involved in the London 2012 Athletes' Villages redevelopment have interpreted and implemented the policy aim to deliver "Homes for all" (Growth Boroughs, 2009). It continues by describing the neighbourhood's housing configuration, the selection criteria for social renters, housing costs, and the questionnaire results, which provide an indication of the neighbourhood's socio-demographic characteristics and compare them to the 2011 Census data of the Stratford and New Town ward (where East Village is located) and the LBN (i.e. residents' previous address, occupation, age and ethnic background).

Chapter 5 – Mixing and Othering at Home and in Semi-Private Space - focuses on how far design foster social mixing or construct difference. It first evaluates policymakers' claims related to delivering a tenure-blind development, by discussing security features within the various plots and the social consequences of the housing tenure distribution. The chapter then goes on to discuss the sense of belonging and community that individuals in the various tenures develop, and how social renters are perceived by other

residents. After that, it draws attention to the ways in which the management settles disputes between residents.

Chapter 6 – Public Space - focuses on the East Village management's spatial practices in public space. Securitisation and an aestheticised image of community are among the main practices that are implemented. The chapter also discusses the relationship between the East Village residents and the old part of Stratford. It then moves to examine the residents' sense of belonging, community and social interactions in public space.

Chapter 7 – Neighbourhood Facilities – focuses on how the various resident social and ethnic groups use the East Village's neighbourhood facilities, and whether these places foster interactions between neighbours from different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds. It begins by exploring the social meaning of having access to modern facilities – such as transport links. The chapter then focuses on the East Village's independent shops and restaurants, the sport facilities and groups. The final sections focus on the health centre community café, and the neighbourhood's school - Chobham Academy.

The thesis argues that various processes, practices and actors come together to produce an environment that panders to the dispositions of white middle-class individuals. Their habitus becomes dominant within the neighbourhood field. Therefore, the ambitions of social mixing are not met in practice. East Village is a place for neoliberal individuals that are moved by the rationale of accumulating various forms of capital. Therefore, it actively reproduces socio-spatial exclusion over class and ethnicity with respect to Stratford and East London.

Chapter 1

East London: Before and After the Olympic Games

1.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews existing literature on the context of East London, before and after the Olympic Games. Section 1.2 focuses on the concept of Olympic Legacy, which is crucial to evaluating the impact of the 2012 Games on East London (Gillespie et al., 2018; IOC, 2002, 2013). Section 1.3 briefly explores the political economy of mega-events and PPPs as their prominent form of governance. This section offers an explanation as to why organisers have often overpromised and underdelivered in terms of benefitting host communities (Boykoff, 2013; Gruneau and Horne, 2016; Harvey, 1988; Kennelly, 2016). Section 1.4 examines literature surrounding UK housing policies (Watt and Minton, 2016), while section 1.5 outlines the history of housing deprivation in East London. Section 1.6 evaluates the promises that various agencies involved in the Games' regeneration process made to the local communities, in relation to the treatment these communities faced in the run up to the Games (Armstrong et al., 2011; Minton, 2012). Section 1.7 focuses on the impact of the Olympic housing legacy on East London (Bernstock, 2014; Watt, 2013; Watt and Bernstock, 2017). Section 1.8 offers an overview of literature on the London 2012 former Athletes' Village housing redevelopment. Finally, Section 1.9 provides a summary of the main debates and concerns that have emerged from this discussion of the literature.

1.2 Olympic Legacy

Research has demonstrated that winning the bid to host the Olympic Games is a highly profitable resource in relation to the competition between cities at the global scale (Essex and Chalkley, 1998; Gold and Gold, 2008). In the context of Post-Fordism, deindustrialisation and public expenditure reduction, this event is a powerful instrument for attracting new investments and tourist flows (*ibid.*). Since the 2000s,

research areas such as “place-branding” and in particular “city-branding” have developed in the field of urban studies, as a means of examining sport mega-events (Karavatzis and Hach, 2013). However, events such as the Olympics usually result in large-scale urban change, which has human and financial costs. Current research has shown that the announced legacy results often tend to benefit wealthy people, with poorer residents experiencing losses in terms of employment and affordable housing (Kennelly, 2016; Thompson et al., 2017; Watt, 2018a, 2018b). Property prices increase, while the displacement of existing residents, as well as the adverse treatment of homeless people during the event, have emerged as controversial issues (Brownill et al., 2013; CHORE, 2007; Kennelly, 2016; Porter et al., 2009; Raco and Tunney, 2010; Watt, 2013). With respect to these themes, Bernstock (2014) notes that the Olympic Games have both intended and unintended impacts.

Alongside these impacts, the reconversion of the Athletes’ Villages into housing has been a common praxis since the Helsinki Games of 1952. In Barcelona (1992), Atlanta (1996), Sydney (2000), Beijing (2008), and Vancouver (2010 Winter Games), the Athletes’ Villages have become luxury and desirable neighbourhoods, while only in Vancouver a percentage of affordable housing (20%) has been included. The Athens (2004) Village was meant to provide low-cost housing, although a large part of it was left empty and then vandalised (*ibid.*). The Turin (2006) Winter Games Athletes’ Village has been reconverted into public housing (33%) and office space (33%) (Castaldi, 2006; Città di Torino, 2003). The remaining 33% was supposed to be turned into private housing for sale, but it was left unsold and subsequently occupied by African refugees in search of shelter (Bolzoni et al., 2015). However, they were evicted by the police as a consequence of the former Italian far right Interior Minister’s policies, which targeted migrants squatting across the country (La Repubblica, 2018).

Given the rise of such controversial themes, the IOC has been increasingly pressurised over the last three decades to introduce concepts such as sustainability and legacy as prerequisites that candidate cities have to include in their bidding dossiers. In this regard, in Agenda 21, adopted in 2002, the Olympic Movement claims that its main goals are to foster sustainable development, preserve human dignity, fight poverty and tackle

social exclusion (IOC, 2002: 26). The key to delivering these positive effects is the concept of “Olympic Legacy”, which is defined as:

“The power to deliver lasting benefits which can considerably change a community, its image and its infrastructure. [...] The Games can leave an array of legacies within a host city, covering not only sport but also social, economic and environmental gains (IOC, 2013: 6-9).

However, Kennelly (2016) draws attention to the lack of accountability in the process used to verify whether host communities effectively enjoy the benefits of the Olympic Legacy. Although the idea of legacy must be central to any successful Olympic bid, research evidence continues to show that social and financial elites are still those who benefit the most, while the least powerful groups are left with limited gains (Cohen and Watt, 2017; Gruneau and Horne, 2016; Kennelly, 2016; Watt and Bernstock, 2017). Nevertheless, research has also highlighted a positive aspect of the Olympic Legacy for discriminated minorities: the Olympic Games can be used as a platform to denounce the denial of social, civil and environmental rights in host countries (Gillespie et al, 2018; Gruneau and Horne, 2016). For example, in the run up to and during the Sochi (2014) Winter Games, Russian activists demonstrated against the denial of rights to gay people (Gruneau and Horne, 2016). Furthermore, as discussed in detail below, London-based housing activists have developed new networks and tactics to resist against the eviction of social tenants, especially young single mothers, as a consequence of the growing gentrification of the 2012 Olympics’ host boroughs in East London. Gillespie et al. (2018) have described this as Olympic counter-legacy, which is generated through the actions of dispossessed individuals in host cities, who create networks, share knowledge and develop new forms of protest.

1.3 The Political Economy of Mega-Events

1.3.1 The Olympic Games and Power Relations

Several authors focus on the structural factors that underpin mega-events regeneration, and why they often fail to deliver on their promises (Boykoff, 2013, 2016; Fox Gotham, 2016; Gruneau and Horne, 2016; Minton, 2012). According to Gruneau and Horne (2016)

the Olympic Games have become crucial for capital accumulation and for the circulation of global city-building models. The Games should not be considered as autonomous events, but rather as an ensemble of relations in political, economic, and cultural terms. They connect the global to the local, because their staging requires a relation between local, national and international actors, which includes global networks of capital circulation and accumulation. Fox Gotham (2016) points out that mega-events are constituted through relations of domination-subordination, which involves global and local elites: the IOC, sponsors, developers, national and local policymakers, the urban space object of extensive transformation, and its population. Notably, the Olympic Games are often held in rundown urban areas. The “necessity” of eradicating stigma, integrating these areas with the rest of the city, and the denigration of low-cost housing, are asserted to justify clearance and land remediation (Gruneau and Horne, 2016). Slums are transformed into fantasy lands where urban shows take place: spectacular architectures, upmarket stores, entertainment venues, museums, theatres and high-quality urban space are built as a signifier of success (*ibid.*).

Long-standing communities and businesses experience direct displacement and displacement pressure (Marcuse, 1986). The first type of displacement – direct - takes the form of rent increase or landlord evictions. The second type – displacement pressure - occurs when residents see their neighbourhoods changing beyond recognition - in terms of built environment, shops, and inhabitants - such that they question whether they belong to the area anymore (Kennelly and Watt, 2012; Marcuse, *ibid.*; Porter et al., 2009; Slater, 2006, 2009). Infrastructural upgrades and reconversion in spaces of consumption and entertainment usually results in property price increases and the consequent gentrification of these areas, with a new affluent population replacing low-income residents (Slater, 2006, 2009; Slater and Iles, 2010; Smith, 2002; Smith, 2012; Watt, 2008; Zukin, 2010). As Watt (2013) has argued with regards to the London 2012 Olympics, land value increases, combined with affordable and social housing decline (in quantity and quality), generate a large amount of profit for developers, if “only” former residents are decanted. Harvey (2008: 34) argues that urban development in the capitalist world-system occurs through “Accumulation by Dispossession”. This process consists of attempts to accumulate capital through intense exploitation and

dispossession of land and housing from the least powerful individuals (Harvey, 2008). The urban space and the post-Olympics neighbourhoods that result from this process are likely to be exclusive. In mega-events' host cities like Barcelona, London, Baltimore and Lisbon, infrastructural upgrade, and the construction of high-quality apartments, public space, and neighbourhood facilities have increased the socio-economic and symbolic value of these locations. The generation of this kind of urban space occurs through the establishment of partnerships between the public and private sectors.

1.3.2 Public-Private Partnerships, the City of Exception and Austerity Urbanism

The relation between the public and private sectors has taken an explicit form through PPPs (Harvey, 1988). These bodies appeared for the first time in the 1970s US context, when several cities established them as a response to federal funding cuts. This example was followed in the UK through the policies of Margaret Thatcher, who abolished metropolitan governments and created urban development corporations (*ibid.*). Similar to their American counterparts, these are public-private bodies that have broad land acquisition, planning and redevelopment powers. In addition, they are not subject to local democratic control (*ibid.*). According to Boykoff (2013), PPPs constitute a particular form of state control via which capitalism, and in particular neoliberalism, adapt themselves to the Olympic Games and its related developments. PPPs are driven by the neoliberal principle that the private sector is more efficient than the public. Therefore, the latter should entrust its responsibilities to the former (*ibid.*). Minton (2012) notes how PPPs have overseen the London 2012 Olympics' regeneration schemes. Quangos, such as the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA), have been created. These institutions manage large public budgets and have enormous planning powers. They are composed of experts from the private and public sectors, which are not subject to democratic control. Moreover, Minton (*ibid.*) highlights that private companies own the London post-Olympic neighbourhoods. They have replaced public authorities in the provision of services such as public ground management, security, and so forth (*ibid.*).

Despite official views, PPPs, applied to Olympic developments, have failed to achieve positive effects for local communities (Brownill et al., 2013, 2015). In fact, developers

exploit the extraordinary media attention and the strict timetable to deliver Olympic venues, and do not fulfil their commitments to community gains. They are aware that in the “state of exception” (Carl Schmitt, cited in Vainer, 2016: 102) governments want to avoid embarrassing situations, and they assume commitments beforehand taken on by their private partners (Boykoff, 2013). This is what Vainer (2016) refers to as the profound penetration of neoliberal thought in the minds of urban planners and policymakers. Flexibility lies at the core of contemporary forms of urban planning. The city should work as a company and be managed as such. Urban space should be handed over to the private sector, which knows how to run business. The city then becomes the realm of productivity and profit, rather than the realm of politics (*ibid.*). In this context, cities need to compete in order to catch the business opportunities that are presented to them. Major flexibility, instead of strict rules, is required. In Vainer’s (2016: 102) words, the city of exception can be described as: “The case by case, flexible negotiation in the pursuit of flexible accumulation”. In this kind of city, residents’ general interests become diluted by a myriad of specific interests of particular groups. Power no longer resides in democratically elected bodies, but is split between groups of interest. Therefore, it is difficult to understand who makes decisions, as well as where and when they are made (*ibid.*).

The 2008 financial crisis has caused another wave of public service cuts and privatisations that Peck (2012) has defined as “Austerity Urbanism”. Peck describes this as the last phase of neoliberal urban restructuring, which is characterised by the reduction of public expenditure for cities and the “enclosure of the commons”, namely the privatisation and dispossession of public goods such as public spaces, gardens, housing, and so forth (Gillespie et al., 2018; *ibid.*). Austerity urbanism paves the way for Olympic Games bids. As noted above, cities have increasingly used sport mega-events to attract private investments in an era of public funding cuts (Essex and Chalkley, 1998).

1.4 UK Housing Policies

The emergence of neoliberalism and austerity has shaped the UK housing policies of the last three decades. Affordable housing was one of the main dimensions of the inclusive Olympic Legacy that was promised to East London residents (Bernstock, 2014; Watt and Bernstock, 2017). It is therefore worth briefly exploring the literature that describes UK housing policies in order to understand what terms like affordable and social housing mean in the current circumstances.

According to Watt (2013), social housing has historically played an important role as a key buffer against gentrification in London. However, there has been a marked reduction of socially rented housing in London and in the UK over the last 30 years, as a direct result of the national policies implemented by the Conservative, New Labour, and Coalition Governments (Watt, 2009b; Watt and Minton, 2016). With respect to London, while in 1981 social housing accounted for 35% of the total stock, in 2011 this amount declined to 24% (Trust for London, 2017). In addition, while the amount of council housing decreased consistently, the amount of social housing run by housing associations (registered landlords after the 1998 Housing Act) doubled (*ibid.*).

The key shift in the policy was embedded in the 1980 Housing Act, by means of which the Conservative government implemented the 'Right to Buy' scheme, which provided council tenants with the possibility to purchase their homes at a discount, even if the local authority objected. Later, the 1988 Housing Act favoured the transfer of council housing stocks to housing associations. Moreover, the Conservatives cut funding for social housing, and this had two main consequences. Firstly, local authorities stopped building. Meanwhile, housing associations continued; even though they delivered a considerably smaller proportion of newly built housing compared to what councils offered before. Secondly, registered landlords have increasingly had to rely on private loans. As a consequence, housing associations, especially the largest ones, have become similar to private companies, with consequent negative effects on their social rent costs, which are higher than those charged by local authorities (Watt and Minton, 2016). The New Labour governments of the early twenty-first century did not reverse these policies. The only improvement to the existing council housing stock occurred with the 'Decent

Homes Programme', which gave local authorities three options: transferring stocks to housing associations, setting up an Arm Length Management Organisation, or looking for private financing. Many London councils retained their existing stock. However, given the lack of funding allocated to undertake refurbishments, they did not act. Thus, 40% of the dwellings owned by local authorities fell below the Decent Homes standard in 2008 – 2009, while the same situation was encountered in only 18.5% of the stock owned by housing associations (Watt, 2013).

In London, a decrease in the quantity and quality of social housing has intertwined with high land value, related to its status as a global city (Sassen, 1991). Such a combination has generated what Watt (2013: 102) defines as a “state-induced rent gap”. In other words, council tenants pay a much lower rent compared to the high profit that developers could make if the existing residents are evicted. Therefore, the land where their homes are built is regenerated, and new housing developments are built. This process assumes a direct form, when councils evict their tenants and sell the land to private developers, or an indirect form, when councils transfer their housing stock to a registered landlord, which then sells out part of it to a private developer. Whether directly or indirectly, the outcome is the same: social housing dwellers are evicted, their estates are regenerated, and a more affluent population moves into the new developments (*ibid.*).

The Coalition Government has not implemented housing policies to invert these trends; on the contrary, they have brought them forward. In 2010, the government introduced a new affordable rent model, which is meant to replace traditional social rent schemes (Wiles, 2014). The new policy indicates that affordable rent should be set at 80% of the market level. This means that affordable housing in London, where the average market rent is very high, is unaffordable for low and even middle-income earners (*ibid.*). In addition, the Coalition Government further cut the affordable housing budget from £3.7 billion for the period 2008-2011, to £1.7 billion for the period 2011-2015. Moreover, the introduction of Universal Credit has placed a cap on overall benefits (Bernstock, 2014). Finally, with the 2011 Localism Act, the Coalition Government provided local authorities with more autonomy in setting out their social housing letting policies. It also provided guidelines to prioritise employed applicants, former military personnel, and individuals

who “made a contribution to the community” (Watt and Bernstock, 2017: 97). In her analysis of social rent letting policies in East Village, Humphry (2019) proposes that we should interpret the Localism Act as a shift from residualisation to individualisation in the UK social housing model. In other words, rather than addressing need, social housing is increasingly allocated based on market affordability considerations. A neoliberal discourse of self-responsible social renters and financially viable tenancies has been implemented via the allocation policies of a growing number of registered landlords and local authorities (*ibid.*). This is a consequence of “Austerity Urbanism”, which has resulted in cuts for truly affordable housing, a growing financialisation of social housing providers, and a tendency to devolve financial risk from states down to cities, neighbourhoods, and households (Peck, 2012; Watt and Minton, 2016).

Shelter (2014) describes the housing situation in the UK as very problematic. The UK housing system produces far less new homes than what is needed. In 2014, 2 million households were registered with the local authorities housing waiting lists across the country. Therefore, at least 250,000 new-built dwellings every year are needed. However, the current rate of new constructions is less than half this figure. Shelter (*ibid.*) highlights that one of the main causes of this decline is local authorities’ disengagement. Councils’ role has been partly replaced by housing associations. Nonetheless, as we saw above, housing associations are becoming privatised bodies and their contribution towards delivering truly affordable housing is not sufficient to address the housing hardships experienced by low-income individuals. Such hardships are experienced by many East Londoners.

1.5 Housing Deprivation in East London

Several authors have highlighted that deprivation, poverty, homelessness, overcrowding and poor housing conditions are widespread and long-standing issues in East London (Bernstock, 2014; Minton, 2012; Shelter, 2013, 2014; Watt, 2013; Watt and Bernstock, 2017). The population of this part of the capital is characterised by low-income and ethnically diverse households (Butler and Hamnet, 2011; Elahi and Khan, 2016; Watt and Bernstock, 2017). Watt (2013) and Watt and Bernstock (2017) note that

the LBN, where the Olympic Park has been built, is one of the most deprived and ethnically diverse areas of London. Minton (2012) points out that Newham includes 13 of the 15 poorest wards of the city, with half of its population living below the poverty line, and 70% of children living in low-income households. According to official statistics, nearly 70% of the borough's population has a BAME background (LBN, 2017).

Watt (2013) highlights that since the end of the Second World War, East London has been one of the key focuses of urban policy in the UK, which has aimed at regenerating the area. However, the existing literature has failed to engage in a comprehensive analysis of the area's regeneration. In spite of this, the analysis of single regeneration projects demonstrate that they have failed to improve the living conditions of disadvantaged individuals, and have in fact exacerbated social polarisation and segregation (Bernstock, 2014; Watt, 2013).

Overcrowding is a key concern in this part of the capital because homes are divided into flats, and rooms that were not designed to be bedrooms are used as such (Bernstock, 2014). The gap between London as a whole where 11.3% of the population lives in overcrowded conditions and the Olympic Host Boroughs increased during the 2001 – 2011 Census period (Watt and Bernstock, 2017: 109). The Olympic Host Boroughs – with the exception of Greenwich – are among the ten most overcrowded local authorities in the UK. Newham and Tower Hamlets occupy the first and third positions, with 25.2% and 16.4% of their respective populations living in overcrowded conditions (*ibid.*). Minton's (2012) interview with an LBN Housing Needs officer provides valuable insights into the extent of this overcrowding. They describe the housing conditions of low-income residents in Stratford as "miserable": 20 to 30 people were living in two-bedroom flats; illegal sheds had been built in houses' gardens where people - mostly legal and illegal immigrants - lived; others slept in garages, the back of shops and even in fridges. Furthermore, landlords provide false identities, there is little chance for residents to receive the deposit back, and unlawful evictions are very common (*ibid.*). These precarious living conditions are likely to affect health by causing stress, anxiety and respiratory diseases (Thompson et al., 2017). Watt and Bernstock (2017) highlight that four out of five households living in overcrowded conditions in the top five overcrowded local authorities of the country belong to BAME groups. The five boroughs

considered include Newham and Tower Hamlets. These figures highlight the links between housing deprivation and BAME groups.

Housing hardships are also reflected by the Host Boroughs' housing waiting lists. Bernstock (2014: 80-81) notes that 34.9% of Newham's and 23.6% of Tower Hamlets' populations are waiting for a council flat. These percentages increased in the six Host Boroughs from 2005 (when London was chosen to host the Olympic Games) to 2014. In fact, while in 2005 73,265 households were registered with the Host Boroughs waiting lists, in 2014 this amount increased to 86,845, which is an 18.5% overall increase (Shelter.org: N.p.). Between 2005 and 2011, this figure rose to 42% (*ibid.*). This means that over 30,000 households were added to the waiting lists (Watt, 2013). Thus, in the last few years there has been a decrease that, however, is due to the restriction of the criteria to be eligible for a council flat (*ibid.*). Watt and Bernstock (2017) note that Newham and Waltham Forest boroughs have harnessed the powers of the Localism Act to cut nearly 12,000 and 5,000 applicants respectively off their waiting lists.

Because of this, many applicants are pressured by council officers to accept private accommodation for which local authorities pay the rent. However, complaints regarding poor maintenance - with damp, cold and mould in the properties - and negative consequences for health are common (Thompson et al., 2017). Several interviewees in Thompson et al.'s (*ibid.*) study on the health conditions of social housing applicants in Newham talk about their experience with the council, saying that it causes them anxiety and distress. Long waits, restrictive access criteria and poor health are frequent themes. The council is perceived as an obstacle. Therefore, being registered on the waiting list is not enough if one wants to obtain a socially rented flat. Strategies such as constantly checking in with the Housing Options office and displaying need, such as poor health conditions or the disabilities of siblings, are used to demonstrate eligibility and necessity (*ibid.*).

A shortage of genuinely affordable housing results in homelessness and households living in temporary accommodation. In spite of the convergence agenda, the gap between the Olympic Host Boroughs and the rest of London is widening (Watt and Bernstock, 2017). The number of households considered homeless in London increased

by 23% in the period between 2012 and 2015 (Watt and Bernstock, 2017). The Host Boroughs experienced a 63% increase in the same period, with Newham reaching 122% (Watt and Bernstock, 2017: 112). In terms of households living in temporary accommodation, the overall increase across London was 32%, whereas in the Host Boroughs it was 43% (*ibid.*). Overall, 3,295 additional households were living in temporary accommodation in the Host Boroughs in 2015, compared to 2012 (*ibid.*). Watt and Bernstock (*ibid.*) argue that these data are the obverse of the Convergence Agenda.

A series of studies explore the life experiences of homeless young people and single mothers living in temporary accommodation in Newham (Gillespie et al., 2018; Kennelly, 2016; Kennelly and Watt, 2012; Watt, 2018a, 2018b). These were the people whose living standards were supposed to improve dramatically as a result of the London 2012 Olympic Legacy (Kennelly, 2016). As they saw the multitude of housing developments popping up all over Stratford and Newham, they felt disappointed because they realised that they could by no means afford these new homes. They expressed concerns that the area was going to become gentrified, and they could no longer afford to live there, regardless of whether they were employed or not (Kennelly 2016; Kennelly and Watt, 2012). In 2014, the LBN downsized the hostel where many of them lived, as a consequence of austerity cuts. Since then, some were evicted for their rent arrears; others, who regularly paid their rent talked about being pressured to move into privately rented accommodation, far away from London, where the Newham council would pay the deposit for them. Those who accepted this solution were removed from the waiting list, such that if they needed to go back to Newham the council would claim that they were no longer their housing responsibility, as they autonomously decided to move into private accommodation outside the borough (Watt, 2018b).

Watt (2018a) discusses the gendered aspects of homelessness. Young women have a higher chance of becoming homeless if they get pregnant. This may happen because of disputes with siblings over a lack of space in the parental home, or landlords' evictions. In addition to this detrimental situation, the women interviewed by Watt (*ibid.*) talk about being pressured by Newham council's officers to view and enter a property shortly after they got offered it. As far as the officers are concerned, declining an offer would

mean making oneself “intentionally homeless”, such that the council would dismiss its duty to assist them. Women were therefore forced to accept the “proposed” solution, which often meant being relocated tens of miles away from London, far from family and friends. Some mentioned being housed in hostels with damp and dirt, having to share communal areas with male drug addicts, who harassed them (Watt, 2018a). Shelter (2013) recognises that the pressure on Newham’s Housing Options service is unique, due to its intensity. However, this and other East London local authorities should not use the private sector to discharge their homelessness duties, given that this has proven unaffordable and unsuitable to address housing needs (*ibid.*).

According to Bernstock (2014), the reason for increasing housing hardships in the Host Boroughs is that, similar to national and London trends, there has been a constant decrease in the levels of socially rented housing and home ownership in this part of the city. Conversely, the Private Rental Sector (PRS) has steadily expanded. Similarly, Minton (2012) notes that until the early 2000s renting privately was virtually impossible for lower-income earners. However, in recent years it has increased considerably due to the decreasing number of socially rented accommodation. Shelter (2013) notes that the number of households renting privately in Newham, Hackney and Tower Hamlets has increased at a greater rate than the London average since 2001. According to the 2011 Census, 34% of Newham, 33% of Tower Hamlets and 29% of Hackney residents rent privately (Shelter, 2013: 3). The change of emphasis from needs-based to market affordability in the allocation policies of several East London social housing providers has played a role in the decrease of truly affordable housing options for young and low-income individuals (Humphry, 2019; Watt and Bernstock, 2017). The above suggests that there is a growing need for genuinely affordable housing in East London. However, the Olympic housing legacy does not seem to adequately respond to the urgent needs of long-standing East London communities.

1.6 London 2012: The Community Games?

According to Cohen (2013), the 2012 Olympic Games have accelerated London’s change of gravity centre from west to east. After the Docklands and inner East London, this shift

has expanded to Stratford and the Lower Lea Valley. At the same time, the Olympics have accentuated long-standing social differences in the British capital. Moreover, Cohen (2013) argues that an Olympiad can be identified by its nexus of internal contradictions. Following this idea, the contradictions between commitments and outcomes in what was promised to be an inclusive Olympic Legacy can be identified. As discussed below, the key to the success of the London 2012 bid was the bidding team's claim that they had sought and obtained the support of local residents. They claimed to the IOC that the host communities supported the bid, because they were promised that through the Games an inclusive Olympic Legacy - in terms of housing, education, health, and employment - was going to be delivered "for the direct benefit" of everyone who lived in East London (London 2012, 2004). "Homes for all" was one of the slogans launched by the Host Boroughs that, given the housing deprivation described above, fostered enthusiasm among local residents (Growth Boroughs, 2009).

In order to symbolise the support of local communities for the London 2012 bid, in November 2004 a 14-year-old East London schoolgirl was chosen to consign the London Candidature File to the IOC in Lausanne (Minton, 2012). Armstrong et al. (2011) and Minton (2012) highlight how the organisers considered the endorsement of local people crucial to a successful bid. Therefore, at the time of the candidature, The East London Communities Organisation (TELCO) was approached by the bidding team and was asked to publicly support the bid. TELCO was considered an ideal partner for the bidders' purpose, because it represented 80 local residents' groups and associations.

After intensive discussion, TELCO decided to back the bid, but in return they asked the main agencies involved in the bidding process to sign an 'Ethical Olympics Agreement'. The document committed the bidding team, the London Development Agency (LDA)⁴ and the then mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, to six "People Guarantees" regarding housing, education, health, and employment (Minton, 2012). With respect to housing, the agreement stated: "Affordable homes to be built for local people and managed through a Community Land Trust where the value of the land would be removed from the property prices, making the homes more affordable" (Armstrong et al., 2011: 3184).

⁴ The LDA was a London Mayoral body in charge of the 2012 Olympics' bidding process.

Nonetheless, the document was only a memorandum indicating general terms rather than legally binding points. The words in the text “in principle” ensured ample room for loopholes. At the same time, it allowed the chief of the bidding team, Lord Sebastian Coe, to claim that the Games were then “eminently more winnable” (Armstrong et al., 2011)

Once the bid was won, the ODA took over most of the responsibilities from the LDA, to deliver the Olympics-related projects. The ODA was accountable to the central government only, so that the process could be sped up (*ibid.*). David Higgins, head of the ODA, refused to accept the terms of the ‘Ethical Olympics Agreement’. He claimed that the ODA did not exist when it was signed. Initially, Higgins even refused to meet TELCO representatives who, therefore, picketed him as he went in and out of his breakfast meetings. Higgins then agreed to meet them, but he continued to refuse the terms of the ‘Ethical Olympics Agreement’, because he argued that “it is illegal to dictate the terms of contracts stipulated by open tender” (Minton, 2012: XXI). Representatives of the LDA and Lord Coe continued to hold regular meetings with TELCO, but after the ODA was appointed, they had limited responsibilities for the major Olympics-related projects (Armstrong et al., 2011).

Several authors (see *ibid.*; Bernstock, 2013; 2014; Brownill et al., 2013; Watt, 2013) highlight that local communities’ needs were given little regard in the cases of the Clays Lane and Carpenters council estates. The Clays Lane Estate was demolished to build the Athletes’ Village in what today is the northern side of the Olympic Park in Stratford. The 425 households who lived there were all decanted and relocated elsewhere across East London. The residents described the process as pressuring and intimidating, with little choice being given to them about where to move (Armstrong et al., 2011). The Carpenters Estate is a council estate located on the southern border of the Olympic Park, near Stratford Railway Station. It is composed of three tower blocks and other lower constructions, providing approximately 700 social housing units. After the 2012 Games were awarded to London in 2005, the LBN brought forward plans for the regeneration of the area (Watt, 2013). The council argued that the complex was rundown, the refurbishment was unviable, and the Carpenters Estate needed to be demolished and replaced by a new housing development (*ibid.*). Several hundreds of tenants and

leaseholders have already been evicted. However, according to current and former residents, most of the Carpenters Estate is still in good condition and does not need to be demolished; it only needs refurbishment (Watt, 2013).

Raco and Tunney (2010) focus on the experience of the approximately 200 small businesses that were displaced from the area where the Olympic Park has been built. Once London won the Olympic bid, they received a CPO, and they were forced to sell their land to the government. Many business owners reported that the compensation they received was lower than what they needed to relocate their business elsewhere. The local residents employed in these firms stated that they were unable to afford the transport costs required to reach their relocated workplaces, which led to them losing their jobs. Given the destruction of their production ecosystem, and the loss of long-standing employees, most of these firms did not survive the relocation (*ibid.*). It is estimated that the CPO scheme resulted in the loss of approximately 5,000 local jobs in Stratford (*ibid.*).

Because of the loss of several hundreds of social housing flats at the Clays Lane and Carpenters estates, the Olympic housing legacy started from a negative balance. The ODA gradually ceased its activity once the Olympic venues had been delivered. The London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) was set up in 2013 as the London Mayoral body responsible for the Olympic Park and surrounding subareas, where a large part of the London 2012 Olympic housing legacy is being developed (Bernstock, 2014).

1.7 The London 2012 Housing Legacy

According to Bernstock (2013), the housing legacy of an Olympiad consists of two key elements: the reconversion of the Athletes' Village and the other Olympic Park-associated schemes in housing units. Starting from this assumption, Bernstock (2014) argues that four layers need to be considered in order to understand the London 2012 housing legacy: the regeneration of the whole Lower Lea Valley, the housing development plans for Stratford City, the five Olympic Park housing developments (Chobham Manor, East Wick, Marshgate Wharf, Sweet Water and Pudding Mill), and the

reconversion of the Athletes' Village. The five Olympic Park neighbourhoods are being built in areas that the LLDC sold to private developers. Although the Athletes' Village (now renamed East Village) borders the Olympic Park, this development is not included in the LLDC area. As we will see below, it was directly sold by the ODA to the current owners in the run up to the 2012 Olympic Games (Bernstock, 2014).

The initial plans indicated that these housing schemes should deliver approximately 50,000 new homes, half of which should be affordable (Bernstock, 2013). Nevertheless, these commitments were vague: they were mostly based on the vacant land available, and on the idea that affordable housing would be delivered as a community gain by private developers who bought the public land to build on (Bernstock, 2014). As a consequence, the affordable housing plans have been constantly revised downwards. With regards to the 20,000 new homes within the LLDC, approximately 35% will be affordable and 20% will be social housing (Brimicombe et al., 2015; LLDC, 2015). According to the 'Olympic Games Impact Study' (Brimicombe et al., *ibid.*), this will offer a significant contribution to the provision of affordable housing in the Host Boroughs. Nevertheless, these percentages could still decrease over time (Watt and Bernstock, 2017).

In order to provide an explanation for this negative trend, Bernstock and Poynter (2012) argue that the weakness of the planning gains mechanism is likely to cause affordable housing provision to decrease in the Lower Lea Valley, Stratford City and Olympic Park developments. In particular, they draw on a case study of Stratford High Street. The authors draw attention to how, in the period between 2000 and 2012, affordable housing commitments, assumed by the private companies that had obtained permission to develop the site, steadily decreased. Notably, the S 106 Agreements, which regulate planning gains, indicate that private developers have to pay a financial contribution when they obtain the contract, and have to include a certain amount of affordable homes in the new development (Bernstock, 2014). However, the Stratford High Street case study demonstrates the capacity of private developers to exploit the land value rise fostered by public investments and, over time, negotiate new deals with public authorities that commit them to deliver lower levels of planning gains than initially agreed. This includes lower amounts of affordable and social housing. Developers used

the financial crisis and recession, which occurred in the run up to the 2012 Games, as a justification for more modest contributions. The consequent low value captured by private developers has often been insufficient even to cover the costs of new educational and health facilities, which are needed when new housing schemes are built (Bernstock, 2013).

However, the S 106 Agreements' weakness is only one of the reasons why the London 2012 housing legacy includes a relatively modest level of genuinely affordable homes. Other reasons regard the introduction of a new affordable rent model, cuts to funding, the introduction of Universal Credits and the Localism Act, as discussed above. Shelter (2013) highlights the difficulty in separating the housing impact of the Olympic Games in East London from the impact of these policy changes. The new housing policy context has made delivering affordable and social housing in desirable areas more challenging. This process has greatly affected Stratford following its regeneration and infrastructural upgrade. The East Thames Group (2011, cited in Watt and Bernstock, 2017: 90) highlights that 44% of Newham's households could not afford a 2-bedroom affordable rent property, and 63% could not afford a 3 or 4-bedroom property. Rather than addressing the needs of the low-income East London population, these properties afford young professionals and City workers the possibility to rent or buy at a discount (Bernstock, 2014).

Moreover, the dramatic increase in the London 2012 Games budget has also had a negative impact on housing⁵. The LLDC needs to cover at least part of the costs associated with the Games. Selling land to developers is one of the most profitable ways of doing so. In order to facilitate sales, the LLDC is employing a flexible approach to negotiate affordable housing provision with developers (Bernstock, 2014). Sadd (2010) anticipates that such a trend undermines the promise of an inclusive Olympic housing

⁵ The initial bidding documents estimated the costs of the Games at £2.37 billion. In 2007 the effective sum reached £9.3 billion. In March 2012 the House of Commons' Public Accounts Committee calculated that the costs of the Olympics had peaked at approximately £11 billion. Less than £2 billion came from the private sector (Boykoff, 2013). Raco's (2014, 2015) studies show that £5.5 out of the £9.3 billion of public money invested in the Olympics was used for drawing up contracts and paying private consultants, who were deemed to provide the necessary expertise to manage large-scale projects. The remaining sum was used to build the actual Olympic Park, its world-class sport venues (the Olympic Stadium, Aquatic Centre, Copper Box Arena, and Lee Valley Velo Park), modern transport links to Stratford and other infrastructures (Gold and Gold, 2008; Raco, 2014, 2015).

legacy. Stratford is therefore becoming gentrified, and its low-income population risks displacement. A measure of this pattern is evidenced by the 22% increase in house prices registered within the LBN in 2015 (Watt and Bernstock, 2017). In the period 2012 – 2015, rent prices in the Host Boroughs also augmented significantly above the average London increase of 27.7%. In these years, Newham experienced a sharp 35.5% private rent inflation (Watt and Bernstock, 2016: 92). This was a symptom of the growing gentrification of the borough (Sadd, 2010).

Watt and Bernstock (2017) draw attention to what they define as the bias of several official reports that celebrate the success of the London Olympic housing legacy. For example, a Department of Culture, Media and Sport (2013, cited in Watt and Bernstock, 2017: 89) report dedicates 12 pages to property value increase, but gives very little space to housing needs indicators. Similarly, affordable and social housing are barely mentioned. Watt and Bernstock (*ibid.*) point out that these reports aggregate the data regarding the construction of affordable and social housing in the six Host Boroughs to demonstrate the success of the Olympic housing legacy. In the 2009 – 2015 period, 26,330 affordable and 13,220 social housing units have been delivered in these local authorities (Watt and Bernstock, 2017: 107). If we consider the number of households registered on the waiting lists across East London, which we briefly discussed above, it can be noted that new socially rented accommodation is insufficient to cover housing needs. Moreover, Watt and Bernstock (*ibid.*) deconstruct this rhetoric of success by disaggregating the data. This shows that Tower Hamlets performed exceptionally well in delivering new affordable and social housing in the period considered (29% and 34% respectively). On the contrary, Newham provided a much lower contribution (15% approximately for both housing tenures), despite having the largest social housing waiting list of the six Host Boroughs (*ibid.*). The authors conclude that this difference shows the inconsistency of the Olympic housing promise to deliver “Homes for All” (Growth Boroughs, 2009). The fact that Tower Hamlets performed exceptionally well, whereas Newham underperformed, is the result of the different policy priorities and ideological positions of the two boroughs’ decision-makers (Watt and Bernstock, 2017).

Despite the controversial scenario described above, Gillespie et al. (2018) instil some optimism in the debate by discussing the initiatives of the Focus E15 group. This provides

new energy to the resistance against the privatisation of commons resulting from Olympics-related urban regeneration under austerity urbanism (Gillespie et al., 2018; Peck, 2012). In September 2013, 29 young single mothers living in the Focus E15 hostel in Stratford received eviction letters from their housing association due to government cuts (Gillespie et al., 2018). Given that private rental costs increased in the area, these women could not find alternative housing solutions autonomously. They sought Newham council's support but they were treated with blatant disregard. Thus, with the help of other housing activists and some local residents, in September 2014 the Focus E15 mothers occupied two empty flats on the Carpenters Estate. The occupation lasted two weeks before the mothers were evicted by the council. However, this attracted many visitors and intense media attention. It also favoured the generation of networks between various housing activist groups across London, which since then share resources, experiences and tactics. This is what the Olympic counter-legacy consists of (*ibid.*).

1.8 The Athletes' Village Housing Redevelopment

The London Candidature File acknowledges the need for affordable and social housing in East London, and indicates that after the 2012 Olympic Games, the Athletes' Village would be reconverted into 3,600 housing units. 50% would be affordable homes for rent and sale, while the other half would be private homes for sale (London 2012, 2004). The London Candidature File also highlights that a PPP, with a "public contribution and a private investment", would develop the Village (London 2012, 2004: 213). However, financial issues, as well as considerations related to the excessive concentration of dwellings, led to a recalibration of the plan. Therefore, it was finally decided that the development would include 2,818 new homes, 1,379 (49%) of which would be affordable/social (Bernstock, 2014).

The Australian developer Lendlease was chosen to develop the site, although this decision raised doubts regarding the regularity of the tendering process, since the chief executive of the ODA, David Higgins, was former chief executive of Lendlease (Boykoff, 2013). The deal between Lendlease and the ODA indicated that the company should

provide £450 million of the £1 billion necessary to build the housing scheme (Bernstock, 2014). However, Lendlease soon claimed that it was struggling to find this funding because of the 2008 financial crisis and credit crunch (Boykoff, 2013). Thus, the government agreed to provide £400 million as a contingency fund. Furthermore, several planning obligations, such as delivering educational and health facilities in the neighbourhood, passed from Lendlease to the ODA, increasing public financial participation in the project (Bernstock, 2014). In the spring of 2009, the Olympics organisers admitted that the Athletes' Village project was "fully nationalised" (Boykoff, 2013: 84).

In 2009 Triathlon Homes (TH) - a consortium of East Thames and Southern Housing Group housing associations, and developer First Base - purchased the affordable housing units in the Village for £268 million. Later, in August 2011 it was announced that a joint venture between Qatari Diar (the sovereign investment fund of the Qatari royal family) and British developer Delancey (QDD) had won the tendering to take over the remaining 51% of the Village, together with the freehold, with a £557 million offer. This meant that the money returned to the government from TH and QDD did not cover the £1 billion public investment, and taxpayers lost £175 million. An ODA representative stated that retrieving the costs was never part of the plan, since the Athletes' Village was built on a former wasteland (Kollewe, 2011). This statement contradicts the indication of the London Candidature File mentioned above, which highlights the central role of "a private investment and a public contribution" (London 2012, 2004: 213), and does not consider the demolition of the Clays Lane Estate (Armstrong et al., 2011).

The freeholder QDD has renamed the neighbourhood "East Village", and has created Get Living London (GLL) as their business platform and housing management arm (Bernstock, 2014). QDD's 1,439 flats have become the first real estate management investment fund in the UK. The apartments are let on the PRS on one, two, or three-year leases (Kollewe, 2011).

The 1,379 TH apartments are a mix of social rent (675 apartments), shared ownership/leasehold (410) and intermediate market rent (IMR) (294)⁶. The latter two

⁶ Chapter 4 contains a detailed discussion of East Village's housing split and policies.

are part of the new affordable housing products: IMR means that part of these properties is let at 70% of the market level, and another part is let at 80%; while shared ownership means that buyers can purchase a percentage of these properties and pay the rent for the unsold share. However, as discussed above, they are not affordable for low-income households living in East London (Bernstock, 2014). Shelter (2013: 8) calculates that an IMR East Village 1-bedroom flat set at 80% of the market rental rate equates to 52%, 46% and 41% of median wages in Hackney, Newham and Tower Hamlets respectively. Moreover, East Village has contributed to the increase in rent levels in East London and Newham, as discussed above. Between 2013 and 2015 rents in the various housing tenures increased from 30 to 50%. Notably, private rental growth has also boosted IMR and shared ownership prices (Watt and Bernstock, 2017).

Affordability issues emerge even with respect to social rent properties. Humphry (2019) discusses the shift from residualisation to individualisation in relation to the TH's social rent allocation policies, which followed the 2011 Localism Act. Access to social housing in the East Village is conditional on being employed, checking rent affordability and accepting rules and regulations about the use of the flat, the communal areas and the relationship with the landlord. By distinguishing between the "deserving" and "undeserving" poor, Triathlon constructs financially viable tenancies and self-responsible tenants. Rather than addressing the housing deprivation experienced by many East Londoners, Triathlon seems concerned with transferring the financial risk, which housing providers experience in a period of austerity urbanism and consequent social housing funding cuts, to its tenants (Humphry, 2019; Peck, 2012).

1.8.1 The East Village's Design

The East Village borders the northern part of the Olympic Park, nearby Stratford International Station. Its design is based on high-density principles. The 11 original rectangular plots contain 2,818 apartments. Each block includes 8 to 12 storey buildings, across 27 hectares. The blocks' sizes are similar; however, they are architecturally distinct. 16 architects were employed in the project, and were allowed to work creatively within the framework of a design code drawn up by Fletcher Priest and Patel

Taylor architectural practices. The aim was to achieve a balance between diversity and similarity. The colours chosen are similar but also different: Portland and Cotswold stone mixed with more industrial concrete greys and darker tones, broken up in places by wooden accents and dotted with many balconies, some in opaque green and others in clear glass. Moreover, a mixture of resin bonded aggregates, sandstone flags and more traditional paving characterises the flooring (Farquhar, 2012; Hall, 2012).

The blocks are set around what was - before they started the construction of two new tower blocks - a triangular green area, called Victory Park. Each plot has a first-floor internal courtyard that sits above a ground-floor car park. The buildings have direct access to the courtyard, which is closed to the general public. The intention is to create a balance between public space that is open to everyone and a semi-private space that is meant to provide a sense of identity and community, where residents from the different housing tenures can meet (*ibid.*). Figure 1 shows the 11 original East Village plots, and how the East Village looked before the construction of the new towerblocks began. This will be further discussed in Chapter 6.

Figure 1: East Village



(Source: Aechpaper.com, 2014)

1.9 Conclusion

Despite the growing pressure on the IOC in light of the negative impact of past Olympic Games on marginal social groups in host cities, commitments to tackling exclusion remain vague and mostly ineffective. The introduction of concepts such as Olympic Legacy and Social Legacy have not translated into inclusive practices in terms of delivering gains for individuals in need (IOC, 2013). In an era of neoliberalism and austerity urbanism, urban development has been handed over to PPPs, which pursue private interests and business opportunities rather than addressing inequalities (Harvey, 1988; Peck, 2012). If systemic issues are not solved and accountable public bodies do not take control of the process, tax-payers' money invested in sport mega-events will continue to foster the interests of sponsors and developers rather than those of the wider public. The story of TELCO, which signed the 'Ethical Olympics Agreement' with the LDA, and was subsequently told that responsibilities had been passed over to the ODA, is an example of how, under the current urban policy circumstances, it is difficult to hold decision-makers to account (Kennelly, 2016).

In the case of the London 2012 Olympic Games, structural issues related to the political economy of mega-events have intertwined with the UK housing policies and the status of its capital as a global city (Sassen, 1991). This has produced a housing legacy, which instead of providing "Homes for all" (Growth Boroughs, 2009), has fostered gentrification and provided homes for a wealthier incoming population in Newham and East London.

Chapter 2

Exclusion, Habitus and Belonging

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses literature highlighting the links between socio-spatial exclusion, urban policy, and claims to belonging in residential space. An analysis of social mixing in post-Olympic neighbourhoods needs to examine the struggles that are played out when groups from different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds share space.

With this in mind, the idea that underpins this chapter is Bourdieu's (1977, 1986a; 1991; 1005) theory. Particularly important are the concepts of social distinction, which refers to the perception that middle-class preferences and practices are better than those of the lower classes; and habitus, which refers to people's dispositions and deeply ingrained habits. Habitus also reflects the way people react to the social world that surrounds them (the field). Thus, social structures and personal history interact, and are shaped by one's positioning in terms of race, class, and other sources of distinction. This theoretical framework is supplemented by a discussion of Bourdieu's idea of symbolic violence (1986a), which highlights that certain groups impose values upon less powerful ones with their unconscious complicity; and classification struggles (*ibid.*), which describes how those in the dominated groups identify ways to align themselves with the dominant ones.

Section 2.2 discusses exclusion as a spatial and multidimensional phenomenon, which is often exacerbated by urban policy. Section 2.3 explores Bourdieu's (1986a, b, 1991, 2005) theory of habitus, social distinction, various forms of capital and power. Section 2.4 focuses on how the classed and racialised "other" is portrayed and treated in western societies. Section 2.5 discusses literature regarding various narratives of belonging among both middle and working-class people. Section 2.6 explains how the way the white middle-class construct space in their own image may lead to disaffiliation and spatial segregation that in certain cases takes the form of GCs and MPCs. Section 2.7 provides an overview of literature on the London middle-class and its various

factions. Section 2.8 discusses the relationship between powerful and less powerful residents – namely middle and working-class households - in socially mixed neighbourhoods, including post-Olympic developments. Section 2.9 explores how public space, leisure and retail facilities may be constructed to stimulate the dispositions of powerful individuals, and therefore rendered more or less exclusionary. Section 2.10 summarises the main concepts, themes and issues addressed in this second literature review chapter, and briefly explains how this will be employed in the remainder of the work.

2.2 Exclusion

2.2.1 Space and Exclusion

Bourdieu's concepts of social distinction, symbolic violence, and field theory (1977, 1986a, b, 1991) are fundamental when looking at class injustice in social space, such as middle-class space or space where working-class culture is considered deviant (McKenzie, 2015). As discussed in detail below, Bourdieu (1986a, b, 1991, 2005) describes social space as a field, where various agents compete to accumulate various forms of capital and obtain advantageous positions. For Bourdieu, power and control over social space are based not only on economic power, but also on symbolic processes such as social distinction, boundary-making, cultural practices and attitudes, which the middle and upper classes consider better than those of the working-class. As Sibley (1995: XI) points out: "the human landscape is a landscape of exclusion". By constructing space in particular ways, powerful groups eradicate the history and symbols of the weaker, and exercise their domination and control over others. For Sibley (*ibid.*), social scientists and human geographers in particular need to raise concerns over powerful groups' domination of space. These groups are primarily white, male, adult and middle-class. Exclusionary patterns go beyond the purely economic argument and include other dimensions like race, ethnicity, gender, homophobia, age, and the social construction of disability, which can inhibit social participation as well (Butler and Watt, 2007; Gough et al., 2004; Gough and Eisenschitz, 2006; White, 2014). The spatial dimension has to be taken into consideration.

Spatial inequalities take different forms when analysed on different scales. For instance, if we take into consideration poverty, the contrast between deprivation levels becomes more evident when examining smaller rather than larger spatial scales. If we take into consideration ethnicity, the dynamics of social exclusion can be reinforced when there is a concentration of certain ethnic groups in specific areas, typically at the neighbourhood scale. The spatial dimension is therefore very relevant. In fact, exclusion is both a manifestation of spatialised power, and a manifestation of spatialised distinctions and social divisions (August, 2014; Herbert, 2008).

2.2.2 Urban Policy, Regeneration, and Exclusion

To comprehensively understand exclusion as a spatial phenomenon, we must take into consideration existing research surrounding the impact of urban policy and regeneration on neighbourhoods and communities under neoliberalism. Notably, social mixing strategies are one of its key characteristics.

Bourdieu (2005) notes that neoliberal principles of governance are hegemonic in western states. They are based on the belief that the economy is governed by natural and universal laws with which governments should not interfere. Self-regulated markets are capable to guarantee equitable production and distribution of goods. This is reflected in urban regeneration regimes across Europe, which have employed regeneration strategies that prioritise economic growth (Mangan, 2004). National and local governments, driven by market logics, have withdrawn from their role of delivering public goods such as housing, health, safety, education and culture in favour of private actors (Bourdieu, 2005). Based on the liberal principles of self-help and individual responsibility, the state has withdrawn from intervening in economics to equalise opportunities and reduce inequalities (Bourdieu, 2005).

These values and moral views are reflected in the UK urban policies since the 1980s. Conservative, New Labour and Coalition governments shared the neoliberal belief that inequalities are caused by the disaffected behaviour of working-class communities, who were considered lazy, apathetic and therefore partly responsible for their condition

(McKenzie, 2015). The responsibility for unemployment and economic failure is attributed to individuals rather than being considered the result of political, social and economic history (Bourdieu, 2005). In the UK policy documents, the term social exclusion is used to describe the concentration of disaffected individuals in inner-city neighbourhoods (Gough and Eisenschitz, 2006); and functions of social assistance are delegated to local levels of governments such as cities and local authorities (Bourdieu, 2005). Documents such as the 'Urban White Paper' (published in 2000) and the 'New Deal for Communities' (published in 2001) addressed these issues and stressed the necessity to undertake regeneration and social mixing strategies to dilute segregation in these areas (Gough and Eisenschitz, 2006; Wallace, 2010). They also stressed the need to consult communities over the redevelopment of their neighbourhoods. However, this did not result in their real involvement in the decision-making processes (Mangan, 2004; Wallace, 2010).

In the attempt to push working-class individuals to "help themselves", the New Labour government has utilised the notion of aspiration, which has been embraced by many ethnic minority groups who have seen an opening up of opportunities that were precluded to their parents when they migrated to the UK (Butler and Hamnett, 2011). Therefore, higher proportions of low-income and BAME individuals have developed aspirations to become middle-class, which has led them to gain higher education degrees and subsequently become employed in highly skilled and well-paid jobs. Some of them have also left the inner city and have moved to the suburbs in search of the middle-class "good life" (*Ibid.*). However, many have not been able to significantly improve their life conditions. In the context of neoliberalism and austerity urbanism, social mobility is rare (McKenzie, 2015; Peck, 2012).

Bourdieu (2005) links the priorities of the neoliberal state to symbolic violence. These links can be identified in the UK urban policy discourse, which focuses on imposing values such as merit and self-improvement – via for example training and skills-development - upon the lower classes. The distribution of welfare resources has become conditioned to the interiorisation of such values, rather than to the necessity of addressing need (Imrie and Raco, 2003; Peck, 2012). The "disserving poor" rather than the "undeserving poor" would therefore be prioritised in the allocation of housing and

benefits (Schneider and Ingran, 1997). In 2006, Conservative leader David Cameron commissioned the right-wing Centre for Social Justice to conduct a study. The result was the 'Broken Britain' report, which identified the exploitation of the British welfare system by disaffected individuals as the cause of the country's breakdown (McKenzie, 2015). Based on these findings, from 2010 to 2015 the Coalition Government (Conservatives and Liberal Democrats) undertook massive welfare cuts to housing, unemployment and disability benefits. Thus, living conditions in lower-income neighbourhoods further deteriorated (*ibid.*).

2.2.3 The Olympics and Exclusion

The links between state priorities, symbolic violence and social exclusion emerge among the lines of the literature on urban transformation brought by mega-events (see Broudehoux, 2016; Kennelly, 2016; Kennelly and Watt, 2012; 2013), but the way it becomes normalised in the lived experiences of the residents of these regenerated areas needs further investigation. As we saw in Chapter 1, Fox Gotham (2016: 35) argues that mega-events are constituted by relations of domination-subordination where rundown urban areas and their marginal populations are subject to the action of local and global capitals.

Kennelly's (2016) qualitative research on the Vancouver 2010 and London 2012 Olympics contrasts the claims of the Games promoters to support low-income young people, with the experience of these individuals. Kennelly's (*ibid.*) findings show how the jobs that young people found in London and Vancouver were mostly linked to the construction of the Olympic venues, and once the Games were over, most of the jobs disappeared. Moreover, as discussed in Chapter 1, participants in the study were disappointed about the new upmarket housing developments that were being built in their neighbourhoods, as they realised that they were not going to be able to afford them (*ibid.*; Kennelly and Watt, 2012). In addition, during the staging of the Games, young homeless people were erased from the streets (Kennelly, 2016). The so-called affordable housing delivered by the Olympic projects, and the new permanent jobs created in the area, are not available to everyone, but only to the "deserving" people. A

state that delivers welfare resources like housing through the Olympics normalises the logics that foster exclusion.

In fact, Olympic cities create a fantasised image of themselves that conceal social issues and difference (Broudehoux, 2016). Olympics-related urban regeneration has often delivered neighbourhoods for privileged social groups, whom possess sufficient economic capital to purchase upscale housing units. In doing so, sport mega-events are likely to reinforce mechanisms of domination-subordination of powerful groups over weak ones.

2.3 Habitus and Power

In *Distinction*, Bourdieu (1986a) deconstructs the Kantian idea that taste is pure, as expressed through upper-class people's appreciation of the arts, concert attendance, and museum visits, or barbaric, as evidenced in working-class people's failure to engage in such activities. According to Bourdieu (*ibid.*), taste is the outcome of the way an individual has been raised and the type of education that one has received, which is social – not natural – in origin. These two elements characterise the process of becoming, the dispositions of an individual; in other words, their taste and preferences (*ibid.*). Habitus therefore generates lifestyles: one's way of living, diet and clothing preferences, for example. According to Bourdieu (*ibid.*), our preferences and lifestyles are similar to those of the other members of our social class. Although dispositions are socially constructed, they are perceived as natural and universal. Habitus is like a second nature, because its formation occurs under the level of consciousness (*ibid.*).

Habitus, however, is not formed in isolation, and is not immutable. It is always the product of the relationships that occur between various actors in social, spatial and economic realms, which Bourdieu defines as "fields". In these arenas, social interactions occur, and actors compete to obtain a better position (2005; *ibid.*). The ongoing relationship between habitus and field is unconscious. As a result, Bourdieu argues, habitus produces reasonable expectations resulting from the experience of constant or recurring situations – individual history – that are immediately adapted to new, but not

totally unprecedented situations. Habitus is therefore the product of objective conditions without a conscious or intentional search for adaptation. The dispositions of the agents in the field may be different, but they are adjusted to conditions of existence and constraints determined by the structure of the field (Bourdieu, 2005: 213 – 214).

Bourdieu (1986a; 2005) clarifies that habitus is not simply shaped by the forces and relationships that characterise the field. In other words, social agents have agency. In this sense, habitus is conditioned and limited spontaneity. This means that habitus is not simply an immediate reaction to a brute reality, but an intelligent response to an actively selected aspect of the real. It is the product of agents' past trajectories that they set against the forces of the field (Bourdieu, 2005: 2011). The extent to which an individual can resist and influence such forces may be greater or less in relation to the amount of capital that they possess (*ibid.*).

Bourdieu (1986b) notes that money is not the only form of capital; it can also take immaterial forms, such as social networks and knowledge. The most relevant forms of capital are economic, cultural, social and symbolic (*ibid.*; Bourdieu, 1991). Economic capital is constituted by the overall amount of money, investments and properties that an individual possesses (Bourdieu, 1986b: 243). Cultural capital is the amount of knowledge that an individual has gained. This can take three forms: embodied, which refers to an agent's taste, dress code, accent and so forth; objectified, which is the objects – such as artworks, books and furniture - that an agent possesses; and institutionalised, which refers to a person's university degrees, certificates, qualifications and so forth (Bourdieu, 1986b: 243). Social capital is constituted by an agent's social networks, which could be familiar, professional or obtained through friendships (Bourdieu, 1986b: 247). Symbolic capital – or symbolic power – is another name for social distinction. This is formed by the reputation that an individual has been able to acquire in the field. It depends on the possession of symbolic goods - houses, degrees, etc - and the exercise of cultural practices – healthy diets, sports practice, etc. - that social agents use to align themselves with the dominant group in the field. In other words, this is the prestige that has been recognised by other agents. Symbolic power is as important as economic and financial power in order to maintain dominance in social space (Bourdieu, 1991). The possession of capital and power in its material and

immaterial forms, and the way in which individuals use it to generate categories of distinction and socio-spatial boundaries, constitutes the main analytical tool of this research.

2.3.1 Symbolic Violence

Connected to symbolic capital is the concept of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1986a). This indicates a subtle and sometimes unconscious mechanism of social domination of certain groups over others. Symbolic violence includes actions that have subtly discriminatory meanings and implications. It consists of imposing values upon dominated groups whom, once observing and recognising the world in terms of such values, perceive the existing order as fair and equal. This, conversely, maintains a social structure that fosters the interests of dominant groups (Bourdieu, *ibid.*, 1991). Symbolic violence is the violence exercised upon a social agent with their complicity (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2002: 167). For example, in class relations it occurs when both the working-class and the middle-class believe that the latter is more intelligent, capable and more deserving of higher pay; whereas in ethnic relations it occurs when BAME individuals believe that the cultural value of whiteness is higher than that of their own ethnic group.

In *The Social Structures of the Economy*, Bourdieu (2005) discusses how the most powerful housing corporations are able to structure the housing market, shape neighborhoods, and inform economic agents' decisions, for instance, where and whether to buy or to rent. Individuals' residential choice depend on three main factors: socially cultivated dispositions – preference for a type of dwelling over others, or for a location over others; their economic resources; and the housing supply. Housing corporations influence state policies that determine housing supply, and implement advertising strategies that point to the presence of symbolic goods. Thus, they influence the financial and emotional housing investments of the various social groups. They impose their priorities on home seekers with their unconscious complicity (Bourdieu, *ibid.*). Thus, not only the working classes, but also the middle classes may become subject to symbolic violence.

2.3.2 Classification Struggles

According to Bourdieu (1986a: 241) social space is not just a conjunctural space of interactions. The social positions are also strategic emplacements, fortresses to be defended and captured in a field of struggle. The distribution of the various forms of capital among the various agents defines the structure of the field. One's dispositions are always related to others' dispositions, such that they generate a rank in which each agent in the field attempts to classify in the highest possible position. For example, associating oneself with middle-class aesthetic and moral values - possessing fashionable objects, being a hard worker, etc. - while distancing from working-class properties - need, dirt, bad behavior, etc - is associated with a distinct value and a distinct position. By means of this strategy, the members of a group distinguish themselves from the group immediately below, while identifying themselves with the group immediately above, whom is recognised as the possessor of the legitimate lifestyle. Distinction takes place by reiterating the dialectic between the new and the old, the clean and the dirty, the moral and the unmoral, the common and the rare, and so forth. This process objectifies differentiations of conditions and dispositions (1986a). Again, Bourdieu stresses that this pursuit for distinction and differentiation is unconscious. Classificatory schemes are mental and historical schemes, which are the product of the fundamental structures of society (*ibid.*).

Notably, classification struggles can take different forms. They may be struggles over the appropriation of economic and cultural goods; the goods that Bourdieu defines as classifying and classified goods or practices, as through their possession one appropriates the symbols of distinction (1986a: 247). They may be struggles to establish what are the legitimate means to appropriate such goods and practices as well. Finally, they may take the form of a struggle to establish or redefine the legitimate lifestyle. In other words, it is a struggle to define what properties are associated with a higher position in the rank (Bourdieu, 1986a). This research focuses on how a particular set of properties and practices become hegemonic in East Village. In a classification struggle, they become tools that agents use to generate distinction and socio-spatial boundaries.

2.4 The “Other”

Sibley’s (1995) theory is beneficial for seeking to understand how the phenomena of distinction, symbolic domination and classification, take a racialised form alongside a classed one. The white western middle classes classificatory schemes perceive working-class and ethnic minorities as the “other”, which is associated with stigmatised properties such as ugliness, dirt, impurity, defilement and danger. These “accusations” or “insults” become the only interesting features to define the social identity of another individual or group (Bourdieu, 1986a: 477). Stigmatisation associates exterior and moral characteristics, and constructs the least powerful as morally inferior, and therefore inappropriate users of space (Sibley, 1995). Hierarchies are created to position the white civilisation at the top, and others such as black people and gypsies at the bottom. The white is associated with cleanliness and humanity, whereas the black is associated with dirt, nature and the animal world. Thus, the legitimate lifestyle displays values and norms of the dominant cultural or ethnic group (Bourdieu, 1986a, *ibid.*).

The tendency to demonise the working-class and ethnic minorities is long-standing in Britain (Beider, 2015; McKenzie, 2015; Sibley, 1995; Skeggs, 1997). The white British bourgeoisie has painted a dark picture of the working-class, described as a deviant subculture (*ibid.*). Working-class and migrants’ neighborhoods have been stigmatised as zones of crime, disorder and social problems (Beider, 2015; McKenzie, 2015). Skeggs (1997) notes that when the label working-class is applied to women this can be particularly detrimental. Her study shows that low-income women in Manchester tend to distance themselves from working-class identification in order to gain respectability. They do so through their dress code, accent, taking care of their bodies and homes, and going to university (*ibid.*). Valentine (2017) highlights that in the Anglo-American context, working-class mothers - especially single parents and BAME women – are deemed responsible for their children “turning up right”. They are blamed for their children’s “failure”, and if they behave “unruly” (*ibid.*).

Practices of distinction, classificatory schemes and stigmatisation may involve different emotions in relation to the “other”. When this is perceived as threatening powerful groups classed and racialised identities, this could be experienced as fear, defilement

and discomfort (Sibley, 1995). When diversity is experienced as a source of cultural capital, this could be appreciated as adding value to residential space (Bourdieu, 1986b; Butler and Robson, 2003). In this regard, Bauman (2003) associates the “other” of the white middle classes in contemporary cities with two different feelings: Mixophobia and Mixophilia. Mixophobia is the most common reaction, and manifests itself through feelings of anxiety about diversity and the drive towards “islands of similarity and difference” (Bauman, 2003: 31). It is a way to avoid contact with otherness so as to avoid feeling uncomfortable. Mixophilia, on the contrary, means attraction to the “other” and excitement about exotic urban experiences (*ibid.*).

2.4.1 Whiteness

Whiteness determines the norms of goodness and beauty, and we can therefore interpret it as a source of symbolic power (Bourdieu, 1991; Sibley, 1995). White people are the “normal” that everyone else is measured against (Beider, 2015). However, being white does not confer power *per se*. Whiteness relates to one’s cultural capital. It is therefore not only about race but also about class positioning (Low, 2004). Karen Brodtkin (cited in Low, 2004: 171) highlights that in the US context, several groups, such as Italian, Irish and Jewish immigrants, gained the status of “white” only after they assimilated middle-class economic and cultural values. Similarly, in the UK, white British working-class people, as well as Eastern Europeans, are still perceived as a form of problematic whiteness, because they lack middle-class dispositions.

Symbolic struggles are at play when BAME individuals understand whiteness as a symbol of distinction, and participate in the game to appropriate it (Bourdieu, 1986a). By interiorising white middle-class values and lifestyles, they wish to be accepted as part of the dominant societal groups. Bourdieu’s words below describe this process as repudiating one’s origin:

“Everyone who wants to succeed in life must pay for his accession to everything which defines what is truly human by a change of nature, a social promotion experienced by an ontological promotion, a process of civilisation, a leap from nature to culture, from the animal to the human; but having internalized the class struggle which is at the very heart of culture he is

condemned to shame, horror. He is now separated from his language, his body and his taste, sometimes even his mother tongue by a frontier more absolute than any taboo” (1986a: 249).

2.5 Belonging

Understanding how urban space is constructed in the image of the white middle classes is an important aspect of this research, which seeks to explore how this process reproduces socio-spatial exclusion. As Savage (2010) argues, issues of belonging are important for understanding the meaning of contemporary inequality, especially its cultural and symbolic aspects. Savage (*ibid.*) notes that in the final part of his life, Bourdieu reflected on the overlap between social and physical space. This is part of Bourdieu’s (2001, cited in Savage, 2010: 123) concern with demonstrating that fields matter in concrete terms. The urban landscape, for example, is itself a field in which people struggle with each other while seeking their own home and territory. The powerful are more capable of acquiring such resources and have more choice to decide where to live. The weak are likely to remain fixed in place as long as they are not displaced by the arrival of mobile middle-class newcomers (Allen, 2008; Savage, 2010).

In *Globalisation and Belonging* Savage et al. (2005) argue that residential space is the crucial field in which individuals define their social position and claim distinction. Residential space is important because it allows people to access other fields, such as education and employment. Elective belonging refers to middle-class individuals’ capacity to move to a certain area that is congruent with their lifestyle, and claim moral ownership over it, even though they are not originally from there (Savage et al., 2005). Savage et al. (2018) argue that contemporary middle-class claims to belonging are linked to properties such as the vicinity to large urban centres, cultural activities, job opportunities, universities, modern transport links and sport venues (*ibid.*). Within this, another narrative of attachment to place can be identified: “nostalgia”. While elective belonging attributes “magical” qualities to residential space, nostalgia occurs when people believe that their area has lost its magic. In both cases, a place of residence is described as an enchanted landscape with reference to either the past or the present (Savage, 2010).

Watt's (2009a) work identifies an additional narrative of attachment to place: selective belonging. In his study of the white middle-class Woodlands Estate in the eastern suburbs of London, he argues that the Woodlands' residents claim for moral ownership over their place of residence is spatially selective. Choosing to live in the estate does not mean choosing the nearby Eastside area as a desired living location. While the former is socially and ethnically homogeneous, the latter is diverse. The Woodlands residents draw clear socio-spatial boundaries between their estate and the wider area (*ibid.*). Drawing up boundaries is inspired by a strategic aim to maintain advantageous positions, and be counted in the dominant class, as opposed to the dominated one (Bourdieu, 1986a). It is the conflictual relationship between the properties of a fashionable, modern, clean and safe area, and the properties of a nearby unfashionable, old, dirty and dangerous one that generate the cultural value of the former. In other words, cultural value cannot exist but through opposition with something that is not economically and culturally valuable (*ibid.*).

Benson (2014) discusses the various strategies that middle-class individuals deploy to demonstrate their "fit" in the neighbourhood. Thus, while habitus informs residential choice, it may happen that residential choice modifies and adjusts habitus as well. The two mutually influence each other. For Benson (*ibid.*), adopting a Bourdieuan framework to understand belonging can aid in elucidating why people choose one location over another, but also in recognising that belonging is generated out of the relationship between habitus and field, and is rarely accomplished. Rather, it is always in process. Benson (*ibid.*) therefore suggests that we should think of the neighbourhood as the key field in which this process takes place.

In recent years, growing attention has been given to the working-class sense of belonging. Unlike elective (Savage et al., 2005) and selective (Watt, 2009a) belonging, this is not linked to the unconscious need to generate categories of distinction (Bourdieu, 1986a). It is rather a sense of belonging to an area, which emerges in the lived experience of people whom grew up there. In her study of the St. Ann's social housing estate in Nottingham, McKenzie (2015) argues that working-class people's sense of belonging is strong and based upon attachment to their neighbourhood, shared history, class culture, social networks and community cohesion. Paton (2014) draws

similar conclusions; but she notes that her working-class participants in an increasingly gentrified Glasgow neighbourhood experience strong sense of belonging but “weak place fixity”: namely the ability to stay in place in a period of neoliberal urban restructuring. Jeffery’s (2018) study of Salford (Greater Manchester) argues that low-income individuals have limited choice as to where to live and suffer “psychological dislocation” when their residential location is remade around them in ways that do not match their lifestyles. For these reasons, this author describes working-class individuals’ attachment to place as “prescribed belonging” (Jeffery, 2018).

2.5.1 Belonging and Community

After the above excursus in the literature on belonging, it becomes clear that in the contemporary world’s residential space, middle-class sense of community and belonging does not necessarily rely on interactions. In these places highly-skilled and mobile individuals live as long as they feel comfortable. In addition, the flexibility of the job market encourages them to change job, neighbourhood and even city rather easily. They have therefore been defined as cosmopolitan middle-class (Bauman, 2003; Butler and Robson, 2003). Allen and Watt (forthcoming) focus on the concept of transience to describe the low level of neighbourly interaction in middle-class developments, which are characterised by the presence of many tenants on short-term lease agreements. The frequent residential turnover does not facilitate ties, and communal areas are like the hall of a hotel, where customers pass by without getting to know each other (*ibid.*). Young professionals, for example, move frequently. Therefore, they do not fully commit to the place where they live (Butler and Robson, 2003). Allen and Watt (forthcoming) also identify the opposite situation, whereby middle-class homeowners invest in their neighbourhood for the long-term. They are more likely to form common bonds, and mobilise their power of owning to distance themselves from tenants and working-class residents (*ibid.*; Watt, 2009a).

The literature examined in this section – including the authors whom have focused on transience – does not explore how, while choosing an area only as a temporary residential solution, young middle-class professionals may develop a sense of belonging

and attachment to place. This research seeks to fill this gap, by drawing attention to how, despite the constraints of the job and housing markets, they still choose a place of residence congruent with their lifestyle and claim moral ownership over it.

2.6 White Middle-Class Disaffiliation

Middle-class disaffiliation is driven by the desire of the dominant classes to impose their power over physical space. It is attached to meanings and perceptions of distinction over class, ethnicity, gender, and the desire to minimise contact with difference (Atkinson and Blandy, 2013; Low, 2004; Watt, 2007). We can track the disaffiliation phenomenon back to the post-war period. Ever since, middle-class individuals have left inner-city areas, where the quality of housing, built environment and public services are poor. They have moved towards suburban areas where they can enjoy glimpses of rural life and, at the same time, be close to the city centres where they work. Suburbia is an aspirational space, where the white middle classes can live with likeminded people and improve their social status (Watt, 2007). However, for the lower middle classes in particular, more affordable house prices have also been an important factor in their choice to suburbanise (Bacqué et al., 2015). Sibley (1995) argues that in the Anglo-American tradition, otherness is considered a polluting presence in suburbia. Similarly, Watt (2007) notes that the Woodland residents, while celebrating the rural idyll of their residential solution in the east of London, stigmatise local council estates, shops and public schools. These are considered places to avoid, as they are associated with crime and bad behaviour (*ibid.*).

With neoliberal urban restructuring, we are assisting a shift: ethnic minorities are moving to the suburbs and white middle-class individuals are returning to the upgraded and sanitised inner city, which are rich of cultural capital (Bacqué et al., 2015; Butler and Hamnett, 2011; Butler and Robson, 2003). This does not mean the end of class and racialised divisions. On the contrary, we are witnessing the emergence of new forms of residential enclavism. Bauman (2003) refers to this shift in terms of a “new aesthetics of security” that characterises constructions through the logics of surveillance and distance, which keep the “other” out. Developers and estate agents stress the necessity

to securitise, and then advertise closed communities as separate worlds. The most prominent feature of such areas is their isolation from the city and its chaos while, at the same time, being embedded within it. The residents of closed communities, thus, seclude themselves in “oases” of calm and safety, away from urban chaos (Bauman, 2003; Watt, 2009a). Neal et al. (2017) highlight a new kind of spatial segregation, whereby in the last two decades UK cities have experienced an increase of white residential neighbourhoods in predominantly ethnically diverse areas. While in the twentieth century concerns were linked to ethnic minorities clustering together in certain areas, in the twenty-first century we are observing the formation of mostly white middle-class settlements next to ethnically diverse areas (Cantle and Kaufmann, 2015; Neal et al., 2017). These settlements often take the form of GCs and MPCs, which transform symbolic boundaries in physical boundaries and vice-versa.

2.6.1 Gated and Master-Planned Communities

The way developers construct residential space in the image of the white middle classes may lead to the construction of GCs and MPCs. These corporations aim at stimulating affluent individuals' dispositions in order to persuade them that their housing products are a perfect place to live. Pinçon-Charlot and Pinçon (cited in Wacquant, 2018: 101) argue that for the French bourgeoisie the elective seclusion in upscale reserved quarters is a decisive practice for their power and distinction. Low (2004) argues that in American suburbs, GCs reflect tensions over class, race, ethnicity and the constant concern with creating “community”. They foster spatial segregation and exclusionary land use. Atkinson and Blandy's (2013) study of GCs in the Global North and South points out that they restrict public access by using gates, booms, walls and fences. They may also employ security staff and CCTV. In some cases, they include sport clubs, facilities, shops and restaurants that work alongside exclusive schools to effect rigid class closure (*ibid.*, Low, 2004, Wacquant, 2018).

There is debate around what GCs consist of. Low's (2004) study only includes physically gated residential developments, adjacent green areas and natural reserves. Talking about the “new aesthetics of security” Bauman (2003) considers condominiums with

secured door entry systems and concierges to be GCs. Atkinson and Blandy (2013) suggest including all MPCs featuring a social and legal framework that binds residents to financial contributions towards security, cleaning staff and maintenance of communal areas, in the conception of GCs. The other key feature is the exclusion of non-residents (*ibid.*; Low, 2004). This research focuses on how both symbolic and physical gates reinforce socio-spatial boundaries.

Fear of crime has been identified as one of the main motivations for pushing the middle-class to live in GCs (Atkinson and Blandy, 2013; Bauman, 2003; Low, 2004). This is linked to a tendency towards victimisation, whereby higher-class positioning increases one's sense of vulnerability and need to fortify properties against threatening "others", who are perceived as potential criminals (Atkinson and Blandy, 2013). Although official statistics suggest that in the US non-gated suburbs' crime rates do not differ significantly from gated ones, there is still a preference for the latter. Rather than being based on effective risks, GCs are the result of a world-view that seeks privacy and delegitimises the presence of difference (Low, 2004). Atkinson and Blandy (2013) note that fortifying up leads to a commodification of security. It becomes another classifying good (Bourdieu, 1986a), which is important for social distinction and control over space. However, this could lead to a reduction of public expenditure for security, thus increasing crime levels in non-gated urban spaces. The same could happen with respect to other services that are usually provided by local authorities, such as street cleaning and waste collection (Low, 2004). Living in GCs and MPCs could be the symptom of a withdrawal from societal obligations, whereby wealthy individuals form micro-communities, who are financially capable of looking after their own needs, and are unwilling to pay taxes to support those who cannot (Atkinson and Blandy, 2013; Bacqué et al, 2015).

The visual consumption of greenery and beautified homeplace is another driver of distinction in residential space. Watt (2009a) notes that middle-class individuals associate aesthetics with morality, and perceive those lacking taste as morally inferior. In this regard, Duncan (2004) discusses how landscapes of privilege shape place-based identity in non-physically gated middle-class American suburbs. Contact with nature is emphasised by reproducing natural landscapes and wildlife. Developers of GCs and MPCs include natural reserves and green areas in their plans to stimulate the

dispositions of white middle-class individuals. However, this is controversial. Low (2004) explains that in the US, parks and ponds, delivered to municipalities as a community gain in exchange for planning permissions, are only accessible through the new gated developments. Therefore, they are enclosed to the broader public. The aestheticisation of community – the prioritising of the visual, material and sensual aspects of place – acts as a subtle but powerful instrument of exclusion. Apparently innocent attitudes such as an appreciation for green landscapes and contact with nature serve to reaffirm class distinction and the moral superiority of the white middle-class over others (Duncan, 2004). As Low (2004) argues, niceness is also a means to maintain whiteness. Unregulated behaviour, a lack of investment, poor maintenance of yards and properties may be perceived as forms of community disorder and may lead to an increased fear of difference (*ibid.*).

Aesthetics, cleanliness and order are protected by rules and regulations that each resident is bound to respect by contractual obligations (*ibid.*). Homeowners see their home as an emotional and financial investment (Bourdieu, 2005). Cleanliness and order are a way to protect it. Constance Perin (cited in Low, 2004: 64) points out that Americans are both traders and neighbours; neighbourly love cannot prescind from caring for the physical environment of the neighbourhood. Many GC residents in Low's (2004) study are very happy about the place where they live. They adjust their lifestyles to the rules and regulations that protect their surroundings, and expect anyone else who lives there to do the same. Thus, the habitus of residents is influenced by the field effects generated by space securitisation, rules and regulations. However, Atkinson and Blandy (2013) note that an increasing number of GC residents disagree with their contractual obligations. Participants in Blandy and Lister's (2013) study of an English GC claim that they were not aware of the legal framework that they had bound themselves to. Contractual obligations commit residents to pay large sums of money for private roads, facilities and natural reserves maintenance. It would appear that some GCs and MPCs have purposely been built using poor-quality materials, such that residents can be charged expensive maintenance fees (*ibid.*). Moreover, McKenzie (2013) notes that rules and regulations in American GCs – such as those related to cars' sizes or not being allowed to put up signs and flags - are too restrictive for ordinary daily life.

Natural landscapes, sport clubs, retail services, walls, security equipment and guards effect consumption practices that are crucial for distinction (Atkinson and Blandy, 2013; Bourdieu, 2005). Developers and estate agents are aware of it and operate advertising strategies that draw on words and images symbolically to awake pre-existing dispositions (Bourdieu, *ibid.*). The symbolic effect of these properties associated to homeplace is the result of the collaboration of the conscious developers and the unconscious home seeker, who confers to the advertisement the symbolic power it exercises on them (Bourdieu, 2005: 58). Thus, symbolic violence is exercised on the middle classes, whom are persuaded that the homes that developers advertise are congruent with their lifestyle.

Although the residents of GCs and MPCs in the studies mentioned above perceive a sense of community, seldom this depends on neighbourly interactions. Rosenblatt et al.'s (2009) study of an Australian MPC highlights that in this kind of neighbourhood, residents buy a "readymade" community package. Drawing on Anderson's (1991) classic text *Imagined Communities*, they argue that residents perceive an imagined sense of community by means of the services that the developer provides. It is imagined because it is not based on getting to know the neighbours, but just on an ensemble of symbols and practices (Anderson, 1991; Rosenblatt et al., 2009). Bauman (2003) notes that one of the main characteristics of GCs is that residents like to live in isolation. "Feeling common bonds" not only means avoiding contact with "others" outside, but also with those inside the "oasis" (*ibid.*). Thus, the level of social interaction in GCs and MPCs is rather low (Atkinson and Blandy, 2013; Low, 2004).

2.7 The London Middle-Class

In their study of middle-class populations in London and Paris, Bacqué et al. (2015) argue that the difference between the various factions composing the middle-class "archipelago" depends on the interaction between gender, ethnicity, generational dynamics, professions and residential choice. The neighbourhood, its social composition, residents' cultural activities within it are crucial for practices of distinction (*ibid.*). The residents' habitus and the neighbourhood field influence each other (Benson,

2014). Moreover, Bacqué et al. (2015) note that Bourdieu's (1986b) theory of the different forms of capital has allowed an understanding of the various factions of the middle-class. While its traditional group – large employers and private sector professionals with established careers - enjoy higher levels of economic capital, early-career private sector, public sector and arts professionals are characterised by lower levels of economic capital (Bacqué et al., 2015). However, they possess more cultural capital.

The traditional high-waged population of Barnsbury (Islington) have constructed the neighbourhood field in their own image. Yet, this is surrounded by a socio-ethnically diverse urban environment. The Barnsbury's residents make sense of this apparent contradiction by describing their existence in Inner London as living in a "bubble" (Butler, 2003). While being surrounded by otherness and celebrating it, they do not interact with those "not like them" who live in the surrounding neighbourhoods. They and their children's friends have similar backgrounds (*ibid.*; Butler and Robson, 2003). The middle-class population of the regenerated London Docklands (in Tower Hamlets, Newham and Southwark) has a more balanced mix of traditional and new middle-class individuals. They are less interested in community cohesion and neighbourhood services, as they usually work long hours. In addition, the high-waged professionals have two houses, and use the one in the area only during the week; while in the weekend they go back to their house in the countryside where their families still live. In contrast to other Inner London middle classes, they do not celebrate diversity, and express harsher judgments of the wider area's low-income and BAME populations, who are portrayed as a criminal underclass (Butler, 2007).

As discussed above, middle-class individuals make sense of their social position by drawing socio-spatial boundaries between their neighbourhoods and lower or upper-class areas around them (*ibid.*; Jackson and Benson, 2014). For instance, those living in Bellenden Village (Southwark) are mostly young professionals and people working in the arts. They draw boundaries with the more upscale area of East Dulwich and low-scale Peckham Rye. This can be interpreted as a form of "selective belonging" (Watt, 2009a). Bacqué et al. (2015) note that claims to belonging in white middle-class London neighbourhoods may be related to the interactive relationship between class identity

and place-imagining across the dichotomy of urban/rural village, even though other types of representation exist. Thus, in Bellenden Village - imagined as an urban village - maintaining class identity translates into recognising and saying hello to neighbours in the street, supporting local independent shops and getting involved in local campaigns. Suburban areas such as West Horsley and Effingham (Guilford) are imagined as rural villages. Cultural practices vary from social networking, defending the idyllic rural landscape through anti-development campaigns, and getting involved in local works such as playground maintenance. Another representation is given by the intertwining of the protected neighbourhood and the vacation village place imaginings (Bacqué et al., 2015). Thus, the uniqueness of neighbourhoods such as Oak Tree Park – a GC in the South-West of London - is narrated by highlighting their separation from the rest of the city, and, at the same time, their vicinity to it by transport links. Another important characteristic is the presence of private sport and leisure facilities, as well as local sport and leisure groups, where residents practice sports (*ibid.*). Again, these cultural practices reproduce class and ethnic distinctions.

2.8 Social Tectonics

The social construction of neighbourhoods in the image of their most powerful residents is desirable for them, but it can be exclusive – with regards to class, ethnicity, gender and so forth – for the least powerful ones. One of the main urban policy aims of the last few decades has been to create socially mixed neighbourhoods, based on the belief that middle-class residents would help the poorer ones by transferring skills and improving their behaviours (Blockland and Van Eijk, 2010). However, geographical proximity has proven insufficient to generate inter-class and interethnic networks (De Filippis, 2001; Johnston, 2002; Olagnero and Ponzo, 2017). What's more, critical urban geographers argue that social mixing does not result in the generation of networks between different social groups, and has often resulted in middle-class invasion and colonisation of former working-class neighbourhoods. These areas have been gentrified and existing low-

income and BAME individuals displaced⁷ (Atkinson, 2004, 2006; Bridge et al., 2012; De Filippis, 2001; Johnson, 2002; Slater, 2006, 2009; Smith, 2002; Watt, 2008). When Butler and Robson (2003) define the middle classes' attitude in socially mixed London areas as a "coping strategy", they mean the necessity to cope with the diversity that characterises their Inner London neighbourhoods. They describe the relationship between white middle-class and BAME working-class residents using the term "social tectonics", to indicate that they do not get along easily, and come across each other with very little or no contact at all.

Davidson (2010) argues that in the context of third-wave state-led gentrification, social mixing cannot be simply seen as another policy failure; rather, this is a politicised issue. Drawing on Bourdieu's (1986a) theory of the socially constructed practices of distinction, Davidson (2010) points out that the formation of middle-class habitus in the residential field may rely on the presence of the "other", who, however, must be kept at a distance. Boundaries and oppositions are therefore not simply a consequence of class distinction, but are rather central to it. Thus, developers build middle-class developments in such a way that contact with difference is minimised (*ibid.*). With regards to the Don Mount Court public housing redevelopment in Toronto, August (2014) highlights that middle-class newcomers eliminate names and signs that remind them of the working-class past of the area, in order to affirm their symbolic domination over the neighbourhood field.

Other authors (see Bacqué et al., 2014; Tissot, 2014) argue that middle and upper middle-class residents learn how to live in diverse neighbourhoods. Berrey (2005, cited in Tissot, 2014: 1181) argues that this happens for two main reasons. Firstly, the increasing housing prices in the most desirable neighbourhoods push these individuals to look for accommodation in working-class areas. Secondly, in certain cases, real estate agents set up commercial strategies to make value of diversity and turn undesirable neighbourhoods into desirable ones. Tissot (2014) goes further beyond, by arguing that gentrifiers learn how to love diversity; but this necessarily entails control, in a continuous negotiation between excitement and fear. In her study of the South End of

⁷ Marcuse's (1986) and Slater's (2009) work on displacement and its various forms has been discussed in Chapter 1.

Boston, Tissot (2014) highlights that the majority of middle-class residents were in favour of building new affordable housing and accommodation for former homeless people in the neighbourhood. However, this positive attitude featured some ambivalence. They had the final say on the number of housing units allocated to low-income residents (30), and they established rules to regulate behaviour and the presence of these individuals in public space. Tissot (2014: 1193) suggests that “when diversity is made into a reality controlled by gentrifiers, their love for it has no limits”. However, Žižek (2005) argues that loving diversity is not possible, as there is always something that the various social and ethnic groups do not like about each other. Thus, justice, not love, has to be pursued. In other words, what matters is that access to housing and services is guaranteed to all residents in a neighbourhood.

Barwick (2018) notes that the debate on social mixing does not sufficiently focus on different socio-economic backgrounds within ethnic minorities, which are too often presented as a homogeneous disadvantaged group. In this regard, Vertovec (2007) describes the complex BAME mix that has characterised the UK in the last two decades as “Superdiversity”. This condition is unprecedented in British history. Superdiversity consists of a dynamic interplay of new, scattered, multiple-origin, transnationally connected, socio-economically differentiated immigrants (Vertovec, 2007: 1204). The flow of resources from BAME middle-class individuals to more disadvantaged members of their ethnic group has been disregarded. In his study of Turkish migrants in Berlin, Barwick (2018) argues that those uplifted to the middle-class continue to be linked in a number of ways to poorer Turkish living in the city. Even when the former move to more affluent neighbourhoods, they keep supporting the latter with resources and information (*ibid.*).

Wessendorf (2014) argues that diversity in Hackney (East London) is “commonplace” and residents would not live in a less diverse area. Long-term Turkish and Vietnamese residents mix with other members of their group in private life, and find it perfectly acceptable that others do the same. What they do not accept is that other groups such as Orthodox Jewish and hipsters refuse to mix at public occasions like meetings to discuss common issues that affect the area. In addition, Orthodox Jewish and hipsters

are accused of taking over retail/leisure facilities and public spaces that were used to being available for everyone who lives in Hackney (Wessendorf, 2013, 2014).

2.8.1 Social Tectonics in Post-Olympics Neighbourhoods

Social mixing strategies have been applied in several Olympic cities (Meredith, 2012; Olagnero and Ponzo, 2017). Olagnero and Ponzo (2017) contrast policy-makers' expectations about social mixing projects and the effective experience of the residents of these neighbourhoods in Turin (Italy). They draw on the case study of the Turin 2006 former Media Village housing redevelopment, in a former industrial district known as Spina 3. The Village was reconverted into public housing (10%), subsidised housing (30%), and private housing (60%). These authors acknowledge that the building of social housing of the same quality as subsidised and private housing has avoided the stigmatisation of social housing. In addition, the presence of middle-class households has facilitated the construction of supermarkets and shopping malls, in which municipality tenants can afford to shop. Thus, these places generate contact between residents from the different housing tenures. Some positive effects have also occurred with respect to the use and good maintenance of communal spaces such as gardens and playgrounds. However, Olagnero and Ponzo (*ibid.*) assert that *ad hoc* agencies would be needed to encourage residents to network and get involved in community initiatives.

Humphry's (2017) photo-essay explores the London East Village residents' experience. She questions the idea of the Village as a cohesive community, where social tenants, intermediate renters, shared owners and private renters have equal opportunities to enjoy public space and neighbourhood facilities. At the same time, Humphry (*ibid.*) questions the East Village's suitability to address housing needs in East London, as the 2012 Olympics promoters promised (Growth Boroughs, 2009; London 2012, 2004). Moreover, there are various ambiguities with regards to the place's identity, housing tenure, planning design and the various stakeholders involved. The East Village is a place that is still in search of meaning, and that has not yet demonstrated that it can fulfil the Olympic promises of being a cohesive and inclusive community. Cohen (2017) highlights the tensions that have emerged between social tenants and other residents in his

research at the East Village. For instance, private renters and shared owners blamed social tenants' children for taking over the internal courtyards, making noise and ruining the place. Conversely, social renters blamed young private renters for making noise during their late-night parties. The management company tried to settle disputes through rules and regulations related to the use of the courtyards, and forbade disturbance after 10 pm. Moreover, public space – where 24/7 CCTV and security staff operate, and the retail services in the Village – seem to be oriented to the taste and financial capacity of middle-class residents, excluding the low-income population who lives in East Village and in the wider Stratford area. Swan's (2017) essay draws on similar themes as Cohen (2017) and Humphry (2017) to argue that East Village is a product of neoliberal urban policy. The control that the landlord exercises over public and leisure space influences ways of living and social interactions (Swan, 2017).

Despite the existing body of literature (Bernstock, 2014; Cohen, 2017; Humphry, 2017, 2019; Swan, *ibid.*; Watt and Bernstock, 2017), further research evidence is needed in order to systematically investigate the implications of the East Village housing redevelopment, the lived experiences of residents, the way they normalise the symbolic violence that some groups are subject to, the boundary-making processes that are at play, the social and cultural practices that become hegemonic and inform the dominant habitus within the neighbourhood field.

More broadly, the literature on social mix examined in the last two sections focuses mostly on class, while dedicating limited attention to issues related to ethnicity, or vice versa, it focused on ethnicity and neglects class. Barwick (2018) is an exception. However, rather than looking at social mixing in urban space, this paper looks at class difference within Turkish migrant in Germany across various residential locations. In addition, there is need for a deeper understanding of the different perspectives between residents living in various housing tenures. Existing literature tends to simplify by constructing two main groups: private housing (middle-class) and public housing (working-class) residents. This contribution seeks to fill these gaps.

2.9 Exclusion, Habitus and Belonging in Public Space

Public space is an important subfield within the neighbourhood field, where social and cultural activities occur. This arena can be more or less inclusive, depending on whether or not it is constructed to appeal to the preferences and perceptions of dominant groups only.

Atkinson et al. (2014) note that North-American and European urban policy has focused on the regeneration of brownfields into parks and green areas as a useful tool to address social and environmental decline. Benefits can range from creating habitats for wildlife, building community, and providing recreational space. The QEOP is an example of this policy, as it is meant to provide amenities for the East London population (Brimicombe et al, 2015; London 2012, 2004). The northern side of the Park – where East Village is located - has been constructed as a natural reserve. The southern side is less “natural”, and has been designed as an event area (Brimicombe et al., 2015). However, the mismatch between regeneration objectives and outcomes that Atkinson et al. (2014) discuss are evident also in the case of the QEOP. For example, the LLDC’s claim that the Park is a public space available for community building is questionable, given the added security features such as CCTV, security staff, as well as micro-regulation, which aim to control undesired behaviour and lead to its *de facto* privatisation (Fussey and Coaffee, 2012). Securitisation and concerns about anti-social behaviour have been an important component of the plans since the run up to the 2012 Games, whereby individuals whose presence is considered as threatening to public order can be removed (Kennelly and Watt, 2013). Prior to and during the Olympics, young black locals were often stopped, searched and dispersed by the police, such that they were not allowed to walk in groups of two or more (*ibid.*; Kennelly, 2016). Moreover, the BAME Stratford residents participating in Smith’s (2015, cited in Viehoff, 2015: 190) study feel alienated, especially from the northern “natural” side of the QEOP. While being outdoors and getting fresh air is appreciated by both white British and BAME participants, the latter highlight that they do not particularly enjoy nature by simply looking at it (*ibid.*). As we saw above, contact with nature and security can be commodified and emphasised as consumption practices, which plays on the dispositions of white middle-class individuals. When this happens the least powerful groups may be alienated (Duncan, 2004).

Neal et al. (2017) argue that social interactions between different ethnic groups might occur in public and leisure spaces such as gardens, parks, playgrounds and local groups, if these are characterised by cultural neutrality and informality. A genuine social mixing cannot occur in these spaces if they are constructed to stimulate the preferences of the most powerful social groups. Neal et al. (*ibid.*) stress that conviviality in urban contexts of ethnic difference is essential to manage processes of cohabitation in the context of “urban multiculturalism” (*ibid.*). Jones et al. (2015) argue that conviviality is a way to rethink community as “being in common”, and “negotiating things together”. Conviviality can be reinforced when residents manage and share public space and facilities (Neal et al., 2017). In their comparative study of multi-ethnic sport and leisure groups in England, Jones et al. (2015) note that community is experienced as urban practice and concrete social interactions. In these contexts, tensions are normal, but they can be managed and are even useful for finding ways to get along together (*ibid.*; Neal et al., 2017, 2018).

2.9.1 Shopping Streets

Local shopping streets are another important field for the consumption practices of the white middle classes (Bacqué et al., 2015). For example, arts venues, bars and cafés (ABCs) arouse the dispositions of this group, which recognises in trendy design and artisanal products, delivered by people on their bikes - or other eco-friendly vehicles – cultural and symbolic value. ABC shopkeepers play the role of social and cultural entrepreneurs, because they allow their customers to maintain their class-based distinction and to branch up together (Bacqué et al., 2015; Zukin et al., 2015). This is an essential space in working-class BAME neighbourhoods as well, because they offer residents goods and services at their convenience (Zukin et al., 2015). Places such as cafés, restaurants, barber shops and so forth, are important meeting points where people spend time talking to each other, and in doing so, create a connection between their home and the wider neighbourhood.

Zukin et al. (*ibid.*) suggest thinking about local shops in two ways: as conceptual spaces, embodying, reproducing and symbolising the collective values of a social group; and as lived spaces, which are physical and experiential (*ibid.*: 7). In the best-case scenario, the

field of shopping streets can be inclusive and provide space for interactions and encounters with diversity. In the worst-case scenario, they can be exclusive and segregated by class, ethnicity, gender, and so forth. When the retail infrastructure of a neighbourhood becomes the realm of powerful groups, it could become exclusive for the least powerful ones (Zukin et al., 2015).

Zukin et al. (*ibid.*) argue that local shopping streets in global cities around the world are characterised by superdiversity (Vertovec, 2007), whereby both shopkeepers and customers come from a wide variety of socio-ethnic backgrounds. Global North migrants are usually part of the cosmopolitan middle-class and open shops in upscale gentrified neighbourhoods, whereas Global South migrants tend to have working-class backgrounds, and open shops in down-scale working-class areas. These retail spaces are shaped by a range of social, cultural and economic forces arising in a global geographical arena (*ibid.*). Nonetheless, they are shaped by local actors as well: local governments, building owners, shopkeepers and the socio-demographics of neighbourhoods.

Shopping streets are the visible face of a neighbourhood (*ibid.*). By looking at them, one can easily understand the social and ethnic groups that belong or do not belong there. The shops' atmosphere and interior design is likely to make certain groups feel more welcome than others (Neal et al., 2017). In this regard, Wessendorf (2014) and Neal et al. (2017) highlight how the Hackney ethnically diverse population feels excluded from the plethora of ABCs that are opening up in the borough, which cater for the white middle-class population. This process, known as retail gentrification (Zukin, 2010), generates animosity, as this type of retail services replace the old ones, which were used as meeting points for long-standing residents.

Local authorities can encourage retail gentrification with the construction of mega-malls or the institution of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). In these spaces, matters such as aesthetics – street furniture and cleanliness - and security - CCTV and security staff - are handed over to local businesses' owners. They can even decide what shops can or cannot open in the area (Zukin et al., 2015). Thus, homeless people, black youth and low-cost shops are considered a deviant presence, which threatens public order and needs to be expelled (Valentine, 2017; *ibid.*).

Neal et al. (2017) assert that corporate cafés are more socio-culturally neutral than ABCs, and therefore people can fill their apparent homogeneity and sense of non-place with their own meanings and identities. They observe ethnically diverse individuals using places such as Nando's and Costa in amicable ways: sharing tables, starting up conversations in the queue and self-cleaning points. The informality of corporate cafes facilitates interethnic interactions. On the contrary, hipster shops and restaurants' interior design, food menus and expected behaviours inhibit ethnic minorities' participation (Neal et al., 2017). Despite their attempts to try and look "local", they are a product of globalisation (Zukin et al., 2015), and valorise the preferences of white middle-class individuals. Authentic local cafes, similar to those described by Hall (2012), have an embedded locality and familiarity. These café spaces become the realm of local residents, regardless of their socio-economic and ethnic background.

2.10 Conclusion

Bourdieu's (1986a, b) theory of distinction, habitus, the various forms of capital, field theory, symbolic violence, and classification struggles will underpin the data analysis; as it is a very useful tool to understand exclusion in white middle-class space, or space where BAME and working-class cultures are considered to be deviant. This theoretical framework has been completed by the theorisations of scholars that have demonstrated how distinction takes a racialised form, alongside a classed one (Bauman, 2003; Sibley, 1995).

Moreover, the contributions of those authors who look at the socio-spatial practices that construct neighbourhoods in the white middle classes' own image, and explore their sense of belonging and attachment to place (Savage et al., 2005; Watt, 2009a), will allow for an understanding of how categories of distinction are generated and socio-spatial boundaries are drawn. The literature on belonging is complemented by literature on aesthetics of community (Duncan, 2004), GCs (Atkinson and Blandy, 2013; Low, 2004), public space and retail space. This will help to identify those values and properties that become hegemonic within the neighbourhood field, and generate field effects that

valorises the habitus of the white middle-class, while being exclusionary for the least powerful social groups.

Chapter 3

Research Methods

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methods employed in this project to answer the research questions. It also discusses issues that emerged during the fieldwork. The study explores the lived experiences of the London 2012 former Athletes' Village residents, and the stances of the various stake-holders. The fieldwork lasted nine months, from February to November 2017, in which 49 semi-structured interviews with residents and eight key-informants, participant observation, and documentary analysis were conducted. A survey was also carried out, in the form of a one-page self-completion questionnaire.

Section 3.2 reiterates the research questions. Section 3.3 explains the research paradigm, ontological and epistemological standpoints of this study. Section 3.4 discusses ethical considerations related to the fieldwork. Section 3.5 explains how the data have been analysed. Section 3.6 explores the benefits of and issues associated with conducting semi-structured interviews with key informants and residents, which was the primary methodological tool used during the fieldwork. Section 3.7 is dedicated to participant observation. Section 3.8 explores the issues encountered in the qualitative analysis of official documents such as the TH's allocation policies (2012a, b; 2013a, b) and the LLDC Local Plan (2015). Section 3.9 explains why questionnaires were administered, and how their comparison with the 2011 Census data related to the Stratford and New Town ward and the LBN, provided an indication about the socio-demographic characteristics of the East Village population. Section 3.10 provides a summary of the various points addressed. This chapter is also linked to Appendix 1 (see pp. 257 - 266), which contains a table that summarises the socio-demographic profile of the 49 residents interviewed.

3.2 Research Questions

The aim of this research is to critically assess how the policy aims of fostering social mixing and tackling exclusion have been interpreted, implemented and realised with respect to mega-events' regeneration, in the case study of the London 2012 Athletes' Village - now East Village - in the aftermath of the Olympic Games. The research questions are:

1. What processes and practices are visible in the fields of housing, semi-private space, public space and neighbourhood facilities, which inform the East Villagers' habitus?
2. How do the various resident social and ethnic groups develop a sense of community and belonging to East Village?
3. How far do the above-mentioned processes and practices go to encourage an environment that is socially inclusive? How is this experienced by the least powerful groups, such as BAME and working-class individuals?
4. To what degree are semi-private space, public space and neighbourhood facilities suitable arenas for encounters and interactions with social difference?
5. On the basis of these research findings, how far has neoliberal urban governance, related to mega-events' regeneration, deepened or ameliorated mechanisms of exclusion in the case of East Village?

3.3 The Research Paradigm

A variety of research paradigms use qualitative research methods. These are, for instance, positivism, post-positivism, post-modernism, critical theory, constructionism, and so forth (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). There are also different epistemological perspectives, for example: hermeneutics, structuralism, semiotics, phenomenology, cultural studies, feminism, etc. (*ibid.*). During the first paradigmatic war of the 1980s, the post-modern and interpretive paradigms were claiming their legitimacy in the academic field, which positivists refused to recognise. During the second paradigmatic war of the 1990s, the post-modern and interpretivist paradigms broadly defined, were

in contention with each other for what perspective should be considered the legitimate one over the use of qualitative research methods (Lincoln et al., 2011). Now that the paradigmatic wars of the 1980s and 1990s are over, several authors have supported the commensurability of post-modern and interpretive paradigms loosely defined, and have argued that qualitative researchers are like bricoleurs that learn how to borrow from various perspectives (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011; Tracy, 2013). There is only incommensurability between positivists and post-positivists on one side, and postmodern and interpretive perspectives on the other, because the two camps have different positions on truth (*ibid.*).

Drawing on the above considerations, my ontological position is that of the post-modern and interpretive perspectives broadly defined: there is not absolute truth. Reality is not something “out there” waiting to be discovered by a researcher, as the positivist and post-positivist paradigms argue. The researcher brings into the field their biographies, ideas, worldviews and specific sets of questions. When researchers approach the field, they already come from a particular interpretive perspective, with its own historical tradition and points of view of the “other” who is studied (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011: 16). Moreover, researcher’s and participants’ social positions (class, ethnicity, gender, etc.), as well as the way in which they interact, shape the process. Objective observations do not exist. There are only observations socially situated in the worlds of the observer and the observed. There is no such thing as value-free research, as research findings always have political implications (*ibid.*).

The epistemological position that underpins this study is a bricolage of critical theory and phenomenology. I intend to deconstruct the rhetoric of a successful social mixing strategy narrated by the East Village stakeholders, in order to understand whether residents from various socio-economic backgrounds enjoy affordable housing, inclusive communal areas, public space and neighbourhood facilities, or only affluent individuals can do so. It is only by understanding how the East Village residents respond to the reality that unfolds around them that I can critically assess social mixing policies in the neighbourhood. By using a phenomenological approach, I seek to comprehend the meaning-making that people use to constitute their worlds (Travers, 2001). Phenomenology is concerned with understanding social phenomena from the

perspective of the people who experience them (Groenewald, 2004). With respect to residents whose neighbourhoods are involved in Olympics-related urban regeneration, Kennelly (2016) notes that the voices of locals are often omitted from official documents. Their perspectives are not only subjective; they also provide a unique lens on larger socio-spatial processes unfolding around them. In other words, oppression, marginalisation and injustice are the result of political, economic, social, racial and gendered histories, as adopting a critical perspective highlights. These structural forces influence the social world and generate socio-spatial inequalities within neighbourhoods. However, it is only by exploring how individuals make sense of these phenomena that we can understand their social implications. With respect to my research, although social mixing strategies are designed and implemented by PPPs, which are the product of a structural phenomenon, it is only by exploring the lived experiences of those who live in socially mixed neighbourhoods that we can obtain a meaningful account of the outcome of such strategies, and urban policy more broadly. Thereafter, we can inform their critique and foster positive social change.

Qualitative research methods are the most appropriate instruments to undertake this effort. Interviews and participant observation provide a unique lens within the lived experiences, perceptions, preferences and interactions of those who live in socially mixed post-Olympics neighbourhoods such as East Village; while qualitative analysis of policy documents and key informants' interviews reveal state and corporate priorities regarding these matters, and the most controversial decisions that help reproducing exclusion within cities and neighbourhoods.

I believe that research has an ethical obligation to help those who find themselves in unfair and unjust situations to understand and improve their condition, even though their common-sense assumptions (Gramsci, 2014) may be partly responsible for it, and therefore need to be questioned. My qualitative research is ethically motivated by the desire to alleviate the so-called unintended negative effects of the Olympic Games and urban policy on the least powerful individuals. In order to do so, it is necessary to problematise certain assumptions regarding social mixing strategies and affordable housing policies, which under the current configuration risk being detrimental for the most marginal members of society. Notably, even the urban middle classes, often

understood in terms of their capacity to gentrify, are part of wider processes and power dynamics within neighbourhoods and cities (Benson, 2014). Even when they believe to benefit from such processes, they might be subject to symbolic violence too (Bourdieu, 2005).

I enjoy practising sports and watching international sport competitions such as the Olympic Games. The athletes that participate in these sporting competitions display the excellence and resilience that the human body can achieve. In addition, they offer very enjoyable spectacles to viewers. However, I am averse to the global and local elites' exploitation of the Olympics to foster their interests, which often reinforce socio-spatial dynamics of domination-subordination.

Lincoln et al. (2011: 133) note that one of the main criticisms towards qualitative research is that this is not cumulative. In other words, it cannot be aggregated to make larger understandings and policy formulations possible. However, qualitative researches undertaken around similar issues and topics, and in similar contexts, can be aggregated into meta-analyses, especially for policy purposes. This is nowadays more easily achievable with the advent of large data bases manageable on computers. Therefore, the argument of non-cumulation is defeated (*ibid.*). My research effort contributes to the growing body of literature that evaluates the legacy of the London 2012 Olympic Games, and to the literature on socially mixed post-Olympics neighbourhoods (Cohen, 2017; Cohen and Watt, 2017; Humphry, 2017, 2019; Olagnero and Ponzo, 2017; Watt, 2013; Watt and Bernstock, 2017). This body of knowledge, once aggregated, could provide useful indications to urban policy-makers and perspective Olympic host cities. In this regard, in pp. 255 and 256 I provide concrete policy recommendations that are meant to suggest a way forward to solve the urban inequality issues discussed in this work.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are one of the most important parts of this research project and were central during fieldwork. There are two dimensions of ethics in qualitative

research. The first dimension is procedural ethics, which refers to seeking approval from a relevant research committee for research involving humans (McCormack et al., 2012; Iphofen and Tolich, 2018). The second dimension is defined by Guillemin and Lym (2004) as ethics in practice, and refers to everyday ethical issues that arise from the relationships that the researcher establishes with participants while doing research. The first part of this section addresses procedural ethics, while the second addresses ethics in practice.

3.4.1 Procedural Ethics

The research project was considered standard – not presenting particular risks for participants - and received ethical approval by the Department of Geography of Birkbeck University of London on November 1st 2016 without requiring the researcher to provide further clarification or undertake changes to the research design.

Participation in the research was done entirely on a voluntary basis with all participants made aware in advance on the purpose of this research. They were notified via several different mediums including an invitation letter to be interviewed, email correspondence, and in person before commencing the interview. In the latter, interviewees were also informed of their right to withdraw from the interview at any time and their right to refrain from answering questions should they choose to. Before an interview started participants were asked to carefully read and sign two copies of the consent form (one for them and one for the researcher) which contained the following information:

- Researcher's name, university and department affiliation
- Researcher's contact details
- The objectives of the research
- Guarantees of privacy and anonymity
- Use of the data for thesis and possible publications
- First supervisor's name and contact details
- Disclaimer about voluntary participation and right to withdraw

With regards to self-completion questionnaires, the following elements were stated upfront at the top of the first page:

- Researcher's name, university and department affiliation
- Researcher's contact details
- The objectives of the research
- Guarantees of privacy and anonymity
- Disclaimer about voluntary participation and right to withdraw

The use of offensive, discriminatory or unacceptable language was accurately avoided in the formulation of the questions for both the interview guides and the self-completion questionnaire. Privacy and anonymity were of paramount importance as well. All of the interviewees' names used in the thesis are pseudonyms. Similarly, key informants and managers' names are not mentioned. The participants were also asked whether they agreed to the name of their organisation to be mentioned in the thesis. When they did not, the name was not mentioned. Confidentiality and anonymity are not merely procedural aspects. They are very important issues to take care of, in order to avoid physical and emotional harm that could be caused to participants by revealing their identity (Guillemin and Lym, 2004).

The organisations that provided unpublished policy documents were previously informed of the use of such documents for the researcher's PhD thesis and possible publications. The interview records have been safely stored in the researcher's computer which is accessible with the use of a password only. The interview transcripts have been stored in a locker in the researcher's workplace. Electronic versions have been stored in a secure server. The use of work of other authors in the thesis has been acknowledged using the Harvard referencing system. Finally, the research process has adhered to the prescriptions of the 1998 Data Protection Act.

3.4.2 Ethics in Practice

Research ethics committees satisfy the need to protect the basic rights and safety of participants from any form of abuse. Moreover, procedural ethics offers researchers a

checklist that help them bear in mind potential risks for participants – anonymity, confidentiality, consent, etc. - that must be avoided (Guillemin and Lym, 2004), and that we discussed in the former section. However, there are ethically important moments, which ethics research committees and forms cannot foresee, and that therefore the researcher needs to pay attention to in the everyday doing of research (Iphofen and Tolich, 2018; *ibid.*). Reflexivity has been fundamentally important to put my own actions under critical scrutiny during my everyday fieldwork. Avoiding causing both physical and emotional harm to my participants has been one of my fundamental considerations during the whole research process. Below, some examples of how this has been done are provided.

When I was recruiting interviewees, I knocked on a social housing door, and a woman with Asian physical traits opened. She seemed keen on being interviewed, but while she was about to give me her contact details a man came out of the lift and entered the flat. By observing their interaction, I realised that he was her husband or partner. He positioned himself between his wife and myself such that we could not see each other anymore, and asked what I was up to. Perhaps he did not deem appropriate that his wife was speaking to a male individual. When I explained that I was looking for interviewees, and asked whether one of them wished to be interviewed, he told me to email my questions and he would answer. When I explained that this was not the method that I was using, he refused the face-to-face interview. I understood that the refusal was extended to his wife. This was an ethically sensitive moment in my fieldwork. I asked to myself whether it was appropriate to let the woman know that I felt her husband was establishing an illegitimate authority over her, by using his position as a male individual to prevent her from agreeing to be interviewed. She did not look particularly happy about her husband's behaviour either. However, she did not contradict him. Thus, I thought that it was better not to escalate tensions further, which could potentially lead to more harm for the woman. Therefore, I left.

Moreover, when I interviewed Kinje, a black female social renter, I got concerned that some of my questions were causing emotional harm. I asked her how affordable the rent and the shops in East Village were for her, and how the latter satisfied her taste. These questions did not cause apparent discomfort in other interviewees, even those with

similar backgrounds as Kinje. However, while she was answering she said: “To be honest I wasn’t gonna ask you to come because when you talk about these things you get upset! It’s annoying!”. Thus, I paused the recorder, and asked her if she wished to stop the interview. She answered no, because she wanted to denounce what she believed to be unfair policies implemented by the East Village management. She told me that nobody was listening to lower-income and BAME residents, and therefore they needed a “mouth”. This encouraged me as it meant that my research was not beneficial for me only, but a participant was finding it beneficial for them too.

Another ethical dilemma that I have constantly been confronted with during the process, is the fact that the majority of participants, especially, but not only, white middle-class individuals, love living in East Village, and they did not want to describe it negatively. I have been reflecting on how to conciliate my research agenda, which has highlighted exclusionary issues, with these participants stances. I do not argue that middle-class individuals are bad people. Neither do I intend to denigrate these people’s lifestyle. I am a white middle-class individual too. I have always been straightforward about my research aims with all participants. In this sense, informed consent has not just been linked to satisfying my departmental ethics committee procedural requirements. It has rather been a very important moment, where I have made participants aware of what the research is about, and what participating would involve; so that they could make their own free and informed decision about whether or not to participate. I have listened to and reported all voices, including those of participants whose ideas and values differ from my own.

Other ethically important moments are discussed in the interviews section below, where I discuss other interactions with BAME women.

3.5 Thematic Analysis

The data have been analysed through thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2014). This approach has been chosen because it facilitates the understanding and the analysis of large data sets, as those collected for this study (*ibid.*). Thematic analysis has permitted

to understand more about the East Village residents lived experiences, and key informants' views, opinions and policies, so as to develop them into codes and themes.

Given that my ontological position is not a positivist one, and at the same time my theoretical framework provided an idea of some themes which could be found in the data, I adopted an inductive-iterative approach (Tracy, 2013). Rather than grounding the meaning only on the emerging data, as grounded theorists suggest, an iterative approach also encourages reflection upon active interests, current literature, granted priorities and various theories the researcher brings to the data (*ibid.*). Thus, I worked between my theoretical and conceptual framings (Chapters 1 and 2) and empirical data. This flexible strategy allowed new ideas to emerge, and for a critical-phenomenological understanding of the meaning-making that the East Village residents attribute to the reality unfolding around them. Likewise, existing themes were further developed and redefined. For example, existing themes related to belonging and attachment to place were identified in the data, as many East Villagers develop a sense of moral ownership over their neighbourhood. At the same time, they are aware that their residential experience is time-limited. Thus, a sense of temporary belonging emerged from many interview transcripts.

I organised and coded fieldnotes, interview transcripts and documents manually. The use of software could be helpful in order to organise data (Bryman, 2012). However, I preferred manual organising and coding, in order to avoid the risk of losing the richness of the data. During the data organisation phase, I reflected on my preferred way to process them. Once I realised that I like to work with hard copies, I printed out my data. Thereafter, I organised them by type – interview transcripts, fieldnotes, documents and survey data, which were located in different files – as well as chronologically, by their date of collection or construction. Given that the residents' housing tenure was a salient feature, the residents' interview transcripts were organised by this criterion as well. Tracy (2013) stresses that the organisation process is an interpretive activity. My decision to organise transcripts according to the interviewees' housing tenure could be seen as prioritising class characteristics over ethnic ones. However, I decided to use this criterion because many interviewees commonly generated categories of distinction from - or similarities to - other neighbours by referring to housing tenure. In addition,

housing tenure has a racialised connotation as well. In fact, while the majority of social rent interviewees are BAME individuals, the majority of the interviewees in the other housing tenures have a white background.

I read the data as I collected them, and wrote down descriptive comments (for example, what happened and where). When I was half way through the fieldwork, I began to talk about the data with colleagues and friends. This helped me to understand different interpretive perspectives and develop initial analytical thoughts that I noted down. Grounded theorists refer to these activities as initial coding (Charmaz, 2006). Coding consists of identifying data as belonging to or representing a social phenomenon: an action, a belief, a relationship a cultural activity or a concept (Tracy, 2013). When collection was completed, I put the data in conversation with my conceptual and theoretical framing, and started secondary level coding, consisting of developing interpretive concepts to explain the data in the best possible manner (Tracy, 2013). I identified and underlined the various codes with different colours and labels. Different colours and labels were attributed to broader themes as well, when they were generated by grouping and finding patterns between the various codes. For example, codes such as “interior other” that refers to East Village residents generating categories of distinction from lower-class BAME social renters, “little devils” that refers to children being constructed as a disruptive and immoral presence in the courtyards, and “exterior other” that refers to East Village residents generating categories of distinction from lower-class BAME Stratford residents, have been grouped under the theme “othering”. I also created a codebook that contains descriptions of the codes and themes, and was constantly revised as the analysis proceeded. In addition, I created a locator sheet with the various codes inserted under the themes they belonged to. Under each code the various data types and page numbers were listed. Throughout the analysis I went back to my research questions to make sure that they were still sensible and relevant to the emergent data, or needed to be modified accordingly.

During the analysis, I wrote analytic memos about my thoughts, which are sites of conversation with ourselves and our data (Clarke, 2005: 202). This helped me to understand the most significant elements of the data, to define and redefine my codes, and to find patterns between them. One of my analytic memos, for instance, is:

“I find impressive how formal the relationships between neighbours are in East Village. When residents have a problem with a neighbour, they are encouraged to liaise with the management instead of trying to sort out the problem with the neighbour. In this sense, the East Villagers look like the guests of a hotel who call the reception when, for instance, the guests in the room next to them make too much noise. This policy, which is encouraged by the management and the security, contributes to the low level of neighbourly interactions”.

This, as well as other memos, have been useful during the writing up phase.

Thematic analysis allows great flexibility. However, it may result in an excess of subjectivity (Braun and Clarke, 2014). In order to avoid this risk, attention was paid to the recurrence of the codes and themes that were emerging. They were constantly reviewed, in order to make sure that they were useful and accurate representations of the data. When they were relevant to answer my research questions, but limited to only few interview transcripts, I was straightforward in the writing up phase. For example, Chapter 7 discusses the code “strict education” that refers to teachers being strict with children in the neighbourhood’s school – Chobham Academy. This was made explicit in the writing, so as to avoid giving the impression of cherry-picking (Braun and Clarke, 2014).

3.6 Interviewing

This research employed semi-structured Interviews with residents, key informants, and managers involved in the Olympics and subsequent regeneration projects, which provided relevant data to answer all the research questions. Interviewing is probably the most common research tool in the social sciences, as it is seen to be the most useful means to elicit information (Bryman, 2012; Cochrane, 2014), to explore people’s lived experiences, and offer them the opportunity to voice their opinions (Cochrane, 2014; Tracy, 2013). While surveys are suitable to analyse broader trends, they do not allow for in-depth analysis. Cochrane (2014) notes that semi-structured interviewing permits the interviewer to maintain control of the process through a list of topics. Moreover, in the case of both unstructured and semi-structured interviews, the process is flexible.

Therefore, the meanings that interviewees give to what they experience is the most prominent aspect (Bryman, 2012; Cochrane, 2014; Tracy, 2013).

The semi-structured format was used in this fieldwork, as it allowed to elicit information from key informants and powerful people, and to explore the East Village residents' lived experiences. Moreover, the flexibility of semi-structured interviewing allowed to adapt the format to each interview's particular context, and to the different steps of the research. This format permitted me to maintain control of the process, especially when powerful people were interviewed. It also allowed developing codes, themes, and issues that answered the research questions. For example, with respect to key informants and managers, questions were asked to understand how the landlords' housing policies influence the socio-demographic composition of the neighbourhood, and how their socio-spatial practices construct the public realm and retail infrastructure.

3.6.1 Interviewing Key Informants and Managers

The semi-structured interviews are a suitable method to elicit information. Thus, this format was used for interviewing key informants and managers about the following topics: their role in the East Village project, the rationale behind their socio-spatial practices and policies, their relationship with other stakeholders, how they work, and their position in the network of power. This allowed an understanding of how decisions are made, who has the last say among the various stakeholders, and what are the real policy aims, beyond the promises contained in the official documents (Growth Boroughs, 2009; London 2012, 2004). Interviewing key informants and managers aided in analysing power relations and uncovering decision-making processes that benefit certain groups rather than others (Cochrane, 2014). The sample of key informants was also selected according to the necessity of obtaining relevant information regarding the urban regeneration process, the housing configuration, and the social housing allocation, which will be further discussed in Chapter 4. The following key informants were interviewed:

- A former LDU civil servant involved in the Stratford regeneration process

- A QDD manager
- A TH manager
- A First Base manager
- Two LLDC officers
- A Housing Needs officer of one of the local authorities with social housing allocation rights in East Village
- A former worker of one of the most popular cafes in the neighbourhood⁸

In total, eight interviews were conducted. I do not believe that my position as a white middle-class male individual played a significant role in interviewing these people. The QDD and TH managers were contacted and accepted the interview via mail, where I do not show my photo. I met the LDU officer at a conference, where I saw them being approachable to people with various socio-ethnic backgrounds. Moreover, three out of eight key informants were not white.

Ideally, I wanted to interview a higher number of powerful people and key informants. However, not all my requests were successful. All the local authorities' Housing Needs departments that have social housing allocation rights in the Village were contacted, and sometimes the result was frustrating. The Housing Needs manager of Hackney denied that they have nomination rights in East Village, saying that they would only have allocation rights in East Wick, a new neighbourhood that is being built in Hackney's portion of the Olympic Park. I replied to them that I have evidence – in Triathlon documents - that Hackney council has got social housing allocation rights in the Village. Nonetheless, they insisted that Hackney has nothing to do with it. They probably just wanted to save the time of the interview. In effect, as we will discuss in Chapter 4, Hackney has allocation rights for 31 socially rented flats in East Village, but I was disappointed about the lack of clarity. The Newham council's Housing Needs manager – which allocates half of the neighbourhood's social housing stock - did not reply to repeated emails initially; when they did, they communicated that they did not have time to accommodate the interview request. However, I had a feeling that they just wanted

⁸ The pseudonym Caffé Sofia will be used from now on to refer to this café.

to avoid opening a Pandora 's box. As we saw in Chapter 1, the LBN is facing growing criticism over the way that they treat people in greatest housing need (Gillespie et al., 2018; Shelter, 2013; Watt, 2018a, b). The other local authorities were all contacted via email several times for a period of approximately three months. Only one responded and accepted my invitation to be interviewed. The others never replied. Perhaps the reason why they did not answer or did not accept the invitation was just a lack of time. However, their decision not to speak to a researcher raises questions and doubts about the transparency of the process. The Housing Needs officer that accepted the interview wished their name and borough to remain confidential. They were also not happy with the audio recording of the interview. Therefore, I needed to take notes by hand, which is not ideal. It was not easy to pay attention to what they were telling me and to write it down at the same time. Nevertheless, this interview provided useful insights into the relationship between Triathlon and the East London local authorities, as well as about the socially rented apartments' allocation process in the neighbourhood.

Although the senior officers I interviewed held dominant positions with respect to the interviewer, some of them became somewhat emotional, and began to think about their role and actions. This is a situation that has also been described by Cochrane (2014). This occurred when I interviewed the TH manager. When I asked this person about their availability for an interview, they welcomed my request, saying that it would help them reflect. When I went there, within several moments I got the impression that the manager wanted to help me by revealing useful information about my matters of interest. They seemed to reflect critically about the issues that we were discussing, and their concerns and ideas emerged naturally. While we were discussing the East Village's tenure distribution and its implications, they stood up in front of the map of the development, and remained silent for several seconds in a kind of meditation. This was quite unlike other encounters with senior managers, who usually tried to use their position to direct the interview, as well as the issues to discuss.

When I interviewed a former LDU civil servant, they became emotional too. This person was involved in both the Docklands and Stratford urban regeneration projects, which radically changed the urban fabric of East London. Therefore, they had plenty of knowledge to potentially share. Like the Triathlon manager, this person was very

approachable. We went through the whole of the Stratford regeneration process, since the first ideas were drafted in 1995. The interviewee got visibly emotional, as at times I noticed tears welling up their eyes and their voice shaking when they reflected upon their role. Although we did not share the same points of view on many issues, the interviewee was very frank and honest. As we saw in the Introduction, they highlighted that in the current circumstances, urban regeneration is not likely to foster social inclusion; at least not to the extent that the Olympic Games' organisers claim and people expect. This interviewee also acted as a gatekeeper – a key figure in the research process who can introduce you to other informants (Bryman, 2012) - by putting me in touch with a manager of the LLDC who deals with employment in the QEOP. The interview with the LLDC representative was very interesting. However, employment in East London is not one of the main focuses of my research. In spite of this, the conversation was useful for highlighting that the LLDC strategy to tackle social exclusion is providing local residents with skills and job opportunities. This person was very helpful. They also kindly gave me two free tickets to a West Ham United match in the London Olympic Stadium, which, as a football fan, I very much appreciated. Finally, they connected me with the LLDC community engagement officer, who agreed to be interviewed. This interview was fruitful, and I had the opportunity to discuss issues related to community activities in the Park, as well as the ways in which they try to engage with local residents, such as the East Villagers.

Cochrane (2014) stresses the importance of choosing not to be too deferential when the interviewee is a powerful person, on whom the success of the research may depend. When I interviewed the QDD manager I was concerned about not upsetting them, but at the same time, I did not want to legitimate certain corporate practices or unequal power relations. Therefore, I asked my questions, and while they were answering I tried not to indicate any gesture of approval or disapproval. In such a context, the semi-structured interview format was particularly useful to investigate the issues I was interested in, to maintain a degree of formality within the process, and to keep a distance between me and the interviewee. Different from the TH manager and the LDU officer, I did not note emotions in this manager, who seemed to me like a sphinx, in the sense that they did not let any feeling become visible on their face. At times I had the

impression that they were staring at me in a sort of attempt to understand what my considerations about their answers were. After the interview, I was quite satisfied. However, when I re-read the transcript, I regretted my partial failure to discuss some issues that were worth further exploring. I felt slightly intimidated by the corporate environment – the interview took place at the Delancey headquarters in the London West End – and I was pressurised by the time limit. This person was friendly. However, they agreed to be interviewed for no longer than 45 minutes. Yet, the interview ended up lasting one hour, which showed their interest in the research topic; but I did not want to take too much of their time.

I also interviewed a First Base manager. Nevertheless, they accepted to be interviewed only over the phone. The unequal power relation forced me to accept these circumstances. When the interview started, the manager was walking in the street. There was a lot of background noise, which affected the audio quality of the phone call. Thus, at times, I could not properly understand the manager's answers. In the second part of the interview, the manager was in their office moving things around. This also created noise, and gave me the impression that the interviewee was not completely focused on my questions. Despite these far from ideal conditions, the interview provided me with insights into the First Base's stake in and vision of the East Village. In addition, the manager disclosed interesting information regarding the bodies that funded Triathlon.

Finally, I interviewed a former Caffé Sofia waitress, who I had met at several seminars and conferences before. This person lived nearby the Village. Juliet – this is the pseudonym with which I will refer to her – had very thorough observation skills. The interview with Juliet was different from those that I mentioned above. The issues guide that I employed sought to explore her experience in the café, what kind of customers used it, the way they interacted with each other, and the manager's relationship with other shopkeepers and the East Village management. This interview took almost the form of a conversation between Juliet and myself, as we shared many ideas and considerations about East Village. She also introduced me to some café's customers that I was able to interview. I was interested in interviewing the manager too. However, I asked him three times and was unable to arrange an interview.

3.6.2 Interviewing Residents

Interviewing residents was central to the fieldwork, as this allowed me to access their life experiences, understand how they make sense of and respond to the systemic processes and dynamics that forge their neighbourhood. Similar to the surveys, a random but representative sample of larger groups was selected, as it was obviously impossible to interview a population of over 6,000 residents. One of the main considerations was to interview a number of individuals linked to the various tenures' proportions, so as to give as equal a space as possible to the various social groups. Other important considerations that guided my sampling approach were the need to give space to gender and ethnic minorities. Because shared owners, intermediate and private renters have similar socio-economic backgrounds, and because exclusionary issues that affect the least powerful residents needed to be investigated, the number of social renters was larger than the others in proportion to the number of residential units available for the various housing tenures. In addition, as the fieldwork proceeded, it became increasingly clear that, as we saw in Chapter 1, there is a concern with market affordability in the TH documents (Humphry, 2019). Therefore, it was interesting to investigate the social renters' socio-economic backgrounds, so as to understand how far these housing units have effectively addressed needs in East London. Moreover, initial coding, that we discussed above, guided the sampling process too, as it provided me with an idea of the themes and issues that needed further exploration through the collection of additional interview data.

Thus, 15 private renters, 15 social renters, 11 shared owners/leaseholders, and 8 intermediate renters were interviewed, equating to a total of 49 participants. The topics that were addressed in the residents' interviews were: the reasons why they moved to East Village, their living costs, neighbourly relationships, interactions and activities, sense of belonging, representations and use of communal areas, the public realm and neighbourhood facilities, how they saw the future, and demographic information. The income level was not asked because I did not want to upset the participants with too many awkward questions. Many questions were asked regarding their rent levels and living costs. Therefore, I thought that it was better not to exaggerate with a sensitive

topic such as money. However, I regretted it later on, as this information would have provided me with more details to understand the interviewees' class positions.

Hamersley and Atkinson (2007) refer to sampling as a fundamental aspect of interviewing. However, sampling is not an easy task. Gatekeepers can help (Bryman, 2012). Nevertheless, the interviewer must retain the task of selecting the interviewees for themselves. The Triathlon manager that I interviewed put me in touch with the then chair of the East Village Residents Association (EVRA). This person accepted to be interviewed and introduced me to the vice chair. I interviewed them both, and I asked if they could talk to their neighbours and members of the association about my research. I also asked if I could go along to some of their meetings, to introduce myself and meet other residents. They agreed, but when I repeatedly emailed them afterwards, they did not reply. When this happened, I realised that finding interviewees was not going to be easy and how frustrating this could be. I experienced how the "snowball" effect (Bryman, 2012) which consists of using the first one or two participants to find others, is not always successful. This situation though, was not entirely negative, as it forced me to look for people who were not involved in community activities. Therefore, they could offer a different perspective, which would enrich my data.

I realised that I needed to change my sampling tactic. I targeted two East Village plots that included 500 flats approximately, and I left a letter in each mailbox. In the letter, I introduced myself, my research and I left my contact details, asking people to contact me if they were interested in being interviewed. Initially I struggled to find social renters to interview. Their response in the plots that I targeted had not been satisfactory. Thus, I looked at the maps of the development (Figures 4 and 5, pp. 144 – 145) within the tenures' distribution; I targeted one of the blocks where a high number of socially rented accommodation is concentrated, and I left approximately 150 additional letters in their mailboxes. Posting letters though, is not enough, as people may not even read them, or could just decide not to follow them up. Only four residents responded to me, and I managed to interview three of them. Thus, I started to knock on the doors of flats where I had delivered my letters, explaining that I was the student who wrote to them. Two people were not particularly happy about my visit. The first one was a woman with a baby. While I was explaining to her what I was doing she asked in a bitter tone: "Are you

allowed to stay in the building? Because I don't think you are allowed to stay in the building" and she closed the door on me. Another woman thought that I was a fundraiser and, quite aggressively, stopped me even before I could finish the first word: "Before you start I warn you! You are not allowed to ask any money for any charity or whatsoever. If Triathlon catches you they will kick you out!". I would always be very clear about my research aims, and I would show my student card straight away; but clearly this was not always enough to appease everyone. Some people simply closed the door on me while I was speaking. Others pretended not to be in. I remember several times hearing the floor creaking behind the door, but no one would open it.

By the end of March 2017, I realised that letters and door-knocking were not sufficient strategies to obtain enough people to interview. At the end of November 2017 – when I terminated my fieldwork - I would have obtained 18 interviews in total through this strategy; but I needed more, as I had to further explore the themes and issues that were emerging. I kept going back to my plots and knocked on the doors of the people who I had not found home yet, or pretended not to be there. However, I also decided to design and distribute a one-page self-completion questionnaire in the Village's gym, Caffé Sofia, and later on in the health centre. This strategy helped me to find more interviewees: 23 in total. Suddenly, the snowball technique also began to offer a contribution, as I found eight interviewees thanks to the people who I met knocking on doors and distributing my questionnaire.

Issues related to interviewing are not linked simply to sampling. As discussed above, there are ethically important moments in the process. For example, I believe that my position as a white middle-class male and English-speaking individual played a negative role when I was looking for BAME female interviewees. This happened in the episode that I described above, when my interaction with an Asian woman was interrupted by her husband. It also happened when I was looking for Muslim female interviewees during door knocking and in the health centre. On several occasions, they reacted as if they were feeling threatened by a male individual speaking to them. When this happened, I just left them alone. A Muslim woman that I met in the health centre filled in the questionnaire, and she also left her contact details to be contacted for the interview. However, when I called her to arrange, she hung up on me. Other times, I had

the impression that BAME female individuals did not understand me when I explained my research project and asked them if they were willing to participate. In addition, when I interviewed Ode, a Black African social renter, her answers were not always pertinent to my questions, which made me think that probably she was not fully understanding them. Thus, I tried to speak slowly and to repeat my questions. This helped, but did not always work. Moreover, during some interviews with other women of colour living in social housing, I noted a worried expression on their face. Some seemed ashamed about their financial condition. Others looked slightly worried that what they said during the interview could put them in trouble with the management. Despite the fact that I repeatedly stressed that the interview was voluntary, anonymous and confidential, they took some seconds before answering some of the questions, as if they were carefully thinking about what to say. This happened, for example, when I explored rent affordability or shopping in the neighbourhood.

3.7 Participant Observation

Participant observation was used to answer research questions 1, 2, 3 and 4. This research method consists of visiting a place, obtaining access to a certain community or social group, spending time with this group, engaging in conversations, and taking fieldnotes in order to observe people's everyday lives and how they perceive their social world (Bryman, 2012; Swanson, 2014). Luck can be as important as possessing good research skills when employing this method, especially in situations such as finding informants, being in the right place at the right time and writing down the appropriate notes (*ibid.*). This method is very useful because it offers the opportunity to study individuals in their natural environment, where they are more at ease. Therefore, their lives can be explored in greater depth (Dowler, 2001).

My initial plans were to attend residents' meetings and group activities. However, I experienced an access problem (Bryman, 2012). As mentioned above, I interviewed the chair and vice chair of EVRA. After both interviews I asked if I could join some of their meetings and the activities that they run for residents. They said that it was not a problem, and they would let me know when the next meetings would be. However, this

never happened. I repeatedly contacted both of them, but they did not get back to me. I also asked if I could join the East Village residents' Facebook page, but this time they were straightforward telling me that this was not possible, as the Facebook group was a place where residents needed to feel free to discuss neighbourly issues. They stated that the presence of strangers would not make them feel comfortable. Because of these issues, the amount of participant observation was limited to time spent in public spaces and neighbourhood facilities.

In August 2016, I moved to the old part of Stratford, and I lived there until January 2018. When I was looking for a room, I also looked within East Village. However, there was nothing available for less than £750 pcm (bills excluded), and I was not able to afford that price. As a resident of the old part of Stratford though, I experienced the divide between this area on one side, and East Village and the Olympic Park on the other. This is a matter of great interest for my research, which I will discuss in Chapter 6. The Village was at a walking distance from my flat, or it just took a short ride on the DLR. I could reach it very easily and this facilitated my interviews, and also my observations in the neighbourhood's public spaces and facilities.

During the fieldwork, I was used to going there two or three times in a day. I spent time in the streets and the green areas, observing what was going on. I also attended several events such as the Village's Sunday market and the November fireworks display, trying to focus on the kinds of people who were there and the way in which they interacted with each other. I spent time in Caffé Sofia, which is probably the Village's most popular café. I observed customers and staff, and the way they interacted. I also had several conversations with shopkeepers and residents. Finally, I used the sport opportunities that the Village offers. I joined the East Village gym, and I participated in various Our Parks sport classes that are held in the neighbourhood's playgrounds. There I met and chatted with several residents. It has to be noted that the gym and the Our Parks classes are open to everyone, not only to residents. In order to participate in the latter an online reservation is required, and because they are very popular they got fully booked quite often. Therefore, I could not participate in all the classes that I wanted to, and when I did I could not see the same faces all the time.

Throughout my observations I took notes of what I had heard and seen, of what happened, and of my thoughts. I got used to writing notes down as quickly as possible, at latest by the end of the day. I was used to typing them, and adding details such as place, time, people involved and so forth. I obviously could not take fieldnotes while I was practising sports. However, I kept a notebook in my bag, and afterwards I noted down interesting things that happened. I also noted down some analytic reflections about what I had observed. For example, I drew on the metaphor of the East Village public space as a theatre to describe how the GLL's place-making practices influence the level of neighbourly interactions and the way residents use and represent this space (see Chapter 6). Fieldnotes and analytic reflections have been very useful to provide a reflexive account of my fieldwork and to analyse the data later.

3.8 Documents

Qualitative analysis of official documents has been a very useful research tool to answer research questions 1, 3 and 5 in relation to the landlords' policies over housing, semi-private space, public space and neighbourhood facilities. Public and private organisations' documents may contain relevant data for researchers. These sources can also be analysed qualitatively by searching for themes and categories in the text (Altheide, 2004; Scott, 1990). The TH manager interviewed as part of the research provided a range of documents regarding their properties' allocations strategy and criteria. Such documents have been very useful to analyse how the landlords' and other stakeholders' policies have influenced the neighbourhood's socio-demographic composition, prioritising certain groups in the allocation of affordable and social housing. These issues will be discussed in Chapter 4. TH also provided the map of the neighbourhood with the tenures' distribution (Figures 4 and 5, pp. 144 – 145). This map has been used to analyse the theme of "othering" difference inside the neighbourhood, which will be explored in Chapter 5. Moreover, the LLDC (2015) Local Plan and the LLDC and GLL websites have been qualitatively analysed in relation to themes such as rules and regulations, and the provision of green areas.

The internet may also be a source of data, not only as a means of searching for reports and statistics, but also of undertaking participant observation through electronic mail and social media (Bryman, 2012). Email conversations with the Triathlon manager provided data regarding the East Village's community centre, which will be explored in Chapter 7.

I also tried to obtain the 2009 and 2012 S 106 Agreements between the ODA, LBN, QDD, and TH about the post-Olympic housing redevelopment of the East Village. These sources are mentioned in the Triathlon documents, and contain information such as obligations for the various bodies involved, how the East Village's tenure distribution was decided, plans for the use of communal areas and community space in the neighbourhood's buildings and facilities. I first contacted the TH manager to ask if it was possible to have them; but they replied that it was not in their system. Thus, I sent a Freedom of Information Request (FOIR) to the LBN to access these documents. However, they responded that for matters and issues regarding the Olympic Games I needed to contact the LLDC. I replied that the LLDC has got little to do with East Village directly, as the development is outside of the area under their jurisdiction. I added that several Triathlon documents mention that the LBN is one of the signatory parties of these agreements. Therefore, such documents should definitely be in their records. They responded with a very short email saying: "We trust that the information provided is correct". I felt very frustrated because I provided clear evidence that the LBN was in possession of these documents. In addition, once a public authority receives a FOIR they have a legal duty to provide the information required. In spite of this, they denied being in possession of these documents, which raised doubts about the transparency of the process.

3.9 Questionnaires

Self-completion questionnaires – combined with census data secondary analysis - helped to answer research questions 1, 3, and 5. The survey has been named East Village Residents Survey (EVS). Qualitative interviewing allows researchers to undertake in-depth analysis of themes and issues related to a research topic. However, the sample is

necessarily limited. Therefore, it does not allow for the analysis of broader trends (Bryman, 2012). During the fieldwork, short self-completion questionnaires were administered, primarily as another strategy to obtain residents to interview. In particular, a larger sample of social renters was needed. I could only arrange interviews with six residents in this tenure through letter posting and door knocking. However, questionnaires also provided an indication of the socio-demographic characteristics of the East Village population, and the extent to which the various social and ethnic residents' groups use the neighbourhood's facilities.

Four places to find as many respondents as possible were targeted: Caffé Sofia, the local pub, the gym and the health centre. In the latter, I met nine social renters who agreed to be interviewed. As discussed in Chapter 7, East Village's retail infrastructure alienates working-class and BAME individuals like the majority of social renters. On the contrary, the health centre, which is a public facility, does not. Permission was obtained from the management of the café, the gym and the health centre, but it was denied by the management of the pub. Approximately 250 questionnaires were administered from April to July 2017; 223 were returned, and 211 of those were valid. Considering that East Village has a population of approximately 6,000 inhabitants, the EVS is not statistically representative; it is only indicative of socio-demographic trends in the neighbourhood. However, these indications have been useful, given that census data related to the East Village neighbourhood only are not available. In addition, the EVS offered an indication of the extent to which the various social and ethnic groups use facilities in the area.

The questionnaire was short (one page). This facilitated residents to participate in the research. Usually respondents took between 15 and 20 minutes to fill out and return the questionnaire to me in person. I spent several hours - from three to five days per week - in the three places, so as to administer and collect questionnaires almost at the same time. The questions regarded: residents' previous address, lengths of residence in the Village, satisfaction with their neighbourhood and flat, housing tenure, occupation, age and ethnic background. It also set out a list of facilities: Caffé Sofia, the gym, the health centre, the local pub, the school, the playgrounds, other shops and restaurants, and other facilities. Respondents were asked to indicate which of these they or other members of their household used. The questionnaire also included an open question in

which respondents were asked how they would describe East Village to someone who does not know it. At the bottom of the page, it was asked if participants were willing to be interviewed, and space was left where people could leave their name and contact details. As a result, 23 survey participants were interviewed.

In order to elaborate the data, answers were entered on an Excel spreadsheet. After that, the data were filtered by removing incomplete answers that were not informative. Thereafter, the data were summarised in pivot tables that aggregated them in terms of residents National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC), ethnicity, age, previous address and housing tenure. Thus, an indication of the demographic profile of the East Village was obtained. A combination of the EVS with the 2011 Census data of the Stratford and New Town ward and Newham – where East Village is located – offered the opportunity to compare and contrast socio-demographic trends between the East Village neighbourhood and the wider context that surrounds it (see Chapter 4). In particular, the objects of this comparison were the residents' NS-SEC, age, and ethnic background.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter has explained why qualitative research methods have been used to undertake this study. My ontological position is that of the post-modern and interpretive field loosely defined as the field that rejects the positivist assumption that reality is something “out there” waiting for a researcher to discover it. From an epistemological point of view, a bricolage between critical theory and phenomenology allows for an understanding of the idea that urban policy and social mixing strategies are the result of political, social, economic and urban histories. However, by exploring the lived experiences of those who live in socially mixed neighbourhoods, we can obtain a meaningful account about the outcome of such strategies, and urban policy more broadly. Thereafter, we can inform their critique and foster positive social change.

Interviews and participant observation provide a unique lens within the lived experiences, perceptions, preferences and interactions of the people who live in East

Village; while qualitative analysis of policy documents and interviews with key informants reveal state and corporate priorities regarding these matters, and the most controversial decisions that generate exclusion within the neighbourhood. Designing a self-completion questionnaire was primarily aimed at finding interviewees. Nevertheless, it provided an indication of the socio-demographic trends within the neighbourhood, as well as their contrast to those of the Stratford ward and the LBN, which we discussed by looking at the 2011 Census data.

Chapter 4

The Neighbourhood

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses how GLL and TH have interpreted and implemented the policy aims to “tackle exclusion” (IOC, 2002) and deliver “homes for all” (Growth Boroughs, 2009). It also describes the effects of the landlords’ policies on the East Village’s housing configuration, costs, and socio-demographic composition. It draws on empirical data from interviews conducted with various managers involved in the regeneration of Stratford and the redevelopment of the Olympic Village into a housing complex. It also draws on the qualitative analysis of TH’s policy documents and on quantitative data from the EVS.

Sections 4.2 and 4.3 describe GLL and TH respectively. Section 4.4 analyses the East Village housing configuration. Section 4.5 focuses on the selection criteria for social renters, while section 4.6 discusses rent levels and housing costs. Section 4.7 outlines the neighbourhood’s socio-demographic profile. Section 4.8 concludes with some analytical considerations about the themes and issues addressed in the chapter.

It is argued that the Olympic promise is at best the promise of an opportunity and at worst just an illusion. Addressing housing needs in East London was not central to the real plans. The least marginal of the social housing applicants are selected to live in a neighbourhood that attracts white middle-class individuals.

4.2 Get Living London

As we saw in Chapter 1, GLL is the housing management arm of QDD, a joint venture between Qatari Diar and Delancey. The Qatari Diar Real Estate Investment Company is entirely owned by the Qatari Investment Authority: the investment fund of the Qatari royal family (GLL, 2016). Delancey is a property investment, development and asset

management advisory firm based in London, which focuses on real estate investments in the UK (GLL, 2016). As one of their managers explained in the interview, they decided to invest in the Village because:

“Certainly, Qatari Diar and Delancey recognised the opportunity: the size, the scale of the opportunity. And we had this desire to get in the private rented sector, and this was a once in a lifetime opportunity to acquire. We had 1439 units which is an enormous amount that would justify setting up the platform business, which is Get Living London to manage the private rented business that we were seeking. So it just was a fantastic opportunity because of the scale”. (QDD manager)

The high number of housing units at a relatively convenient price convinced QDD to invest in the site. As often happens in the context of neoliberal urban restructuring, a PPP was formed, where the ODA – and therefore the UK government – were put in charge of the most expensive phase of the Athletes’ Village development. Once everything was ready, and the most profitable phase was about to begin, a private body took over ownership (Boykoff, 2013; Minton, 2012; Vainer, 2016). As QDD owns 51%, it is the freeholder. As such, QDD owns the communal areas and public ground. This 51% figure, coupled with QDD’s decision to rent out its properties instead of selling them, have been key to its continuing control of the neighbourhood, which QDD intends to retain for the long-term:

“By retaining the ownership you retain control! You then are able to deliver a service without loads of a multitude of opinions saying what we should do. We’ve got control through that. And obviously Qatari Diar Delancey is a business interest. We are expecting to get a rental growth and to have a stable income over the long term. So people could make a quick profit, but we see this as a business that we wish to grow in terms of not just East Village but elsewhere in London”. (QDD manager)

QDD believes that retaining ownership will allow them to maximise profitability, as well as to retain control. As will be discussed in the following chapters, they use this control to deliver a readymade community “product”, which structures the neighbourhood field in a way that influences residents’ way of living:

We are focused on control... Not control but delivering the ingredients for the community and making it a place, a special place to live. Because business-wise it makes sense because you want to make the product as attractive as possible, so that our residents will stay and stay a

long time but the business ultimately has charm. You're always gonna have people coming and going. We want just to make sure that they always come". (QDD manager)

The idea of "making it a special place to live" refers to a housing corporation strategy that Bourdieu (2005) identifies. Such a strategy aims at arousing pre-existing dispositions of home seekers to profit from them. As discussed below, QDD's customers are young, white and middle-class individuals. While claiming to valorise their experiences and meet their expectations, QDD plays on them to extract economic capital. In addition, the managers' words convey the idea of transience (Allen and Watt, forthcoming). They represent a business model similar to that of a hotel, where guests do not reside permanently, but are continually "coming and going". In reality, QDD's interest is not so much that residents stay a long time, but rather that there is a constant turnover, such that the business keeps running:

"The instability and the incessant need for housing and for rentable accommodation... We don't see that disappearing so it's a fundamental isn't it? Housing is a fundamental... If Stratford continues and East Village continues to grow and improve, and the community grows then we may also see some rental growth as well. It's good for us!" (QDD manager)

Thus, QDD's particular interests – maximising profit and attracting mobile middle classes to buy into a readymade community package – becomes a civic interest (Blackshaw, 2010; Rosenblatt et al., 2009). The general interest of delivering genuinely affordable homes, as promised by the Olympics organisers (Growth Boroughs, 2009; London 2012, 2004), for the many East Londoners who need them, fades away with the arrival of powerful incomers. One could argue that even the initial plans indicated that 50% of the East Village properties would be private housing. However, it is the power that QDD retains over East Village, the idea of what the neighbourhood should be like, as well as the vision for the wider area that jeopardises the Olympic promise. For their business to be successful, QDD needs to make sure that social and ethnic difference is alienated. It also needs to maintain property value and rental growth in the whole of Stratford. This reflects what the Olympic Legacy has meant for East London: an exclusive economic growth, which provides little benefits for the long-standing low-income ethnically diverse population of this part of the city (Kennelly, 2016; Watt and Bernstock, 2017).

4.3 Triathlon Homes

In order to understand how TH was formed and got involved in the East Village project, we need to take a step back to the early 2000s. The original partnership was between the East Thames housing association and the developer First Base. They had an aspiration to build new homes in the LBN as a response to the Stratford City Master Plan. In effect, a housing development was already planned in the East Village site as part of this plan, which was launched by the LBN. After the IOC announced that the London Olympic bid was successful in 2005, the plans for the previous development were turned into those for the Athletes' Village. Given the scale of the enterprise (purchasing 1,379 apartments), the New Labour government did not believe that the original partnership between East Thames and First Base was sufficient to deal with the debts associated with the project. As we saw in Chapter 1, in the era of austerity urbanism, the state dismisses financial risks to deliver welfare resources such as affordable and social housing, and attempts to transfer them to other entities (Humphry, 2019; Peck, 2012). The government therefore thought that another financial leg was necessary. Thus, they brought in a third partner: the Southern Housing Group housing association (Interviews with a TH manager and an LDU officer).

TH was therefore established in 2009 with the purpose of purchasing 49% of the East Village housing stock to be turned into affordable and social housing (TH, 2014). Thus, the UK government played an active role in its formation. This is an example of what Bourdieu (2005) defines as a direct control of the housing market by public authorities. In the case of the East Village redevelopment, the UK government not only has created an exception to the rules that it had created to regulate social housing provision – as discussed below, but it has intervened directly to set up a joint venture like TH to purchase affordable housing units. The three partners obtained a £63.5 million loan from Barclays Bank, a £95.2 million loan from the European Investment Bank, and a £110 million grant from the Homes and Community Agency (HCA) to invest the £375 million necessary to purchase their share of East Village. In the interview, a First Base manager describes TH as a “special single purpose vehicle” that was created specifically and only to acquire properties in East Village, in order to minimise and spread the risk among various partners (Interview with a First Base manager). Concerns about financial risk are

therefore an important consideration for the neoliberal state, as well as for the bodies that replace it in delivering low-cost housing (Humphry, 2019). As we will see below, this has relevant impacts on rent levels. The operating model for the company is that the managing director is the only employee, and the various functions are delivered through contractors, whom the managing director oversees (TH, 2014). Such a simplified model could also be interpreted as a strategy to minimise expenditure.

First Base is a private company. Nevertheless, it has become involved in the property of the East Village's affordable and social housing stock, thanks to a partnership with two registered landlords. This seems an anomaly, as social housing is usually owned by housing associations or local authorities. In addition, TH is a private provider, and not a registered landlord⁹. Despite this, it was able to obtain a public grant from the HCA and purchase socially rented apartments. This demonstrates how companies such as TH, and the banks that support them, have the power to influence political decisions to the point that they receive public grants to purchase social and affordable housing. Once subject to market logics, they are no longer a form of welfare support for those who cannot afford a home on the PRS. They are commodified; and an additional segment of the housing market is created. Thus, the apparent withdrawal of the neoliberal state from the economic sphere, conceals a continuous public intervention to create, shape and support markets and the large corporations that dominate them (Bourdieu, 2005).

4.4 The East Village Housing Configuration

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the East Village housing configuration is a mix of PRS, affordable housing and social housing. The privately rented housing is a mixture of 1, 2 and 3-bedroom flats and 4-bedroom townhouses (Getlivinglondon.com: N.p.). The affordable units are a mixture of 1, 2 and 3-bedroom flats divided between three different affordable housing products: IMR, where flats are rented out at 70 and 80% of the market rent level; shared ownership, meaning that buyers can purchase a percentage of the property and pay the rent for the unsold share; and shared equity,

⁹ Terms such as housing association and registered landlord have been explained in Chapter 1, Section 1.4.

meaning that buyers can purchase up to 80% of the property and do not pay any rent for the rest. There are also former shared owners who exercised their right to acquire 100% of their property, and are now leaseholders (TH, 2013a). Finally, social housing is a mixture of 1, 2 and 3-bedroom flats, and 4-bedroom townhouses (TH, 2017). Table 1 shows the housing configuration in East Village.

Table 1: East Village Housing Configuration, 2018

Housing Product	Amount	Triathlon Stock %	EV Total Stock %
Social Rent	675	49%	24%
Intermediate Rent	294	21.5%	11%
Shared Ownership	264	19%	9.5%
Shared Equity	79	5%	2.5%
Leasehold	67	5%	2.5%
Private Rent	1439	N.A.	51%

(Source: GLL, 2016; TH, 2018b).

The 675 social housing units are allocated via different housing routes. The bodies that have allocation rights in the Village are the LBN, TH, the GLA, and the other East London housing partners: London Borough of Hackney (LBH), London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH), London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF), London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (LBBD), London Borough of Redbridge (LBR) and London Borough of Havering (LBHV). Table 2 shows the housing split between the different social housing nominating bodies.

Table 2: Social Housing Nomination Rights in East Village

Nominating Body	Total	Percentage
LBN	348	51.5%
TH	152	22.5%
GLA	68	10%
LBH	31	4.5%
LBTH	27	4%
LBWF	23	3.5%
LBBD	11	1.5%
LBR	10	1.5%
LBHV	5	1%

(Source: TH, 2018b)

We will now try to simplify the complicated system that led to the configuration illustrated in Table 2. The LBN is a member of the East London Sub-Region Housing Partnership (East London Housing Partnership, 2010). This partnership was created in recognition that housing markets do not respect boroughs' boundaries, and the problems that such markets generate are better addressed at the sub-regional level. The protocol also recognises the strategic importance of pan-London collaboration. As a consequence, new social housing developments in the East London sub-region may contain a pan-London share (*ibid.*). Partner housing associations that develop housing schemes in the sub-region are signatories to the East London sub-regional nominations' protocol, which describes how nominations for new socially rented accommodation in the sub-region are shared out between their partners. This document applies to all socially rented accommodation developed by housing associations with social housing grants (East London Housing Partnership: 1). Given that East Village is one of these, this protocol applies.

The process of distributing nominations indicates that 50% of the units are assigned to the hosting borough, 25% to the developing registered landlord, and the remaining 25% to the other East London sub-regional partners, according to the Borough's Housing Needs Indicator. This 25% may also contain a pan-London share (East London Housing Partnership: 6). However, these percentages are subject to local agreements and arrangements. As can be observed in Table 3, based on the arrangements for East Village, the LBN has been allocated nominations for 51% and TH for 22.5% of the housing units. The other East London sub-region partners have been assigned nomination rights of 16.5% of the socially rented flats, and the remaining 10% has been assigned to the GLA. Objective 3 of the TH Letting Strategy recognises the strategic importance of East Village for the capital as a whole (TH, 2012a). The 68 properties assigned to the GLA are allocated to tenants in the so called "Housingmove" queue. This is a London Mayoral scheme, which is meant to favour allocations to those households who accept to be housed outside of their original borough. Such households then enter the Housingmove waiting list and can bid for the properties allocated through it (LBN, GLA and TH, 2012; *ibid.*).

4.5 The Selection of Social Renters

TH has agreed to slightly different procedures with the various bodies that have social housing allocation rights in East Village (LBN, GLA and TH, 2012; TH, 2012b). Nevertheless, there are equal criteria for all of these bodies, which are likely to restrict the number and socio-economic background of eligible households. Requests for nominations are made directly by TH to the nominating borough or Housingmove. The nominating boroughs and the GLA use their own allocation schemes. They shortlist five nominees for each property in order of priority. After receiving this list, TH invites each nominee for an interview, where they are signposted to a range of employment support programmes (LBN, 2012; TH, 2012b). TH reserves the right to reject a nomination for affordability reasons, if a prospective tenant has got insufficient financial means to afford the rent and service charge (TH, 2012b). Again, social housing becomes subject to market logics (Humphry, 2019). A private entity such as TH acts like a judge that

questions prospective tenants about their financial capacity, entitlements and attitudes to demonstrate their fit in the neighbourhood. The result is that the most marginal applicants are rejected. It is important to bear in mind the condition of deprivation and relative poverty that many East Londoners experience (Kennelly, 2016; Kennelly and Watt, 2012; Thomson et al., 2017; Watt, 2018a, 2018b; Watt and Bernstock, 2017).

An officer of one of the boroughs with social housing nomination rights in East Village was vague when asked if their office was notified of any prospective tenure rejection from TH:

“I can’t remember now because it’s been a few years ago, and it would be very time-consuming to count how many, because rejections were notified via email. But there might have been some nominations rejection [by Triathlon] for affordability reasons. (Housing Need Officer)

Affordability checks consider rent and service charge levels against the prospective tenants’ income, and take into particular consideration welfare reforms, including benefit caps (TH, 2012b). As we saw in Chapter 1, in 2010 the Coalition Government introduced a new benefits system called “Universal Credit” which caps the overall benefits that a household or individual can claim (Bernstock, 2014). Moreover, as the below quote highlights, TH prioritises in-work applicants:

“They also told us that there was the option to allocate these properties to in-work people, but we didn’t apply the employment criterion. Obviously you need to work to be able to afford the rent, especially in the case of social housing owned by housing associations. They charge a higher rent because they need to run their business!” (Housing Need officer)

Watt and Bernstock (2017) note that the Newham and Waltham Forest boroughs utilised the 2011 Localism Act to change their allocation policies, and prioritise employed applicants too (LBN, 2016; LBWF, 2016). Other categories prioritised by TH and Housingmove are disabled people, overcrowded households and single mothers (TH, 2012a, 2017). However, these categories need to be able to afford the rent, either directly or by welfare support. As we can see in Table 3, TH, Housingmove, the LBN and the LBWF together allocate 591 out of 675 social housing units (87% of the total stock). Although the inclusion of overcrowded and single headed households in the categories exempt from work has addressed need in a small proportion, the possibility to be

assigned a flat in East Village still depends on the capacity to afford the rent, and involvement in employment support programmes (TH, 2017). The TH's Letting Strategy's minimum target is 50% of tenants in employment at first let. The document also considers that at least 15% of the tenants would be disabled, retired, have an illness and therefore unable to work (TH, 2012b: 3).

The TH Letting Strategy provides the following reason for prioritising in-work applicants: "Studies show that in families where neither parent works there is a higher risk of children also failing to gain employment when they grow up. Triathlon Homes is committed to reducing this risk" (TH, 2012b: 3). These considerations bring into relief Shildrick et al.'s (2012) challenge to the notion of intergenerational worklessness. As we saw in Chapter 2, Valentine (2017) notes that blaming parents – especially mothers – for their children's failures is typical of the Anglo-American middle-class tendency to demonise migrants and working-class households. Offering training opportunities to unemployed people could provide positive support. Nonetheless, the imposition of such programmes appears to be based on a paternalistic approach to tackling unemployment which deems unemployed individuals living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods responsible for their condition (Beider, 2015; McKenzie, 2015).

As we saw in Chapter 2, Bourdieu (2005) links tightly the priorities of the neoliberal state to symbolic violence. Thus, the emphasis on merit is typical of the UK's Conservative and New Labour welfare discourses (Atkinson, 2003; Butler and Hamnet, 2011; Imrie and Raco, 2003). Gough and Eisenschitz (2006) highlight that in this state of affairs the role of the state is not providing, but inculcating good values and habits – such as a positive attitude towards work – in those deemed to lack them. Raco (2009, cited in Butler and Hamnett, 2011: 92) argues that in the New Labour discourse there has been a move from a culture of expectation to one of aspiration, which has been engineered to win consent for the framing of what might be termed neoliberal welfare policy. Schneider and Ingran (1997, cited in Imrie and Raco, 2003: 25) describe this welfare discourse as degenerate. It is based on social constructions that distinguish the deserving from the undeserving poor, with the latter becoming subject to punitive policy tools (*ibid.*).

TH can also reject nominations or terminate tenancies for anti-social behaviour (TH, 2017). Social housing tenants have to sign the “Residents’ Charter”, which contains a set of rules and regulations that they have to respect (TH, 2013b). The TH’s Letting Strategy Objective 6 explores anti-social behaviour. The document states that all tenants need to accept the “values and expected behaviours within the neighbourhood” (TH, 2012a: 7). The landlord has the duty and the right to ensure that tenants respect each other, and no one impedes others from using the communal areas. However, some of these prescriptions appear restrictive. Several social renters have expressed frustration in the interviews with the researcher, because they are not allowed to put curtains on their windows, hang pictures on their house walls, or store belongings and hang up clothes on the balcony, as this would make the buildings’ facades look disorderly. These rules are perceived as unrealistic, and they have been broken by many residents, not just in social housing.

Affordability and employment criteria, combined with an emphasis on “behaviour” appear to aim at prioritising the least marginal of the social housing applicants. Social engineering has been used to create a neighbourhood where otherness is under control, and the social renters adjust their lifestyles to the habitus of white middle-class individuals, which becomes dominant within the neighbourhood field. Therefore, BAME groups lifestyles are alienated from this space.

4.6 Affordable Homes?

The TH Rent Setting Policy sets out how the rents for each of the tenures provided by this operator are calculated (TH, 2016b). As mentioned above, the IMR rents are set at 70 and 80% of the market level, and like GLL properties, they are inclusive of service charge. These properties are let with two different contracts: fixed term (12 months) or periodic term. Fixed term rent levels are revalued every month in line with market values (with the deductions of 20/30% applied), so that when the fixed term lease expires the rents are reset accordingly to increase or decrease alongside the market fluctuations. The periodic rent levels are increased each year at the Retail Price Index (RPI) plus 0.5%, or the average salary increases for Greater London (Earnings Index for London for

December each year), plus 0.75% (TH, 2016b). The annual rent that shared owners pay is calculated at 2.75% of the value of the unsold share of the property at the point of the first sale. This rent increases at the RPI plus 0.5% each year. Leasehold and shared ownership/equity 's rents are not inclusive of service charge, which is paid separately (*ibid.*). Shared owners, equity shared owners and leaseholders also pay an annual ground rent.

The Rent Setting Policy states that as a private provider, TH is not required to comply with all the HCA rent standards. Because Triathlon has been assigned a public subsidy, it has to deliver a certain configuration of properties. In addition, TH has agreed with the HCA to set initial social rent and re-let levels in line with the HCA requirements as follows: 30% of the rent is based on the property's value; the remaining 70% is based on relative local earnings; and an uplift of up to 5% is applied to reach the final figure, which is the maximum allowable (TH, 2016b). The rents are increased annually by the RPI plus 0.5% (*ibid.*). Social rents do not include the service charge and all other charges that are stated separately, and are increased annually by the Consumer Price index (CPI), plus 1.5% (*ibid.*). To simplify, when a new social tenancy starts, the combination between rent and service charge is capped at the maximum social rent level allowable. However, after the first year, rent and service charge increase annually by RPI plus 0.5 % and CPI plus 1.5% respectively, such that social rent levels become higher than what is prescribed by the HCA for registered landlords in receipt of public grants.

As Bourdieu (2005) has argued, the neoliberal state's housing policy produce a set of economic and social conditions that contribute to produce the state of the housing market, and favour those companies which are able to impose their priorities through it. TH is one of them. It enjoys a public grant and a favourable and flexible regulation regime. Moreover, the last four decades' steady funding reduction to build council housing, as well as the benefits cuts, have created new customers: those individuals on low to average income levels, that are encouraged to renting housing owned by companies such as Triathlon at a higher price than those offered by local authorities.

Table 3 contains a breakdown of the social and IMR average rent levels, and the range of PRS levels in East Village¹⁰. Rent levels in the table are inclusive of service charge¹¹. Figure 2 contains some examples of the housing costs associated with shared ownership.

Table 3: Rental Costs in East Village

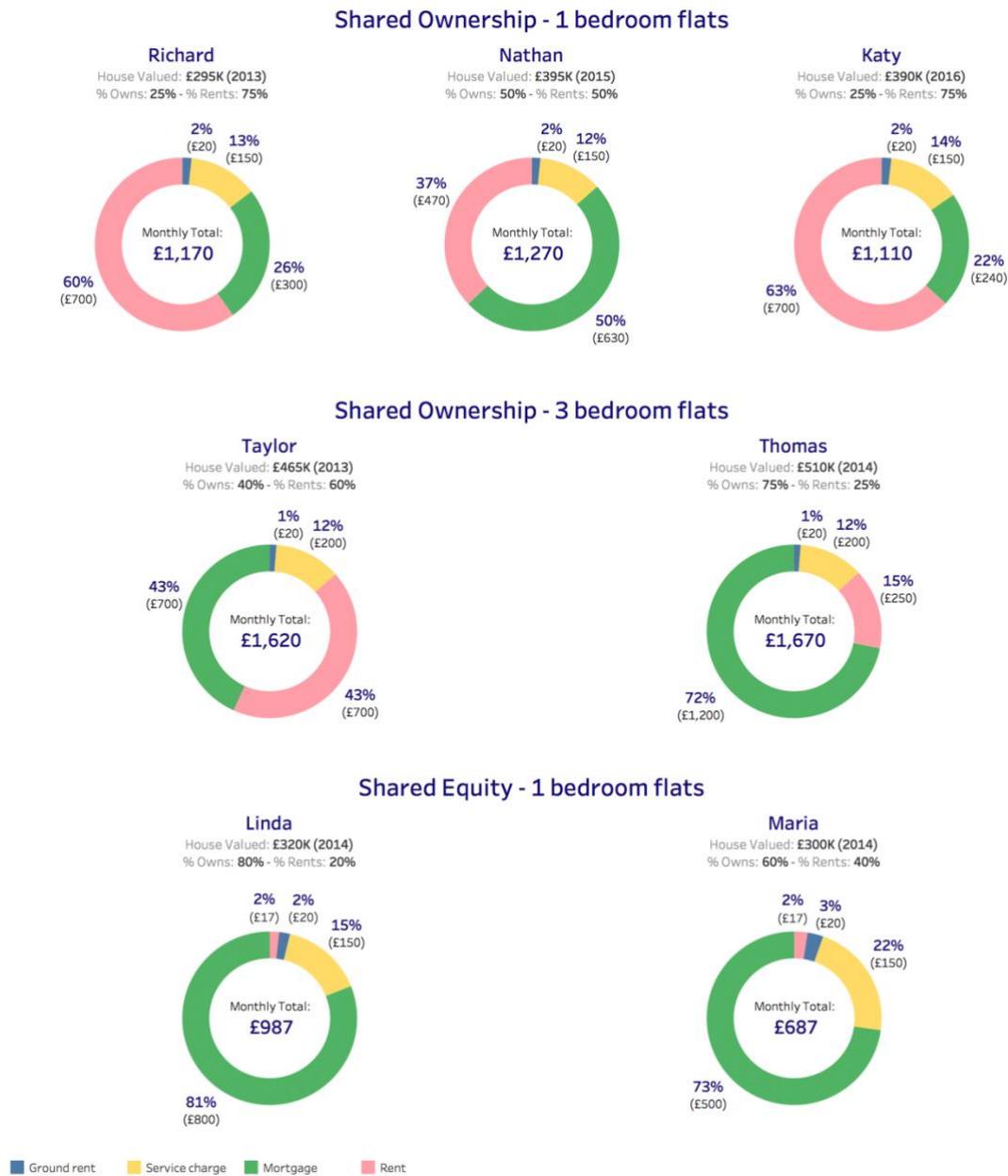
	1-bedroom flat	2-bedroom flat	3-bedroom flat	4-bedroom flat
Social Rent	£657.48	£774.62	£876.33	£875.07
IMR Periodic 70%	£1,026.16	£1,328.02	£1,674.49	0
IMR Periodic 80%	N.A.	N.A.	£1,850.06	0
IMR Fixed 70%	0	0	0	0
IMR Fixed 80%	£1,131.09	£1,496.96	N.A.	0
Private Rent	£1,700 – 1,710*	£1,600 – 2,000*	£2,200 – 2,600*	£3,100*

(TH, 2018a; * Piero Corcillo interviews, 2017)

¹⁰ TH has provided weekly rent levels. The monthly costs have been calculated by the researcher using the formula weekly rent x 52 ÷ 12.

¹¹ GLL properties are in a range because rent levels can vary depending on the location of the property and whether a flat is let furnished or unfurnished.

Figure 2: East Village's Shared Ownership Monthly Housing Costs, 2017



(Source: Piero Corcillo interviews, 2017)

If we look at the social rent levels in Table 3, we can note that they are out of reach for deprived East Londoners such as homeless, unemployed or low-income youth and single mothers living in temporary accommodation, whose housing hardships have been explored in Chapter 1 (see Kennelly, 2016; Minton, 2012; Thompson et al., 2017; Watt, 2013, 2018a, 2018b; Watt and Bernstock, 2017). The young black youth of Stratford in

Kennelly's (2016) and Kennelly and Watt's (2012) studies, express frustration about the new upmarket housing developments, which they cannot afford. What's more, they would have little chance to be allocated a social rent apartment in East Village.

Moreover, if we look at Table 4 and Figure 2, and consider that affordable housing costs are linked to the PRS (Bernstock, 2014; Watt and Bernstock, 2017), we can note that PRS levels also pull up the affordable housing products. In addition, the East Village's intermediate renters and shared owners must be employed, their housing costs should not make up more than 45% of their net income, and they can have a gross household income of up to £90,000 per annum (TH, 2013a, 2016a; UK Government, 2018). This income cap is quite high, such that even some households in the most affluent 10% of the London population could fit (Trust for London, 2017).

If we look at Figure 2, we notice that the housing costs for a shared ownership 1-bedroom flat range from £1,170 to £1,270 per month, while those for a 3-bedroom flat range from £1,620 to £1,670 per month. Shared equity properties are less expensive: Linda owns 80% of her 1-bedroom flat, and pays £987 for her monthly housing costs; Maria owns 60% and pays £687 per month. The costs in Table 4 and Figure 2 do not include council tax and utility bills, which tend to be quite expensive and range from £200 to £400 per month, depending on individual cases and the size of the property.

Watt and Bernstock (2017) note that house prices and private rent levels have increased in Stratford and East Village in the post-Olympic period, rendering private and affordable housing products further unaffordable. In effect, we can find evidence of such increases in East Village. If we look at the 1-bedroom flats in Figure 2, we notice that Richard's property was valued at £295,000 when he bought it in 2013, and Maria and Linda's flats were valued at £300,000 and £320,000 respectively in 2014, whereas Nathan and Katy's flats were valued at £395,000 and £390,000 in 2015 and 2016 respectively. We can therefore observe a sharp 31% (£95,000) increase in three years. Similarly, if we look at the 3-bedroom flats, Taylor's property was valued at £465,000 in 2013, while Thomas's flat was valued at £510,000 in 2014. This shows a considerable 10% (£45,000) increase in one year. Moreover, the PRS price increase between 2013 and 2015 in Stratford and East Village has had direct consequences on IMR properties, especially those let with 12

months fixed term leases. As we saw above, these rent levels are updated monthly. Therefore, they are very much subject to market fluctuations. These affordable housing products tend to be affordable for young professionals and City workers, but they are not for an average income East London household (Shelter, 2013; Watt and Bernstock, 2017). The East Village housing redevelopment is therefore an example of how Olympics-related housing developments are contributing to the gentrification of Stratford (Bernstock, 2014; Kennelly and Watt, 2012; Sadd, 2010). When the LDU officer is asked whether they considered that this was going to be the case they answered:

“Well, that was always going to be an inevitable outcome. I mean it’s become more and more acute in the last 10 years. I don’t think that we anticipated that the housing problem would become as acute as it is now. There was an expectation that the housing developments that would come from the Olympic Park would have much more value. But we didn’t really expect the destruction of so much existing social housing to be happening as it is now”. (LDU officer)

The interviewee recognises that gentrification was expected to happen as a result of the regeneration of Stratford. They also claim that the “destruction of social housing” was not an intentional outcome. They seem to blame the housing crisis for the hardships experienced by many East Londoners. However, the above quote highlights the prioritisation of corporate logics, and a lack of consideration for the needs of the least powerful individuals in carrying out many London-based urban regeneration schemes, which are the main reasons why the housing crisis has become so acute (Watt, 2009b; Watt and Minton, 2016). Moreover, what emerges from this quote is that delivering truly affordable housing for deprived East Londoners was never part of the real plans. This quote reinforces the argument that the promise of an inclusive Olympic housing legacy was illusory. A state that utilises the Olympics to deliver affordable housing and creates the social and economic conditions for a private entity to take over the property legitimises the logics of social inequality.

4.7 The East Village's Socio-Demographic Profile

This section discusses the East Village residents' demographic profile, by drawing on the EVS. It has to be acknowledged that middle-class individuals are more willing to come forward for social research than marginal individuals such as those belonging to BAME and working-class groups (Savage, 2015). This is likely to have influenced the proportions of participants from different social and ethnic backgrounds. In addition, the collected and valid questionnaires were 211; while East Village has a population of over 6,000 inhabitants. Therefore, the EVS is not statistically representative, and it is at best indicative of socio-economic and demographic trends in the neighbourhood.

However, given the lack of census data related to the East Village neighbourhood alone, this indication is useful to outline its socio-demographic profile. With the exception of the previous address, we also draw on 2011 Census data, so as to compare and contrast the East Village socio-demographic characteristics to those of the Stratford and New Town Ward – where the Village is located – and Newham as a whole. In particular, we will look at the residents' previous address, NS-SEC, age, and ethnic background.

4.7.1 Residents' Previous Address

The bidding documents contain a commitment to prioritising existing East London residents in the allocation of flats in East Village, with a target of housing East Londoners in at least 50% of the residential units in the neighbourhood (Growth Boroughs, 2009; London 2012, 2004; Meredith, 2012; LBN, 2012; TH, 2012a). Table 4 shows where the EVS participants lived before moving to East Village¹².

¹² The total valid questionnaires were 211. However, the non-responses or not adequately stated figures have been removed from this and the other tables. Moreover, the percentages in this and the other tables that do not contain a comparison with the 2011 Census data have been rounded to the closest number, as the number of participants is small.

Table 4: Residents' Previous Address by Tenure

Previous Address	Social Rent	IMR	Shared/Eq./Own	Private Rent	Total
East London	85%	50%	50%	35%	49%
Another London Borough	10%	20%	25%	25%	22%
Elsewhere in the UK	5%	15%	18%	25%	19%
Europe	0	10%	5%	4%	4%
Outside Europe	0	5%	2%	10%	6%
Total N= 100%	39	20	44	106	209

(Source: EVS, 2017)

If we look at the total figure contained in the last column, it would appear that the outcome has almost met the original commitment, as 49% of the residents lived in East London before moving to the Village. However, the rest of the data breaks down the total by showing where the residents in the various housing tenures lived before. The situation, therefore, appears more complex.

As we saw above, 67.5% of the socially rented flats are allocated by the East London local authorities. As a consequence, the percentage of social renters who lived in East London previously is unsurprisingly high: 85%. In addition, 68 socially rented properties (10% of the total stock) have been allocated through the pan London criterion. Indeed, the percentage of respondents coming from another London borough perfectly coincides with that of the apartments allocated via the Housingmove queue: 10%. The two respondents coming from elsewhere in the UK could have obtained a flat through the East Thames and Southern Housing Group waiting lists, by means of which the tenants of the 152 properties allocated directly by TH have been chosen.

50% of both the intermediate renters and the shared owners/leaseholders lived in East London previously, which is a high percentage. Notably, former East London residents were prioritised by TH not only in the allocation of social rent properties, but also in the allocation of IMR and shared ownership properties (TH, 2013a). However, 24 out of 64 participants in these two tenures (38% of their total) were living in Hackney and Tower Hamlets before moving to East Village; two boroughs that have experienced gentrification (Butcher and Dickens, 2015; Butler and Robson, 2003; Wessendorf, 2013, 2014). Therefore, most of them are likely to be part of the young gentrifying population mentioned in Butcher and Dickens (*ibid.*) and Wessendorf (*ibid.*) studies. Therefore, they are not likely to be from East London originally. IMR and shared ownership have also a consistent population coming from another London borough, 20% and 25% respectively; as well as from the rest of the UK, 15% and 18% respectively. On the contrary, only a few of the respondents in these two tenures lived in Europe or outside Europe previously. They account for 15% and 7% of the total participants in these tenures.

We can note with little surprise that the tenure with the lowest percentage of former East London residents is private rent, with 35%. In addition, 25% of the respondents in this tenure lived in another London borough previously, and another 25% lived elsewhere in the UK. However, a similar observation made for the intermediate renters and shared owners applies for the 35% of private renters with an East London previous address. 18 out of 37 lived in Hackney and Tower Hamlets, two areas whose social composition has been considerably changed by young middle-class incomers (Butcher and Dickens, *ibid.*; Wessendorf, *ibid.*). Moreover, as the data about the residents' ethnic background – illustrated in Table 10 below - show, 52% of the residents in this tenure have declared to have a non-British ethnic background. This suggests that a considerable number of them are overseas affluent students, or part of the cosmopolitan highly mobile middle-class (Bauman, 2003; Butler and Robson, 2003) who moved to London to take highly-skilled jobs, or study in higher education. This observation is supported also by the data on the residents' occupation illustrated in Table 5 below. Another part, however, could be second generation migrants, who became part of the middle-class, as suggested by Butler and Hamnett (2011). Finally, 14% of the private renters lived

outside of the UK previously. This is another indicator of how East Village is appealing for the cosmopolitan middle classes.

With regards to the total sample, Islington and Camden are the two previous addresses with the highest number of residents coming from another London borough, with eight and six residents respectively. These are gentrified areas of London (Butler and Robson, 2003; Watt, 2008). Also, 13 come from Kensington and Chelsea, Hillingdon, Wandsworth and Richmond, which are traditionally affluent boroughs of the city (Bacqué et al., 2015; Butler and Robson, 2003; Watt, 2008). The residents' previous address is an indicator of how the East Village attracts middle-class individuals coming from wealthy or relatively wealthy areas of the capital. At the same time, even though it would appear that the 50% target of residents living in East London before has almost been met (49%), the amount of gentrifiers who moved to East Village from boroughs such as Hackney and Tower Hamlets, but are not from these areas originally, have contributed to the 49% figure.

4.7.2 Residents' Occupation

This section looks at the East Village residents' occupations by comparing and contrasting them to the 2011 Census data of the Stratford and New Town ward, as well as of Newham as a whole¹³. It also compares and contrasts the residents' socio-economic backgrounds within the various housing tenures between East Village, the ward and the borough.

Table 5 below shows the East Village residents, Stratford/New Town ward and Newham resident NS-SEC¹⁴.

¹³ There is a six years difference between the 2011 Census data and the 2017 EVS. Therefore, they do not correspond to the socio-demographic characteristics of the areas in the same period.

¹⁴ The EVS participants were only asked their occupations. Therefore, their NS-SEC is an approximation derived from the Simplified and Reduced NS-SEC derivation Table n. 10 (Office for National Statistics, 2011).

Table 5: East Village, Stratford/New Town Ward and Newham Residents' NS-SEC

NS-SEC	East Village					Stratford /New Town	Newham
	Social Rent	IMR	Shared / Own.	Private Rent	Total		
1 Higher managerial and Professional	0%	42.1%	25%	27.6%	23.7%	10.7%	6.1%
2 Lower managerial and professional	29.4%	36.8%	47.7%	41.9%	40.5%	20%	14.2%
3 Intermediate occupations	8.8%	5.2%	4.5%	3.8%	4.9%	9.8%	9.4%
4 Small employers and own account workers	5.8%	0%	0%	0.9%	1.4%	9.1%	9.4%
5 Lower supervisory and lower technical	5.8%	0%	0%	0%	0.9%	5.5%	5.7%
6 Semi-routine occupations	11.7%	5.2%	9%	4.7%	6.9%	10.2%	12.8%
7 Routine occupations	8.8%	0%	6.8%	1.9%	3.9%	7.8%	9.5%
8.1 Never worked	14.7%	5.2%	2.2%	2.8%	4.9%	7.1%	11.8%
8.2 Unemployed (economically inactive)	2.9%	0%	0%	0.9%	0.9%	2.3%	2.5%
9 Students	11.7%	5.2%	4.5%	15.2%	11.3%	17.5%(7!	18.7%
Total N = 100%	34	19	44	105	202	14,387	228,958

(Source: EVS, 2017; 2011 Census KS611EW, KS608EW)

Table 5 suggests that, 29.4% of the respondents in social renting are in lower managerial and professional occupations. Five out of ten are in the private sector: two finance officers, a service manager, a social media professional, and an interpreter. The other five are in the public sector: three nurses, a housing officer, and a teacher. Thus, nearly one third of the social rent respondents' socio-economic classification is comparable to

that of those in the other housing tenures. They are middle-class individuals. In addition, 20.5% of social rent respondents have declared that they occupy intermediate, own account, lower technical and lower supervisory positions. They include a legal associate, two public sector workers, a taxi driver, a chef, and two construction workers. They can therefore be considered to be members of the better off working-class. This category is characterised by being on middle-income, and on stable contracts (Beider, 2015). Another 20.5% are in a semi-routine or routine occupation. They are two childcare assistants, two sales assistants, a security worker, and two bus drivers. Thus, they belong to a more precarious working-class, which is characterised by low-income, and flexible jobs (*ibid.*). These figures raise further doubts about the effective contribution that the East Village's socially rented properties can make towards addressing housing need in East London, as the bidding documents claim (Growth Boroughs, 2009; London 2012, 2004). Notably, as a result of the TH employment policy, 70.3% of social renters are employed. What's more, Table 5 suggests that TH's 50% employed tenants at first let target has been exceeded by over 20%. Consequently, only 17.6% have declared themselves to have never worked or be unemployed.

As far as IMR is concerned, the presence of individuals in higher managerial and professional occupations is quite consistent: 42.1%. They are a media producer, a digital manager, an HR manager, a marketing director, a scientist, a civil engineer, and a university professor. Notably, in IMR the number of residents in NS-SEC 1 slightly exceeds that of respondents in NS-SEC 2. The latter account for 36.8% of the sample, and include a retail manager, a store manager, an office manager, a social worker, a midwife, a journalist and a make-up artist. If we consider the difference between private and public/arts sectors in NS-SEC 1 and 2, IMR has 11 participants in the former and four in the latter. Also, there is only one respondent in NS-SEC 3, (an administrator), one in semi-routine occupations (a sales assistant), and one student.

In terms of shared ownership and leasehold respondents, 25% are in NS-SEC 1. They include professions such as IT manager, broker, pharmacist, scientist, university manager, and so forth. The most common category in shared ownership is constituted by residents in lower managerial, administrative and professional occupations, whereby they account for 47.7%. They include professions such as event manager, assessor, web

designer, IT technician, journalist, artist, teacher, nurse, and so forth. With respect to NS-SEC 1 and 2, this tenure has an almost equal split between respondents in the private (17) and those in the public/arts sector (16). Moreover, only 4.5% of the shared owners are in intermediate occupations: a graphic designer and a communications technician. 15.8% are in routine and semi-routine occupations. They include occupations such as sale assistant, bar attender, housekeeper, and van driver. Finally, 2.2% never worked and 4.5% are students.

It is important to highlight that even though IMR and shared ownership are supposed to be affordable housing, they accommodate a high number of residents in higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations. They account for 29% of the overall participants in these two tenures considered together. If we consider NS-SEC 1 and 2, they represent 74%. Therefore, almost three quarters of the shared owners and intermediate renters are middle-class individuals. Conversely, only 22% of these respondents are working-class.

Similarly, private renters are mostly middle-class. 27.6% of these respondents are in higher managerial and professional occupations. There are, for instance, brokers, consultants, engineers, architects, software developers, a surveyor, a marketing director, and so forth. Another 41.9% are in lower managerial and professional occupations, including for example, auditors, finance analysts, investment advisors, a quantity surveyor, a freelance choreographer, trainers, a social worker, a charity worker, teachers, and so forth. If we look at the split between those working in the private and public/arts sectors, 64 participants are in the former and just 9 in the latter. Only 4.7% are in NS-SEC 3, 4 and 5; 6.6% are in routine and semi-routine occupations; and 3.7% are unemployed or never worked. In private rent there is also a considerable number of students: 15.2%. Notably, East Village is quite popular as a place to live among affluent home and international students.

If we look at the overall sample, and compare it to the data of the ward and the borough, we note that East Village is much more affluent than both. Even though Stratford is gentrifying, and the new housing developments are not affordable for the long-time low-income BAME population (Bernstock, 2014; Watt and Bernstock, 2017), East Village still

maintains a distinguished middle-class character within it. The respondents in higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations are 23.7% in the Village. In Stratford/New Town they are 10.7% of the total; while in Newham they only account for 6.1%. Those in lower managerial, administrative and professional occupations are the largest East Village's group, and account for 40.5%. Again, there is a sharp contrast with Stratford and New Town, where they account for 20%, and with Newham as a whole, where they only account for 14.2%. Thus, the percentage of East Village middle-class residents – those in NS-SEC 1 and 2, and without including the probably affluent IMR, shared ownership and private rent students - reaches 64.2%; whereas in Stratford they represent 30.7% and in Newham 20.3% of the population. This is also indicative of how East Village is contributing to the gentrification of the ward and the borough.

Moreover, in the Village there is a total of 7.2% better off working-class residents – NS-SEC 3, 4 and 5; while in Stratford these three categories account for 24.4%, and in Newham for 24.5% of the population. An additional 10.8% are in routine and semi-routine positions in the Village; therefore, they are part of a more precarious working-class, which in Stratford/New Town, and especially in Newham as a whole, is present in more consistent numbers. In the ward they represent 18%, and in the borough 22.3% of the residents. Finally, 5.8% of the EVS participants have never worked or are unemployed; whereas in Stratford/New Town they account for 9.4%, and in the LBN for 14.3% of the population. The presence of relatively fewer working-class residents in the Village, as opposed to a larger presence of these categories in the broader area, is another way to look at the socio-demographic mismatch between East Village on one side, and Stratford and Newham on the other. The divide between East Village, Stratford and Newham can be better highlighted if we look at the intra-tenure socio-economic difference between the three areas. Tables 6, 7 and 8 below do so by looking at social rent, shared ownership/home ownership and private rent respectively.

Table 6: East Village, Stratford/New Town Ward and Newham Social Renters' NS-SEC

NS-SEC	East Village	Stratford and New Town	Newham
1 Higher Managerial and Professional occupations	0%	4.3%	3%
2 Lower managerial and professional occupations	29.4%	15.1 %	12.9%
3 Intermediate occupations	8.8%	12.5%	11.3%
4 Small business employers and own account workers	5.8%	6.2%	7.5%
5 Lower supervisory and lower technical occupations	5.8%	7.2%	7.6%
6 Semi-routine occupations	11.7%	16.8%	18.4%
7 Routine occupations	8.8%	15.6%	16.5%
8 Never worked and Unemployed	17.6%	16.8%	18.6%
9 Students	11.7%	4.9%	3.7%
Total N = 100%	34	2,334	30,082

(Source: (Source: EVS, 2017; 2011 Census QS607EW)

While in East Village 29.4% of the social renters are in NS-SEC 1 and 2, in Stratford and the entire borough, they only account for 19.4% and 15.9% respectively. The social housing units in the ward and the borough house higher numbers of working-class individuals. In East Village, those in NS-SEC 3, 4 and 5 represent 20.5%; in Stratford/New Town they are 25.9%, while in Newham they are 26.4%. Those in routine and semi-routine occupations represent 20.5% in East Village, 32.4% in Stratford, and 34.9% in Newham. The never worked and unemployed categories account for 17.6%, 16.8%, and 18.6% of the three areas respectively. It would appear that in this case East Village is in line with the numbers of the ward and the borough. However, the EVS did not ask if other members of the household were in work; which could therefore be the case of

some of the never worked and unemployed respondents. Finally, the students account for 11.7%, 4.9% and 3.7% of the social renters in the three areas respectively. These data confirm Humphry's (2019) findings of a shift in the East Village's social housing allocation policy from addressing need to market affordability. Drawing on interview data, this author suggests that those whom have been allocated these housing units are wealthier than social renters normally are (Humphry, 2019). However, the EVS provides more precise evidence that this is the case; and that, contrary to the ward and the borough, the majority of East Village's social renters are either middle-class (29.4%) or better off working-class (20.5%). There is an even sharper difference with regards to shared owners.

Table 7: East Village, Stratford/New Town Ward and Newham Shared Owners/Owners' NS-SEC

NS-SEC	East Village	Stratford and New Town	Newham
1 Higher Managerial and Professional occupations	25%	20.8%	11.3%
2 Lower managerial and professional occupations	47.7%	32.6%(23!)	23.6%
3 Intermediate occupations	4.5%	13.1%	13.1%
4 Small business employers and own account workers	0%	8.6%	12.1%
5 Lower supervisory and lower technical occupations	0%	5%	9.1%
6 Semi-routine occupations	9%	9.4%	13.9%
7 Routine occupations	6.8%	4.6%	11%
8 Never worked and Unemployed	2.2%	2.8%	4.8%
9 Students	4.5%	2.5%	1.8%
Total N = 100%	44	1,810	35,626

(Source: EVS, 2017; 2011 Census QS607EW)

Table 7 above shows that while 72.7% - therefore almost three quarters – of the East Village’s home owners and shared owners are in higher and lower managerial and professional positions, 52.6% - slightly over half - of Stratford and only 34.9% of Newham’s owners have similar backgrounds. Stratford and New Town’s figure is seventeen-point seven percentile points higher than the borough as a whole; but again, both the ward and the borough’s homeowners’ backgrounds are considerably lower-class compared to East Village. Thus, only 4.5% of the Village’s owners and shared owners are in intermediate, own account, lower supervisory and technical occupations, while this group accounts for 26.7% of the ward, and 34.3% of the borough’s residents in this tenure. East Village is more aligned to Stratford in terms of the percentage of

owners in semi-routine and routine occupations, whereby the former accounts for 15.8%, while the latter for 14%. The Newham percentage is at 24.9%. There are not significant differences with regards to the unemployed and those who never worked. They account for 2.2%, 2.8% and 4.8% of the three areas respectively. Finally, 4.5%, 2.5%, and 1.8% of the Village, Stratford and Newham owners are students.

Table 8: East Village, Stratford/New Town Ward and Newham Private Renters' NS-SEC

NS-SEC	East Village	Stratford and New Town	Newham
1 Higher Managerial and Professional occupations	27.6%	15.9%	8.9%
2 Lower managerial and professional occupations	41.9%	25.2%	16.4%
3 Intermediate occupations	3.8%	9.9%	7.6%
4 Small business employers and own account workers	0.9%	11.7%	14.9%
5 Lower supervisory and lower technical occupations	0%	6%	7.4%
6 Semi-routine occupations	4.7%	8.1%	13.4%
7 Routine occupations	1.9%	7.4%	11.2%
8 Never worked and Unemployed	3.8%	3.8%	9.2%
9 Students	15.2%	11.6%	10.6%
Total N = 100%	105	3,192	35,776

(Source: EVS, 2017; 2011 Census QS607EW)

There is a sharp contrast with regards to private renters as well. 69.5% of those living in East Village are in NS-SEC 1 and 2, while 41.1% of the Stratford and just 25.3% of the Newham residents in this tenure belong to the same groups. 4.7% of East Village, 27.6% of Stratford, and 29.9% of Newham's private renters are in NS-SEC 3, 4, and 5. Moreover,

6.4%, 15.5%, and 24.6% of the three areas respectively are in semi-routine and routine occupations. An equal percentage of East Village and Stratford private renters are unemployed: 3.8%; while the figure regarding the borough is higher: 9.2%. Finally, students represent 15.2%, 11.6% and 10.6% of the three areas respectively. These findings show the contrast between the PRS in the Village, which attracts middle-class individuals, and the same housing tenure elsewhere in Newham, which, due to the shrinking number of social housing in the last three decades, has increasingly accommodated lower-income households (Minton, 2012; Shelter, 2013; Watt, 2018a, b).

The discussion of Tables 5, 6, 7 and 8 demonstrates that the new housing developments in Stratford are attracting growing numbers of middle-class individuals (Bernstock, 2014; Watt and Bernstock, 2017); whereas the wider borough remains predominantly working-class. However, the distinctive middle-class character of East Village emerges even within the Stratford gentrifying context. The neighbourhood's social renters have more affluent socio-economic backgrounds than those in the ward and the borough. The same consideration applies to shared/home owners and private renters. What is also significant is that, despite shared ownership is supposed to be an affordable housing product, the percentage of middle-class shared owners in East Village (72.7%) is higher than the percentage of middle-class private renters (69.9%). This suggests that, rather than addressing housing need in East London, or even just accommodating middle-income individuals, the presence of non-genuinely affordable housing products has contributed to the formation of the middle-class character of the neighbourhood.

4.7.3 Residents' Age

Table 9 below shows the East Village, Stratford ward and Newham's residents' age.

Table 9: East Village, Stratford/New Town Ward and Newham Residents' Age

Age Group	East Village					Stratford/New Town	Newham
	Social Rent	IMR	Shared Owners/ Own.	Private Rent	EV Total		
18 – 24	10.2%	10%	17.3%	33%	23.2%	20%	17.8%
25 – 44	74.3%	80%	73.9%	59.4%	67.2%	55.8%	50.8%
45 – 64	15.3%	5%	8.6%	7.5%	9%	17.4%	22.3%
65 and over	0%	5%	0%	0%	0.4%	6.7%	8.9%
Total N=100%	39	20	46	106	211	14,720	230,176

(Source: EVS, 2017; 2011 Census KS102EW, KS102EW)

The above table suggests that the East Village population is very young. Notably, the 25 – 44 category has the highest number of residents in all of the housing tenures: 74.3% in social rent, 80% in IMR, 73.9% in shared ownership, and 59.4% in private rent. Although the latter tenure has the smallest percentage of residents in this group, it has the highest of the 18 – 24 group: one third of private renters (33%), whereas the 18 – 24s account for less than 20% in the other tenures (17.3% in shared ownership, 10.2% in social rent and 10% in IMR). The 45 – 64 population is rather low. Its numbers reach 15.3% in social housing only, whereas this category accounts for 5% of the intermediate renters, 8.6% of the shared owners and only 7.5% of the private renters. However, it is impressive that only one participant in the whole sample is 65 and over. This suggests that elderly individuals are barely present in East Village.

Overall, the social rent population, while still rather young, tends to be slightly more middle aged than the other tenures' populations. On the contrary, thanks to the consistent presence of university students, the private rent population is the youngest.

Moreover, elderly people seem to be alienated from the neighbourhood. An older population almost does not exist. If we compare the East Village residents' age with that of the residents in the wider areas we notice that the former is younger than the latter. 23.2% of the EVS participants are aged between 18 and 24, while equals in age account for 20% of the Stratford /New Town and 17.8% of the LBN residents. The largest gaps are in the 25 – 44 group. 67.2% of the East Village, 55.8% of the Stratford/New Town and 50.8% of the Newham populations are in this category. Therefore, there is an 11.4% gap between the Village and the rest of the Stratford area, and a 17.2% gap with Newham as a whole. There are significant differences in the 45 – 64 group as well, whereby just 9% of the Village population is in this category; while 17.4% of Stratford/New Town, and 22.3% of Newham residents are in this group. Again, the 65 and over individuals living in East Village are very few. Only one of the participants in the survey was in this group, whereas they represent 6.7% and 8.9% of the Stratford/New Town and Newham populations respectively.

Thus, our early consideration that East Village is a suitable place to live for early career, young professionals and students who can afford upmarket accommodation is confirmed by the data on age. As we will see in the following chapters, this is not random, but it is an expected outcome, as the East Village's public space and neighbourhood facilities are constructed to promote a young middle-class lifestyle. The distinguished character with respect to the surrounding areas emerges even in relation to the residents' age, whereby the East Village's residents are much younger than their neighbours in Stratford and Newham as a whole.

4.7.4 Residents' Ethnic Background

Elahi and Khan (2016) highlight that in 2011, Newham was the third most unequal among the 32 London boroughs in terms of health, employment, education and housing. There are relatively small differences between white British and ethnic minorities such as black Africans and Asians. However, housing inequalities are broader, with a 24% gap between the former and the latter (*ibid.*). East Village does not follow Newham's trend. Table 10 below shows that this neighbourhood is a white enclave in an ethnically diverse

borough. As we saw in Chapter 2, these islands of similarity have increased in number in the 21st century UK context (Bauman, 2003; Cattle and Kaufmann, 2015; Neal et al., 2017).

Table 10: East Village, Stratford/New Town Ward and Newham Residents' Ethnic Background

Ethnic group	East Village					Stratford/ New Town	Newham
	Social Rent	IMR	Shared Own. /Owners	Private Rent	Total		
White British	15.3%	50%	47.8%	42.8%	39.7%	20.9%	16.7%
White Other	5.1%	25%	30.4 %	21.9%	21%	19,7%	12.2%
Black	53.8%	10%	4.3%	11.4%	17.7%%	21.3%	19.6%
Asian	15.3%	5% (1!)	13%	20.9%	16.7%	28.3%	43.5%
Mixed	7.6%	10%	4.3%	2.8%	4.7%	5.5%	4.5%
Other	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	3.5%
Total N=100%	39	20	46	105	209	17,768	307,984

(Source: EVS, 2017; 2011 Census KS201EW, KS201EW)

The table shows that 60.7% of the East Village sample has a white background, with white British accounting for 39.7%. In addition, ethnic minorities account for 39.1% of the population. We can observe how the ethnic make-up of East Village contrasts to that of Stratford, where 59.1% of the population is BAME, and the LBN, where 71.1% of the population has a BAME background. Conversely, only 40.6% of Stratford, and 28.9% of Newham's residents are white. The white British, whom are the relative majority in the Village, only account for 20.9% and 16.7% of the ward and the borough respectively.

Shared ownership with 78.2%, IMR with 75%, and private rent with 64.7% present high concentrations of white individuals. Notably, the two so called affordable housing tenures have a larger proportion of white residents than private rent. Thus, their

capacity to attract privileged incomers has both, a classed element – as described above, and a racialised one. These figures, contrary to broader trends, are to some extent comparable to Elahi and Khan's (2016) findings, which show that there is a wide gap in housing inequalities between white people and ethnic minorities in Newham. In fact, these tenures have a rather low BAME population: in shared ownership this accounts for 21.7%; in IMR for 25%; in private rent the BAME percentage is higher, although this is still a minority: 35.1%. This suggests two things. Firstly, the great majority of the residents who have been able to access home ownership in East Village are white, with 47.8% being white British (almost half of the homeowners). On the contrary, only 21.7% of the shared owners are BAME. Secondly, if we sum up the participants in IMR, shared ownership and private rent, we find out that 79.5%, more than three quarters of the most affluent residents, have a white background, with 45% being white British. In addition, only 30.5% of the residents in these three tenures are from minority ethnic groups. Moreover, private rent and shared ownership are the most international tenures: 51% of the private renters and 50% of the shared owners have a non-British background. Combined with the data in Table 5, regarding the various tenures' socio-economic characteristics, this suggests that, contrary to what indicated by the data on the residents' previous address – which show where they lived before moving to East Village, and not where they are from originally - also a large part of shared ownership properties have accommodated members of the cosmopolitan middle classes.

If we analyse the data regarding social housing, the proportions that we have observed in the other three tenures are reversed: 76.7% have a BAME background, whereas only 20.4% are white, with white British people accounting for 15.3%. Nonetheless, we must bear in mind that 29.4% of the social renters are in lower managerial and professional occupations, and another 20.5% are in intermediate, own account and lower supervisory positions. Therefore, they are not as deprived as the BAME individuals who live in the rest of Stratford and Newham (Elahi and Khan, 2016). If we consider socio-economic differences within ethnic minorities (Barwick, 2018), as Table 11 below does, we find confirmation that the BAME individuals living in East Village are from a higher occupational class.

Table 11: East Village Ethnic Groups' NS-SEC

NS-SEC	White British	White Other	Black	Asian	Mixed	Total
1 Higher managerial and professional	29%	14%	12%	30%	40%	24%
2 Lower managerial and professional	45%	50%	41%	24%	10%	40%
3 Intermediate occupations	4%	7%	6%	6%	0%	5%
4 Small employers and own account workers	0%	5%	3%	0%	0%	1%
5 Lower supervisory and lower technical	0%	0%	6%	0%	0%	1%
6 Semi-routine occupations	7%	5%	9%	6%	10%	7%
7 Routine occupations	0%	9%	3%	3%	20%	3%
8.1 Not working	7%	0%	12%	6%	10%	6%
8.2 Unemployed	0	2%	3%	0%	0%	1 %
9 Students	8%	9%	6%	24%	10%	11%
Total N = 100%	83	44	34	33	10	204

(Source: EVS, 2017)

The above data show that the white British and white other groups are unsurprisingly well off, with the former being the most affluent ethnic group in East Village. 74% of the white British and 64% of the white other groups are in higher or lower managerial and professional occupations, which are associated with a middle-class background. 4% and 12% respectively are in intermediate, own account, lower supervisory and lower technical occupations, which can be associated with a better off working-class background. Moreover, only 7% of the white British and 14% of the white Other groups are in semi-routine and routine occupations; while just 7% of the white British and 2% of the white other are not working or unemployed. Routine, semi-routine occupations

and unemployed can be associated with more precarious working-class backgrounds. Finally, 8% and 9% of both groups are students.

Notably, the white other group is not significantly more affluent than ethnic minorities living in East Village, whom are not as deprived as those who live elsewhere in Stratford/New Town and Newham. With regards to the Black residents, 53% occupy the two highest NS-SEC categories. 15% are in intermediate, own account, lower supervisory and technical occupations. Those in semi-routine and routine occupations amount to 12%, whereas another 15% are not working or unemployed. Finally, 6% are students. Moreover, 54% of the Asians are in higher or lower managerial and professional occupations; 6% are in intermediate occupations; 9% are in semi-routine and routine positions; 6% are not working; and 24% are students. The number of Asian students is the highest of all the ethnic groups, as East Village is home to many of them. The mixed ethnic background participants are slightly less affluent than the other ethnic groups: 50% of them are in NS-SEC 1 and 2; 30% are in routine and semi-routine occupations; 10% are not working; and another 10% are students.

Overall, 59% of the BAME individuals who live in East Village do not experience the same degree of deprivation as those in the rest of Newham. 53% of them are middle-class individuals, whereas an additional 6% are in intermediate, own account and lower technical positions. They can therefore be considered part of those second generation migrants described by Butler and Hamnett (2011). As we saw in Chapter 2, an opening up of educational and employment opportunities, which were not available to their parents, encouraged them to develop middle-class aspirations (*ibid.*). If we sum up those in more precarious job conditions (NS-SEC 6 and 7), those not working, and the unemployed (NS-SEC 8.1 and 8.2), we find out that a rather low percentage of BAME East Villagers are part of the worse off working-class: 23%. Therefore, contrary to the Newham's broader trend, East Village mostly accommodates relatively affluent BAME individuals.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed how public authorities, GLL and TH have interpreted and implemented the policy aims to “tackle exclusion” (IOC, 2002) and deliver “Homes for all” (Growth Boroughs, 2009). It has also described the East Village’s housing configuration and costs. Finally, the chapter has provided an indication of the socio-demographic composition of the neighbourhood.

QDD – and GLL on its behalf – is interested in rental growth, which inflates the affordable housing costs within the Village and the rent levels in the wider Stratford area (Watt and Bernstock, 2017). Moreover, they are focused on control, which, as we will see in the next chapters, they use to construct the neighbourhood in a way that stimulates the dispositions of young, white, middle-class, early career professionals on relatively short-term leases. This business model is similar to that of a hotel, whereby there is a frequent turnover of residents, and the community assumes a transient character. TH’s focus on employment, rent affordability, and behaviour aim at selecting the least marginal of the social renters, and reproduce the exclusion of those individuals deemed to lack “positive” values and habits. Thus, the priorities of the neoliberal state are tightly linked to symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 2005). A public policy that aims at delivering affordable/social housing through the Olympics and PPPs legitimises the logics of social inequality.

The EVS provides an indication of how the landlords’ policies and vision reflect in the residents’ socio-demographic background. The majority of participants come from affluent areas of London. Moreover, nearly two thirds of the sample are in higher and lower managerial and professional occupations. A comparison of the EVS with the 2011 Census data indicates the distinguished middle-class character of East Village with respect to Stratford and the LBN as a whole. Almost one third of the EVS social rent participants are in middle-class occupations; while in Stratford and New Town they represent less than 20%. There appears to be a contrast also by comparing the data on ethnicity. Thus, over 60% of the EVS participants are white; whereas approximately 40% of Stratford and less than one third of the LBN populations have a white background. Finally, almost 60% of the BAME EVs participants are in middle-class or better off

working-class occupations; whereas the majority of BAME Stratford and LBN's residents are in a more precarious working-class occupation.

These ideas will be further extended in Chapter 5, which examines to what degree the housing tenure distribution, and the way semi-private space is constructed foster social mixing or construct difference.

Chapter 5

Mixing and Othering at Home and in Semi-Private Space

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on how security features, the tenure distribution, and the way in which semi-private space is constructed foster social mixing or construct difference. It also discusses the residents' sense of community and belonging generated in the fields of housing and semi-private space. Finally, it examines to what degree the latter field is suitable for social interactions. The chapter draws on documents and data from interviews with East Village residents and managers. Section 5.2 highlights space securitisation, the policymakers' claims related to delivering a tenure-blind development and the social consequences of the housing tenure configuration. Section 5.3 analyses the various East Village communities' sense of belonging and interactions. Section 5.4 discusses the stigmatisation of social renters. Section 5.5 draws attention to the ways in which the management settles disputes between residents. Section 5.6 concludes the chapter with an analytical discussion of the research evidence presented. It is argued that East Village is composed of multiple GCs, where residents develop a temporary sense of belonging. Design and the freeholder's policies thwart the intentions of social mixing.

5.2 Security, Flats, and Tenure: Mixing or Othering?

The interview with a QDD manager has highlighted that East Village's design has been elaborated in collaboration with Secured by Design (SBD). SBD is a police initiative that specialises in design and security features for new and refurbished homes, commercial premises and car parks, by promoting quality security and crime prevention projects. It supports the principles of "designing out crime" through physical security processes (Securedbydesign.com). In effect, security was a key component in the plans for East Village and the whole of the QEOP (Minton, 2012). Social space needs to be captured

and defended in order to generate categories of distinction (Bourdieu, 1986a). There is a dialectic relationship between orderly middle-class space and disorderly working-class space. As highlighted in Chapter 2, such a dialectic relationship is experienced as fear of crime. Bauman (2003) and Atkinson and Blandy (2013) argue that in the current era of globalisation, white middle-class individuals are increasingly demonstrating the tendency to live in highly securitised condominia, as a response to the anxiety generated by urban diversity and heterogeneity. These considerations are central to the GLL's vision of the neighbourhood. Fear of crime could be viewed as a disadvantage in the minds of affluent prospective tenants who could decide not to rent a flat with GLL, if they feel threatened by real or perceived criminal activities. Thus, SBD has supported GLL, by evaluating East Village to ensure high security, and offering inputs on a number of key standards (Securedbydesign.com). If we follow Bauman (2003) and Atkinson and Blandy (2013), both of whom include blocks of flats and condominia with secure entry doors in their conception of GCs, we can consider the 11 East Village plots as multiple gated communities, where strangers have not got access. As illustrated in Figure 3 below, the Village's plots are equipped with secured doors to access the various blocks of flats, and gates to access the internal courtyards. These features are meant to keep strangers out, as the harsh reaction that two women had to my visit, when I was looking for interviewees during fieldwork, demonstrates (See Chapter 3). Each door and gate is monitored by a camera. Furthermore, as mentioned in Chapter 4, residents need to sign up to a set of rules and regulations and contractual obligations regarding financial contributions for the maintenance of communal areas, as well as prescriptions over the way they can be used. This is another key characteristic that defines GCs (Atkinson and Blandy, 2013; Low, 2004). Security features will be further discussed in Chapter 6, which will examine public space in the neighbourhood.

Figure 3: East Village's Secured Doors and Gates



(Source: Piero Corcillo)

In an article written for *The Guardian*, Dale Meredith – former managing director of TH – notes that there is a slight difference in quality and interior design between the TH and GLL housing units, and they are located in separate buildings with different entrances (Meredith, 2012). During fieldwork, I visited and discussed the features of several flats with their residents. In reality, there are not many differences between PRS, IMR, and shared ownership properties. They generally have open plan living areas and hard floors. They are also equipped with high-quality appliances. In contrast, the socially rented accommodation – with the exception of those adapted for disabled people – have carpets, a separate kitchen and living room, and lower quality appliances. The flats' interior therefore differs substantially depending on whether they are for social rent or another housing tenure. This goes contrary to the authorities' claim that they will provide all residents with the same treatment and opportunities, regardless of their wealth level (*ibid.*). Different features in the flat seems to be a marker of social difference in the field of housing, especially for female social renters:

“What I don’t like, cause I’m a social housing tenant, so my layout is different to shared owners or private renters. So I’ve got separate kitchen and living room, and I have carpet in the hallway and all over, but not in the kitchen. And carpet is not good! Because the colour is like cream. It’s kind of dirty now through the kids. And so that’s what I don’t like about my flat, the carpet”.

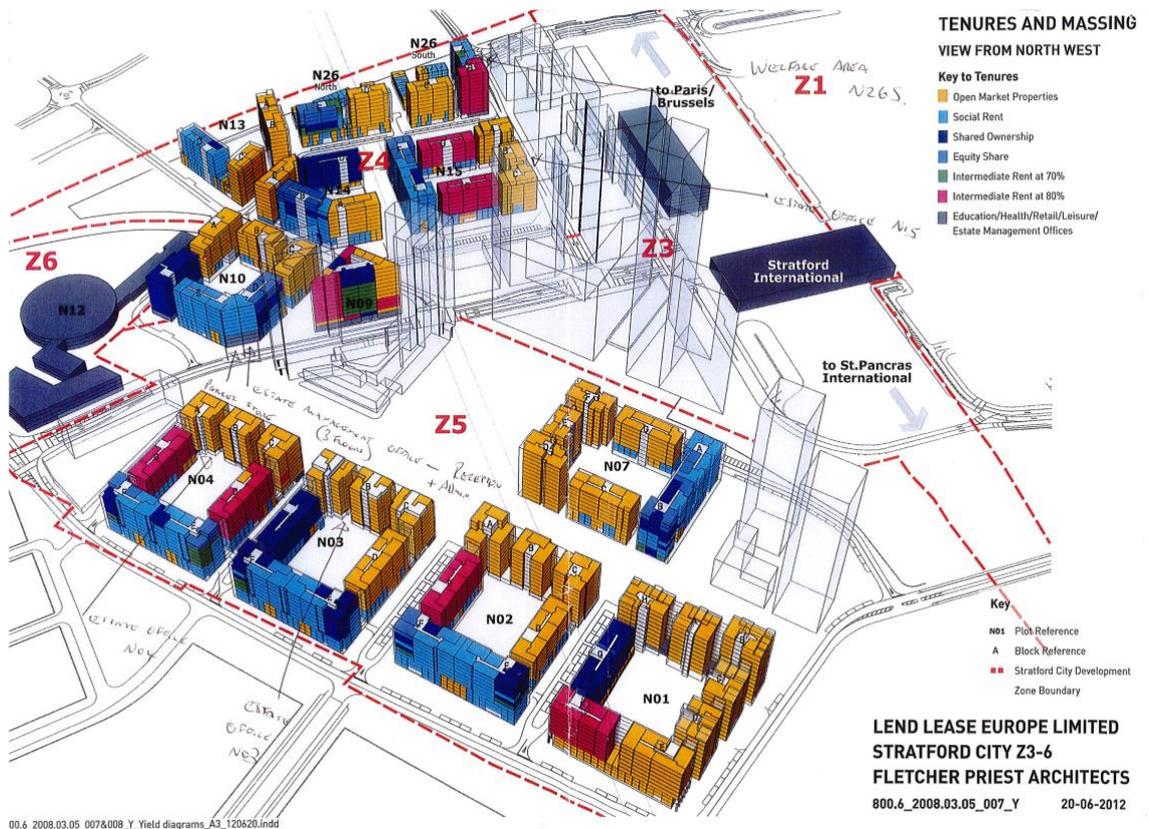
(Jane, Female, Mixed ethnic background, Unemployed single mother, Social renter)

Jane’s demand for cleanliness, practicality and a more fashionable open plan design conceals a demand for symbolic goods that would align her with the shared owners and private renters that she knows through being involved in EVRA. They are the possessors of the legitimate lifestyle within the neighbourhood field. What seems to bother Jane more than anything else, is that her neighbours have hard floors, which look nicer and are easier to keep clean, whereas she has carpet. As discussed in Chapter 2, describing the working classes as materially dirty, and therefore morally impure, has been used as a vehicle of symbolic violence to pathologise them (McKenzie, 2015). Therefore, working-class women are particularly concerned with showing that they are of a higher class (Skeggs, 1997).

Notwithstanding the differences between social rent flats and other properties, Meredith (2012) highlights that TH and GLL housing units share large common spaces such as courtyards. Externally, the scheme is meant to be tenure blind, such that no one knows where the various tenures are distributed, and there is no exterior differentiation between the blocks. However, Jane’s experience demonstrates that residents are aware of the differences between the various housing tenures and get a sense of their social meaning. We are left with the impression that when the tenures’ layout and distribution were designed, TH did not fully acknowledge their potential social consequences. Figures 4 and 5 below show the housing tenure distribution across East Village’s plots, from two different perspectives¹⁵.

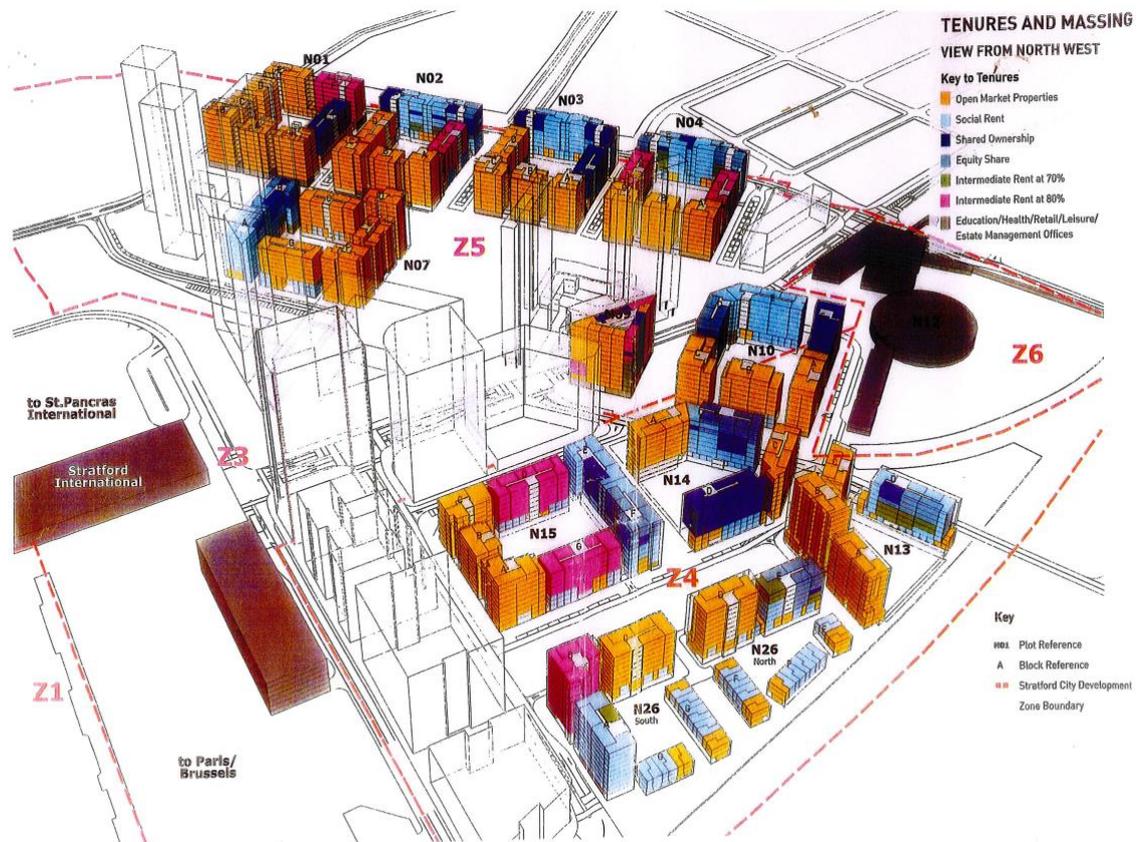
¹⁵ The dotted constructions are the 6 plots for which QDD has got planning permission. These tower blocks will host 6,000 additional residents. At the time of writing, those in the middle of Victory Park have been finished, while the others are being or will be built in the coming years. They will provide 2,000 additional apartments for PRs only.

Figure 4: Housing Tenure Distribution in East Village (Perspective A)



(Source: TH, 2015a)

Figure 5: Housing Tenure Distribution in East Village (Perspective B)



(Source: TH, 2015b)

With regards to the tenure distribution across the Village, Objective 1 of the TH Letting Strategy highlights that the ODA has agreed a portfolio of tenures with QDD and TH, which provide residents with different options (TH, 2012a: 3). Where viable – the document explains – the tenures have been pepper-potted to avoid an over-concentration of one type of tenure (*ibid.*). Nevertheless, Figures 4 and 5 suggest that this “where possible” has translated to “very rarely” in the actual configuration.

The separation between GLL and TH blocks suggests that a real mix of tenures within the buildings was not a genuine part of the plan. Even though GLL and TH buildings share a courtyard within each plot, and each block has internal access to it, residents can only enter and exit their own block from the courtyard. Moreover, within certain blocks, we can observe a high concentration of socially rented flats, which in the charts are indicated in blue. Similarly, some TH blocks are almost entirely, and in certain cases totally for shared ownership, which on the maps is indicated in red. Even in the buildings where

there is a mix of shared ownership, IMR and social housing, the various tenures are often located in different floors, and socially rented flats tend to be concentrated on the lower levels. One is therefore left with the impression that the aim was to set the tenure distribution in a way that kept the most affluent residents separated from the least affluent ones. Such a separation has had two main consequences. Firstly, it has facilitated the construction of social difference, as the people who live there know where the various tenures are located. Secondly, combined with the securitisation that we discussed above, it has not facilitated social interaction between neighbours with different socio-economic backgrounds. As Olga, a social renter, has highlighted:

“Neighbours in the other buildings... I don’t know anyone [...]. Do you know I used to live in Rolle Road, near Belsize Road and Abbey Road [Camden]. There buildings are designed front to front. So the neighbours used to see each other and our children used to play together. That for me was a community. I knew all my neighbours; I could leave my daughter there to go and grab something and come back. There was a community! Here they try to make a community. However, I think it’s difficult to be a community when the buildings are designed in a way that we’re kind of locked away from each other”. (Olga, Female, Black European, Single mother, Own account hairdresser, Social renter)

As highlighted in Chapter 2, Davidson (2010) points out that in the context of third wave policy-led gentrification, a lack of social mixing cannot simply be interpreted as another policy failure. Rather, we need to acknowledge that, in spite of policymakers’ claims (Meredith, 2012), social distinction continues to operate and be structured within the neighbourhood context (Davidson, 2010). According to Butler and Robson (2003) the London middle classes have an awareness that they need to learn how to live with diversity. Thus, they set out coping strategies that allow them to live in close proximity with it, and, at the same time, to limit contact. In East Village simultaneous proximity and distance from the “other” is part of the readymade package that middle-class residents buy from the landlords. The quotes below show that on the one hand, this becomes a source of symbolic power because “difference” is kept in separate floors and blocks. On the other hand, the presence of the “other” is considered a source of cultural capital, even though very limited contact is made with it. The tenure distribution generates categories of distinction in East Village, by reinforcing an othering process through the identification of “us” and “them”. As discussed in Chapter 2, Bourdieu

(1986a) argues that this differentiation is necessary for the accumulation of symbolic capital. Sibley (1995) notes how the process of othering can take a racialised form, as the desire to fetishise and to fear difference is a condition of existence:

It registers in nervousness about other cultures or about things out of place. Yet, the urge to make separations between clean and dirty, ordered and disordered, us and them, that is to expel the abject, is encouraged in western cultures creating feelings of anxiety, because such separations can never be finally achieved (Sibley, 1995: 9).

Moreover, if we focus on Plot N 01 in figures 9 and 10, we note that it is the closest to the Olympic Park, and therefore the most desirable and economically valuable. The plot does not contain any social rent property. In addition, the buildings that directly face the Olympic Park in the same plot are entirely for either private rent or shared ownership. Once again, there is a sense that, as Davidson (2010) would put it, this is not a policy failure. On the contrary, the landlords have deliberately planned to allocate these buildings to wealthy renters and homeowners who are able to invest higher amounts of economic capital to live close to nature.

5.3 The East Village Communities

Limited tenure mix and space securitisation have facilitated the formation of different communities in East Village. In addition to encompassing various tenures in different locations within the neighbourhood, they are also based on the length of the residents' leases, as well as their class and socio-ethnic status.

5.3.1 Private and Intermediate Renters: A Transient Community

As discussed in Chapter 2, Bauman (2003) argues that in a rapidly globalising world, members of the middle and upper classes are becoming increasingly mobile. Thanks to their higher education degrees and advanced skillsets, they can continuously change job, neighbourhood, city and even country if things get too uncomfortable for them. This has led to a more liquid and transient form of community, especially in global cities like London (Sassen, 1991), where young professionals do not fully commit to a specific

place. With respect to this tendency, Butler and Robson (2003) note that the lives of the new middle classes are characterised by insecurity and flexibility to the extent that nothing – including their residential choices – is long-term. They can easily break the links with their neighbourhood and move elsewhere if necessary. Allen and Watt (forthcoming) describe the concept of transience as a lack of neighbourliness and social interaction, which is mostly the result of tenants being on short-term leases. Chapter 4 has highlighted that the high level of residential turnover is taken into account, and to some extent is influenced by QDD's policies, which render East Village similar to a hotel in which young early career professionals and students stay until their flexible life circumstances change and they leave. Thus, as in the case of Allen and Watt (*ibid.*) research in post suburban England, they generate low levels of social interaction. For them, it is an easy commute into the City, Canary Warf and Central London, where they study, work and find sources of cultural capital. They tend to share flats with other professionals or students – and in some cases with their partners - given the high rental costs. Often, the only neighbourly relationships that they establish are those with their flatmates or friends who live there, but who they met elsewhere. They are not interested in establishing social networks with other East Villagers, as they are aware that they will not live there for a long time. Most of them say that their neighbours are very friendly, but they only meet them randomly and occasionally. For instance, Mei notes that her interaction with the neighbours is very limited:

“We don't really communicate. I mean sometimes we just get a parcel and they get a parcel for us. There's not much interaction. We rarely see them, maybe once or twice a month in the hallways”. (Mei, Female, Asian, Student, Private renter)

Jack perceives a sense of belonging and moral ownership based on aesthetics. This makes him feel proud of his residential choice. Nevertheless, his sense of belonging and community cohesion are not based on social networks with neighbours:

“I never see them! [the neighbours]. I never see them, I never hear them, but everyone I do come across in the Village is just very nice. They all have this feeling that you are quite proud to live here, if you know what I mean. It's nice built! The people who I come across are always very nice, but I don't come across them very much. I've been here for 10 months and I've seen people on my floor less than 10 times. I just never see anyone, I don't know why”. (Jack, Male, White British, Self-employed estate agent, Private renter).

Intermediate renters have similar experiences. Although they have a different landlord (TH instead of GLL), they rent as well, and they have comparable demographic profiles to those of private renters. The quotes from Zara and Kalidou below mention friendly relationships but low levels of interaction with neighbours:

“To be honest I don’t see them very often. You know just when you go down the lift and you might see them and say hello. Occasionally we might just send them some food or something, but we’re just so busy with our lonely world that we don’t interact as much with our neighbours”. (Zara, Female, Asian, Researcher, Intermediate renter)

“There are people who I’ve met around here that if I need some sort of assistance either because they know the neighbourhood better than I do or something like that I can ask them for advice. If I want a cube of sugar or if I want an extra tea bag yes! But you know there’s a limit to how far I would go with that. I wouldn’t say that the neighbours are my best friends”. (Kalidou, Male, Black African, Entrepreneur, Intermediate renter)

The most long-standing private renters, who have lived in East Village for a few years, highlight the transient character of the East Village community. For them, it is challenging to establish relationships, as most of the people do not remain for a long period of time. For example, Michael and Anna are in their 50s, unlike their neighbours whom tend to be much younger. In addition to the high residential turnover, for them it is difficult to become friends with individuals in their 20s and 30s, because their lifestyles are different:

“I just see them [the neighbours] coming and going. Now we don’t do so much together. Before we used to have a party, get together once every couple of months or some. But people who lived here who moved out, I’m still friend with. The ones who lived on my floor we became good friends, so we still stay in touch. The new ones I see them once a week, just walking not meets, just in the hallways “. (Michael, Male, White Canadian, Self-employed marketing expert, Private renter)

“We don’t see them [the neighbours] that much. They work a lot. We would meet them now and then and they are next door. They are younger and they have a young child, so we just do different things. And the flat over there [on the other side of the hallway] has had many people moving in and out quite a lot and now I don’t know them. Now they are three guys living together, but there’s always some of them moving out and another moving in. So I don’t know them as much as in the beginning.” (Anna, Female, White European, Housewife, Private renter)

These insights confirm Butler and Robson's (2003) and Butler's (2007) findings about regenerated neighbourhoods in the London Docklands, where middle-class newcomers generate low levels of social interaction. In contrast to other Inner London case studies, the action of developers rather than the collective action of middle-class groups, have created neighbourhoods like East Village and those in the Docklands. Therefore, they did not need to come together and establish relationships to make sure that their neighbourhoods are shaped in their own image (Bacqué et al., 2015).

The residents who are involved in community activities have a different view. John, for example, works as a waiter in one of East Village's cafés. He just does this to keep himself busy and to meet other East Villagers, as his partner has a managerial post in an IT company, which guarantees them a high level of disposable income. They live with their daughter and moved to the UK from the USA for a life change. However, they plan to go back to the US within six months of the interview. John's description of his residential experience is comparable to a holiday. Thus, the East Village "hotel" is perfect for him. He and his partner are very willing to mix, and tend to see everything in a positive light:

"We get on well with the neighbours; we have a lot of friends in the building as well as in the community, so great! [...]. I see them every day because our children go to school together, or I have coffee with them, or social... We've just been social, or I just talk to them on the phone".

(John, Male, White American, Waiter, Private renter)

The transient character of many of East Village's private and intermediate renters' residential experiences limits their attitude toward mixing. As we saw in Chapter 4, private rent and IMR properties make up 62% of the East Village flats (1,787 out of 2,818 properties). In addition, 2,000 flats are going to be built in the next few years, and they will all be for private rent. Therefore, the transient character of the community will probably increase. These residents have declared their love for living in East Village, and display a sense of elective belonging (Savage et al., 2005). Their claim for moral ownership over the neighbourhood is based on aesthetics, the presence of trendy retail and sport facilities, vicinity to central London and its sources of cultural capital, as well as modern transport links (see Chapters 6 and 7). However, they are young. Their sense of belonging is temporary and lasts as long as their life circumstances change. For some, this is related to their desire to buy a house. For others, it is related to their job:

“Yes! While I’m still renting I’d definitely like to stay here and if I could buy here I would. But you know it does not actually seem like you could actually buy here [because it is mostly a rental place]. But one of the things I like is that QDD as the freeholder they really look after the place. So when I buy I will certainly look outside the Village”. (Jack, Male, White British, Self-employed estate agent, Private renter)

“I’d definitely like to stay. I don’t think I can but I’d like to stay. In terms of flat size we’d like to buy a 2-bed. We are thinking about having children or maybe not, so it would give us an option. But then if we have kids we’d have to move out very quickly. So yes we’d like to buy a 2-bed but I don’t think we can afford here”. (Rhys, Male, White British, Software engineer, Intermediate renter)

“I’d like to stay here but it depends on my job ‘cause I move for job reasons. I’d really like to stay but because of my job I have to move around. So like in August probably I have to change job”. (Kevita, Asian, Female, Doctor, Private renter)

While developing a special relationship with East Village, due to short-term leases, the desire to buy a house, the ever-changing job market and a need for social reproduction, private and intermediate renters’ sense of belonging has a temporary character.

5.3.2 The Power of Owning: Shared Owners and Leaseholders

Bourdieu (1991) argues that in order to convert one’s economic capital into symbolic capital, the former must be recognised as legitimate by peers. Watt (2009a) notes that this can happen in the field of housing, where middle-class individuals display their economic power in the housing market by purchasing a house. This guarantees them recognition and prestige. Allen and Watt (forthcoming) point out that middle-class homeowners invest in their neighbourhoods for the long-term. They form common bonds, and utilise the power of owning to distance themselves from working-class renters (*ibid.*; Watt, 2009a). Low (2004) argues that middle-class American homeowners like buying into GCs where cleanliness and order are protected by rules and regulations. The physical appearance of their block is the most important thing, and they maintain a strict separation between the value of money and neighbourly love. This happens because buying a house is their financial investment, and in many cases, homeowners put all they have into it (Low, 2004). However, Bourdieu (2005: 22) notes that

considering a house purchase as a mere financial investment would be imitating. In fact, this represents an instrument of social reproduction, and embodies individuals' taste and lifestyle. Therefore, it needs to be considered an emotional investment as well.

Similar instances can be identified in the residential experience of shared owners and leaseholders in East Village. The mutual recognition of prestige, the emotional investment in their house and neighbourhood, and the creation of common bonds is evident in the words of Katy:

"I know every neighbour on my floor. I think that's because when my block was built and because they are all owners, everyone's been there since day one. So I think that's why it's unique! And it's nice because if I go away and there is an issue I can always count on them. And actually that's how I met my boyfriend we are living in the same building". (Katy, Female, White British, Marketing manager, Shared owner)

Shared owners have invested in their property, and generally they have planned to live in East Village for a longer time than private and intermediate renters. Several live with their partners or families - if they have children. Their similar socio-economic background, common financial and emotional stake facilitates a higher level of social cohesion than those in the other tenures. For them, creating a community based on interactions and on doing things together is also a means to guarantee the success of the neighbourhood and therefore to protect their investment. Nevertheless, they generally establish relationships with other owners, or residents with similar socio-economic backgrounds. Marine is a teacher and manager in the local school: the Cobham Academy. When she is asked about her relationship with her neighbours, she comments:

"I like my neighbours; I have a different kind of relationship. They are very respectful, I'm very lucky. Because I am a mom, I organise for the moms to meet. We are in the same building and it's very positive [...]. They are kind of similar demographic as mine I suppose". (Marine, Female, White European, School teacher/manager, Shared owner)

Marine and the other moms have developed middle-class place-based identity through doing activities together in the neighbourhood. Similarly, Lina has developed common bonds in her block and in the wider Village, thanks to the fact that as a parent she meets other parents.

“We know a lot of parents who have children in our block and in the blocks surrounding. So we know them and we spend a lot of time with them. With one of them we see almost every day when we do activities together with our children, and with others we probably see once or twice a week. It’s four or five families that we do activities at least once a week. They all live in East Village. With about 20 mothers we are all part of the same group, we do the same activities. [...] They are either shared owners or private renters “. (Lina, Female, Asian, Community worker, Leaseholder)

Lina’s residential experience reveals that BAME individuals can demonstrate their “fit” in the neighbourhood. However, this is conditional on interiorising whiteness (Sibley, 1995), and adjusting their habitus to that of white middle-class individuals, which is dominant within the neighbourhood field. When asked about the socio-economic background of the mothers in their local groups, Marine and Lina say that they all have similar socio-economic backgrounds. As we will discuss below, the majority of social rent households are comprised of families with children. However, there seems to be a division between social rent and more affluent mothers. There is a sense that Lina and Marine’s local groups are exclusive of social and ethnic difference, unless, as in the case of Lina, BAME individuals display middle-class dispositions.

In this regard, Valentine (2017) highlights the construction of white middle-class motherhood: mothers should not be too young (under 20), too old (over 40), and their main responsibility should be fostering the development and social acceptability of their children. Therefore, a “good mother” should ensure that her children do not imitate the bad habits typical of the lower classes (*ibid.*). Likewise, the East Village middle-class mothers’ groups represent “good” motherhood, and become a means to generate categories of distinction from working-class “bad” motherhood¹⁶.

Similar to Marine and Lina, Nathan has only developed relationships with shared owners:

“Actually with my neighbours we are all very close, and with my next door neighbours if I go away I leave them my keys. Yes, it’s quite a nice sense of community I suppose [...]. We see quite often, at least once every two weeks. We are all on the same WhatsApp group together,

¹⁶ The othering of social rent mothers in the neighbourhood will be further discussed below, when we address issues surrounding children playing and making noise in the courtyards.

so we contact each other and we see quite regularly, yeah [...]. I suppose we are all shared owners". (Nathan, Male, White Australian, School teacher, Shared owner)

A minority of shared owners tend to have limited relationships with their immediate neighbours. The reason for this is the "conservative" attitudes that many have. Enrique and his partner Richard feel that they are quite different from their neighbours:

"I don't have a lot of relationships with my neighbours. In my building, there is some neighbours who is talking about doing sports, and they want to do a lot of social things, but just don't have a lot in common with them. I and my partner have a lot of relations with the neighbour next door, but she's never there. We talk to her. There are certain neighbours that we sort of know, but we are a little bit kind of outsiders. They are a little bit conservative in views". (Enrique, Male, White European, Freelance dancer, Shared owner)

"I feel there is a few right-wing Tory voting. That sort of hard Christian sort of mentality [...]. There's one neighbour who administrates the East Village Facebook group, and I put stuff up there that isn't at all offensive, but because it's not... May be about politics or may be about air pollution or you know, it's not deemed appropriate. You know let's talk about Westfield and shopping but not about air pollution". (Richard, Male, White British, Part-time lecturer/part-time PhD student in the arts, Shared owner)

Richard and Enrique feel like outsiders. They feel excluded from the mentality and views that the majority of East Village shared owners hold. They both work in the arts sector and they are both politically involved in East London left-wing groups. Thus, they do not agree with what they describe as the "conservative views" of their neighbours, and the closed circle of affluent residents that they frequently meet.

As mentioned above, shared owners plan to live in East Village for a longer time than private and intermediate renters. However, the majority of them are also planning to move out eventually. Similar to private and intermediate renters, they are young, which encourages them to live near central London, with its job opportunities and cultural capital. Despite developing a strong sense of moral ownership over East Village, which is reinforced by the fact that they have invested both financially and emotionally in the neighbourhood, many talk about their desire to have more space and contact with nature. Thus, they express their wish to move to the suburbs in the future. Their sense of elective belonging (Savage et al., 2005), is therefore temporary as well:

“When I’m in London, I’ll stay here, but once I want to move then I’ll leave to get away from the pollution and have some more space. The flat is nice for now, but there’s no garden, it gets really restrictive. I quite enjoy making stuff, but obviously I can’t have workshops in the flat. So I can’t have big tools or anything like that”. (Alan, Male, White British, Software developer, Leaseholder)

“I like it around here, but I guess when I have kids I don’t want to stay around here. It depends how things are going. I would eventually move yeah. I think it’s now for me starting to get a little bit more claustrophobic living-wise. And then if I want to have kids I want them to go out and be safe on the roads, you know? Whereas here you have business. You know it really does get busy, the roads the chock-a-block around here. If there’s a concert or a match at West Ham, so I would worry here”. (Linda, Female, Black British, School teacher, Shared equity)

“So I think we’ll have to move because we have 1-bedroom and so we’ll need some more space at a point for our children. I think given that we’re gonna have to move anyway I think we’re gonna move out of the area to be closer to family and also to have a garden”. (Lina, Female, Asian, Community worker, Leaseholder)

Thus, for those who have or are planning to have children, concerns with social reproduction, living in a neighbourhood that is suitable for infants’ upbringing, and having a house with more space are quite central considerations in the decision to move or to stay. Another reason that encourages many people to leave is the construction of the new tower-blocks, which is causing a lot of discontent. This issue will be further discussed in Chapter 6.

5.3.3 Social Renters and the Struggle for Distinction

According to Bourdieu (1986a: 248) the dominated classes intervene in the symbolic struggle to appropriate distinctive properties associated with the legitimate lifestyle. Dispositions are therefore relationally defined and adjusted to those of other individuals whom occupy dominant positions in the field. Assimilating white middle-class morality and taste, as well as distance from necessity, are necessary steps towards the achievement of distinction. This entails an unconscious disassociation from the group immediately below, or even from one’s own group, and identification with the group immediately above. This classification struggle requires a dialectic relationship between

morality and immorality, beauty and ugliness, order and disorder, new and old, and so forth; even though this is not driven by a conscious intention to stand aloof from ethnic minorities and working-class laxity (Bourdieu, 1986a: 246).

The same process can be identified in the residential trajectory of several East Village social renters. In the quote below, we can observe how moving to East Village has represented a chance to leave the dirty inner city, and gaining a bigger and nicer flat in a middle-class neighbourhood; thus, appropriating the symbols of distinction. Participating in this classification struggle may lead one to demonise their old neighbourhoods:

“Where I lived before we had less space, so we are satisfied with our flat in East Village. And the environment, there the buildings were really not good, dirty and the surrounding area was dangerous. On the contrary, this place is fantastic! Very good quality! Very safe!” (Akmal, Male, Asian, Legal associate, Social renter)

The cramped living conditions of Akmal’s old flat in Tower Hamlets did not satisfy his residential aspirations. He has elected East Village as the perfect place to live. Thus, he physically and symbolically distances himself from the Inner London area where he lived, surrounded by the “deviant” presence of marginal social and ethnic groups. The struggle to appropriate the symbols of distinction induces better off social renters to differentiate themselves from other neighbours in their housing tenure that are slightly less affluent:

“I know that most of people in my block they are all social housing [...]. You know what it is that I and my immediate neighbours sometimes we don’t share our opinions and you may not have the same belief, and they may not be as positive as you. They may not see things the way you see, cause people see things differently. For instance, I like nice things, some of the people in my block may not respect the fact that I like nice things. That’s why I work so hard, you see what I mean?” (Samira, Female, Black British, Office manager, Single mother, Social renter)

Nice things and ugly things only exist through each other (Bourdieu, 1986a). It is Samira’s conflictual relationship with her neighbours that generates the cultural value of her lifestyle as opposed to the lack of taste and laxity of her neighbours.

For Olga, moving to East Village has meant the opening up of new entrepreneurial opportunities:

“Here you have the opportunity! There’s new things opening so you can see new things and you can say ‘ok, I have an opportunity to open a shop’, or as a hairdresser, to start a new business for me, coming to East Village and East London was a great thing, because new clients, new money, new opportunities!” (Olga, Female, White European, Own account hairdresser, Single mother, Social renter)

Olga’s words convey the aspiration of achieving a better social condition than the one she experienced in her old neighbourhood in Camden. The attitude towards mixing of Olga and other better off social renters is similar to that of private and intermediate renters. They describe positively their relationship with neighbours, but they do not consider them as their friends:

“I love my neighbours, all of the ones around my area. On this floor they are all lovely people. The rest I see them, I say hello and goodbye. You know living in a big building like this is not bad...But neighbours in the other buildings I don’t know anyone. And when you live in a block with other people, you don’t know their business. I know a few people because I am an extroverted person. So I go ‘hi how are you?’ But do I get on with my neighbours? Yes, if I need sugar or if I need a chair or if I need something I can just knock and ask, but just on this floor”. (Olga, Female, Black European, Own account hairdresser, Single mother, Social renter)

Mariana is willing to mix; even though her interactions with neighbours seem limited to when she occasionally meets the parents of her three children’s schoolmates:

“All the neighbours on my floor we do talk every time we see each other. I’ve met some neighbours from other buildings, I know some neighbours from the town houses. We’ve been out for our kids’ birthday parties; we’ve been out for a coffee. I think that’s it, because some of them work, some of them don’t and you know we’re all busy with our own lives and kids and so on [...]. The people that I know some of us we belong to the same one [tenure], some of them they’re private renters, some of them I think they bought their own place”. (Mariana, Female, Black European, Housewife, Social renter)

It is important to highlight that not all of the East Village social renters engage in the game to appropriate the symbols of distinction, which we have discussed above. Those individuals with more limited economic, cultural and social capital than better off social renters try to defend what they have. This is visible in some single mothers’ attitude to mix with neighbours of similar socio-economic backgrounds, with whom they develop mutual help networks:

“Three of my neighbours I’m very close to them. Sometimes we share school runs, sometimes I pick up their kids, sometimes they pick up my son. One day a week my son spends time with them, one time their girl spends time with us... We’re quite close, we have a good network [...]. They are all here through social housing as far as I know”. (Margaret, Female, Black African, Public worker, Single mother, Social renter)”.

“My neighbours are so friendly, we have very good relationships with my neighbours yes... Like in the summertime all the time they’re out in the garden and we talk, sometimes we share coffee or just chat a bit [...]. They are social housing, yeah...” (Ode, Female, Black African, Unemployed single mother, Social renter)

Other single parents - like Simona who gets help with her child by her mother - are not willing to mix at all:

“I’ve never been one socialising with my neighbours to be honest. I prefer to keep myself to myself. I don’t want to integrate. Yes if I need to keep the parcel for you I’m here, but me being friendly like ‘oh come for a cup of tea’, I’m not that type of person” (Simona, Female, Mixed ethnic background, Casino dealer, Single mother, Social renter)

Alexandra is a disabled person with mobility problems. Her partner cannot work either, because Alexandra needs constant assistance. They have four children and rely on benefits to afford living costs. She would like to become friend with the neighbours. However, she expresses disappointment because, in spite of herself, she has not been able to interact with them as much as she would like.

“To be honest we keep ourselves to ourselves really. We’d say hello to people, we’d be quite pleasant. To be honest that’s one thing that I find... Cause I feel like I haven’t made friends with parents and other moms at school. It’s only now that I’m starting to get to know more people in the area than since we moved here to be honest. But yeah I mean my neighbours, they keep themselves to themselves; we don’t do much together (Alexandra, Female, White British, Disabled, Social renter)”.

Although in social rent there is a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, and the extent to which individuals in this housing tenure interact with their neighbours varies as well, this is still relatively limited. As the next section shows, their residential experience, and aspirations to become middle-class are complicated by economic difficulties and ever-increasing living costs.

5.3.4 The Struggle to Stay

In the interviews, social renters have expressed love with their flat and with East Village as a place to live. Nevertheless, with the exception of some social renters in middle-class occupations, another recurrent theme in the interviews is struggling with living costs. This seems to be a direct consequence of the TH rent policy (TH, 2016b). As discussed in Chapter 4, socially rented flats in the Village are more expensive than social housing elsewhere, and after the first year they become increasingly more expensive, going over the maximum allowable by the HCA (*ibid.*).

“Well, if we don’t wanna live in the street we need to find ways to afford the rent, right? Can we afford it? No! But I always try to save money where I can. As I say since I moved here I’m broke all the time”. (Olga, Female, Black European, Own account hairdresser, Single mother, Social renter)

Others note that the expensive bills and service charge inflate living costs, such that they do not know how long they can live in the Village. The neighbourhood is supplied by two energy companies: East London Energy for heating and hot water, and EDF for the rest. Everything works by electricity, which is an expensive utility. All residents are obliged to pay the service charge and accept the energy providers that the landlords impose. These kinds of contractual obligations are typical in GCs and MPCs. However, as Atkinson and Blandy (2013) have argued, they limit residents’ freedom of choice. In East Village one of their implications is expensive bills. Some residents have highlighted that energy providers make living costs increasingly unaffordable. The interview data suggest that the East Villagers spend between £200 and £400 per month on council tax and utility bills, depending on individual consumption and the size of the property. While residents in other housing tenures with higher disposable income can more easily cope with these costs, social renters struggle to pay. Zoya, for example, is not a single mother. She works part-time and her husband is a full-time BBC broadcaster. They have three children and live in a 3-bedroom flat. She is not comfortable with the costs of her bills:

“The rent is expensive! It’s because they keep increasing the price. They keep increasing here, and the electricity is very high. Because you don’t even have an option to move to a different company. It’s a company that they impose you. Also the service charge, which they put together with the rent. But every time we receive letters that it’s increasing it’s increasing... It’s getting

too much really. It's getting too much". (Zoya, Female, Black African, Part-time interpreter, Social renter)

Those who receive housing benefits - especially disabled people - state that they are able to afford the rent because of the welfare support that they receive, but they recognise that they would struggle otherwise. Daniel, for example, lives in a 2-bedroom flat. He is a disabled person with severe mobility problems:

"Luckily Newham Council pays for it [the rent]. I can't pay for it on my own. There's no way I can pay for it on my own, it's a lot of money!" (Daniel, Male, Black British, Disabled, Social renter)

High living costs result in a sentiment of uncertainty about the future. This is due to a struggle about being able to afford staying in the neighbourhood, which affects social renters' sense of belonging. On the one hand they love living in the Village; on the other hand, they experience "weak fixity" in place (Paton, 2014). Neoliberal public policies have forged East Village's social housing in such a way that it is difficult to afford. This is the case even for some individuals in better off working-class occupations, especially if they are lone parents:

"You work and like I said it's so expensive! Half of your wage is gone already! Just on your rent! [...] You know you get paid and your money is finished! You have to pay bills, you have to eat, and you know, it's very difficult!" (Kinje, Female, Black African, Home Office worker, Single mother, Social renter)

Others are unsure whether they are going to be able to afford their living costs, if rent and service charge keep increasing:

"No! I wouldn't be able to afford another increase no [...]. My decision is that if the rent goes up again I'll go in and have a consultation with the manager and let them know just where I stand". (Margaret, Female, Black African, Public worker, Single mother, Social renter)

"It is not easy to live here to be honest, but I always try and save money where I can [...]. I don't know let's see what happens. If the rent goes up again and I'm not able to pay for it I'll just move out and look for somewhere cheaper". (Ode, Female, Black African, Unemployed single mother, Social renter)

These quotes suggest that there is a tension between the desirability of East Village, and the ever-increasing rents. This, in turn, is likely to further reinforce the feeling of

transience within the East Village community, and, as the next section highlights, its sense of social stratification. The Olympic promise of “homes for all” (Growth Boroughs, 2009) is again evoked as a very distant promise.

5.4 The Interior “Other”

Davidson (2010: 533) argues that the different subjectivities of the working and middle classes can be seen as relatively constructed and naturalised differences. As we saw in Chapter 2, Davidson (*ibid.*) builds on Bourdieu’s (1986a) concept of habitus to explain how this othering process relies on the relative construction in which the working-class plays the subaltern role of “other”. The concept of working-class also takes a racialised form (Beider, 2015; Sibley, 1995). With respect to East Village, we can observe an othering process that creates socio-spatial boundaries based on concerns with order, aesthetics and cleanliness, which aims at maintaining advantageous positions within the neighbourhood field, and is typical of GCs and MPCs (Atkinson and Blandy, 2013; Low, 2004; Rosenblatt et al., 2009). Such boundaries are reinforced by the tenure distribution discussed above, which generates stereotypes, and constructs those who have different habits as a deviant presence, to the extent that their right to belong to the neighbourhood is questioned:

“We have the people downstairs who are living in the council places. Not so much now but at some points we had some disturbance at night, it’s just a problem which is down to socio-economic background. Some of them don’t really understand what area they are living in. Some of the things I’ve heard is some people from Eastern Europe for example who tend to have different sleeping habits, and that caused a problem. Some people who are living in council flats... I don’t have proof, but sometimes I was walking around the area and I was smelling weed”. (Marine, Female, White European, School manager/teacher, Shared owner)

Ethnic minorities such as Eastern Europeans are subject to symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1986a), which constructs their lifestyle as illegitimate, and constructs them as inadequate dwellers. The expression “don’t really understand what area they are living in” displays the imposition of white middle-class value on the least powerful residents. The principle implemented to understand the behaviours of these individuals is based

on identifying a feature “different sleeping habits” and perceiving the group associated with that feature as people out of place. This denotes a misunderstanding of the reasons why they have “different sleeping habits”. It may well be that social renters work on shifts, some of which might be overnight. It is evident how the social rent apartments’ location in different buildings or floors reinforces stigmatisation and stereotypes, and generates a socio-spatial identification of “them” - the council tenants - and “us” – the owners; as exemplified by the sentence “the people downstairs who are living in the council places”. Associating the presence of the “other” with dirt and disorder is a recurrent theme in the interviews with shared owners:

“There was a group of people in my block who were that sort of behaviour. They didn’t fit in. I think they got kicked out in the end. They were smoking inside and putting cigarettes out on the carpet and leaving drinks in the lift, and to a degree I saw drug dealers coming to the buildings. I don’t really know what the make-up in my building is, but if you have got affordable or some other type of affordable rent, or people who don’t care, that’s what you’re gonna get”. (Thomas, Male, White South-African, Surveyor, Shared owner)

The sanction for those who do not adjust their lifestyle to the dominant white middle-class habitus is eviction. There is a sense that the emphasis on “expected behaviour” in the policy documents analysed in Chapter 4 legitimates symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1986a), and reinforces the stereotypes that powerful residents create about social renters. In both Marine’s and Thomas’s interviews, we note the association between social renters and the use of drugs. White middle-class individuals use drugs as well. The problem in East Village seems to be related to the visibility of drugs, which, according to these interviewees, affects the neighbourhood’s respectability. Concerns with order, cleanliness and fear of crime may become so obsessive that the shared owners long for CCTV being installed, even in hallways and lifts, such that transgressors can be captured and punished:

“There are the normal tensions between people that are renting and people that are sort of landlords. [...]. I mean I think there should be more CCTV in the buildings and in the lifts. There is things like bikes getting stolen, occasionally from the bike cases. If we had better CCTV they catch them faster. Sometimes people leave all sort of stuff in the lifts and in the bin rooms instead of taking them away properly. If we had CCTV they would get caught if they are doing that”. (Alan, Male, White British, Software developer, Leaseholder)”.

As shared owners' concerns with dirt and safety seem to rotate around the presence of social renters, housing tenure become synonymous with classed and racialised otherness (Beider, 2015; McKenzie, 2015; Sibley, 1995). In reality, nobody knows in which tenure the people who litter reside. They could be shared owners or intermediate renters. Regardless, the dominant discourse constructs social renters as dirty and impure. However, Bourdieu (1986a) notes that symbolic violence is not simply based on imposing norms and values on the dominated groups; but this requires the latter's unconscious complicity. In East Village, many shared owners, but also many social renters agree that the former are more capable and disserving. Social renters internalise this idea. They disassociate themselves from working-class identification to acquire respectability (Skeggs, 2015). Nevertheless, by doing so they denigrate their own experience:

"Most of social housing people they don't work. I'm from social housing but I work, it's not hard for everyone to work. I work because my mom helps me out [with the child]. If my mom didn't help me out, I wouldn't be able to work. I know a lot of people here, they don't work and they are here all the time, they don't work! When you get something for free you take it for granted, you don't care. If you spend your money you spend your time. If you own you are not just gonna come out the lift and litter. These people [the shared owners] if the lift breaks down they are private, they have to pay for it out of their own pockets". (Simona, Female, Mixed Latino/Middle-Eastern background, Casino dealer, Single mother, Social renter)

Once again, the exceptions are Richard and Enrique – the lefty liberal outsiders working in the arts. In particular, Enrique feels that the discourse of other East Village shared owners could lead to the dehumanisation of social renters:

"The comment often has been 'these social housing people'. They put a label. They consider that everybody living there is the same kind of person, to some level dehumanising this kind of people. Saying you know like grouping them all like kind of beasts! They don't use the word beasts but they say like 'the social housing people'. They use the 'they', there is common use of 'they' like 'they are all the same'. So my point is there have been minimal episodes of kind of not respecting the communal areas, and the response has been quite harsh from the other people that are shared owners". (Enrique, Male, White European, Freelance dancer, Shared owner)

A TH manager recognises the stigmatisation of social housing tenants, and believes that the reason for this is shared owners' view of their flat as a financial investment:

“There is a great whipped up animosity towards social renters. We have a problem in our society, that we tend to want to hate poor people, and I see evidence of that in the Village [...]. So one of the things I have to deal with is a lot of overt and sometime covert criticism of the social renters and that’s a struggle [...]. So I would say there’s the social renters and then everybody else. Because if you are an intermediate renter, you are passing through [because they have not invested in their property]. The shared owners own part of their property, and therefore this is their investment, and they want their investment to grow! So everything that jeopardises that... (TH manager).

Despite the stigmatisation of social renters, some shared owners recognise living in close proximity to the diversity, which the tenure mix brings, as a source of cultural value:

“I wanted to see how they were going to manage the social housing with the private renters. I think that’s a very unique philosophy. You know you see a lot of the locations and they are very separate. Whereas the whole point of this community is having everything together. So you wouldn’t see a difference between a social housing flat and a GLL flat”. (Katy, Female, White British, Marketing manager, Shared owner)

“It’s a mixture of young professionals, families, people on benefits from the council. So, it’s a whole mixture. From loads of different backgrounds as well. So you have a lot of migration, but also a lot of quite wealthy people coming now. So it’s a very interesting mix to be in. You have again a lot of cultures. You’ve got people wearing the scarf and people not wearing it. People wearing very short skirts. You’ve got a bit of everything, all of that living together”. (Marine, Female, White European, School teacher/manager, Shared owner)

In reality, the mix that Marine and Katy perceive is more limited than they actually think. As we saw in Chapter 4, TH selects the least marginal of the social housing applicants. Social distinction also relates to an unconscious need to live in close proximity to diversity, at the same time as one seeks to keep it under control and distance oneself from it (Davidson, 2010).

5.4.1 Children in the Courtyards: A Dionysian Presence

The internal courtyards are the places where residents with various backgrounds could meet and interact (Farquhar, 2012). They are shared between TH and GLL blocks. Notwithstanding, the courtyards have become contested places. Cohen (2017) highlights that in the early period after the first residents moved into East Village, children from

the social housing families used the courtyards to play ball games and to ride bikes. This triggered complaints from other residents, who did not like the noise that children made. They were also concerned about children ruining plants and flowerbeds with balls and bikes. Therefore, the East Village Management Company (EVML) – appointed by the two landlords to manage the communal areas - forbade these activities and implemented rules and regulations over the use of the courtyards.

Figure 6: An East Village Internal Courtyard



(Source: Architectsjournal.co.uk)

Valentine (2017) identifies two main tendencies that have dominated the discourse around children in the last four centuries: Apollonian and Dionysian. The Apollonian vision regards children as angels: as possessors of an innate goodness. On the contrary, the Dionysian vision regards children as devils: as inheritors of original sin. Children are therefore perceived as little savages who, however, can be disciplined and socialised to adopt adult behaviours (Valentine, 2017). In East Village, the latter discourse tends to prevail among the middle-class residents. The presence of children in the courtyards is associated with disruption and disorder. In addition to rules and regulations, EVML has

employed community engagement officers to find “alternative ways for children to play” (QDD manager interview). This policy is reminiscent of the role that the American and British middle classes attributed to education in the nineteenth century. Schools needed to inculcate respect for order and correct the unruly behaviour of working-class children (Valentine, 2017). The othering process that the EVML’s policies and the most affluent residents’ attitudes forge, constructs even the social housing children as an inappropriate presence. In the field of semi-private space, considerations of aesthetics, order and cleanliness play a prominent role in the production of place. The imposition of an idea of community based on aesthetics has exclusionary repercussions for the least powerful individuals (Duncan, 2004), such as social housing children, whose presence causes discomfort:

“I don’t know how to get into the courtyard in my building. It’s not nice to sit outside in. So if we want to sit outside we’ll go to the Park or the canal. [The courtyard] It’s very noisy, there’s always kids playing there. Like the ground floor they are all social housing and they are very noisy. There’s about ten people living in each house. It’s very strange!” (Helen, Female, White British, Publisher, Intermediate renter)

In Helen’s words, we can observe the relevance of stereotypes in defining social space (Sibley, 1995). Stereotypes foster distinction between white middle-class individuals and subaltern groups such as working-class ethnically diverse social housing residents. This negative representation of the interior “other” is based on a lack of contact and interaction that the tenure distribution fosters. Noise is identified as a stigmatised feature, and it is isolated from other personal traits that remain unknown because they are not relevant to construct labelling judgements about the “other” (Bourdieu, 1986a, Sibley, 1995). If Helen got to know the social renters who live in her plot, she would realise that they are not as deviant as she seems to suggest. Nevertheless, several East Villagers share this perception:

“It’s kind of all the kids use it [the courtyard]. So they seem to dominate. All the families seem to have the ground floor maisonettes. I don’t know, that was probably deliberate, all the family homes. The kids spill out and play football, so I’m happy to go off into the Park It’s easier... Let’s put it away”. (Taylor, Male, White European, Freelance designer, Shared owner)

The middle classes are committed to the symbolic (Bourdieu, 1986a: 249). Their concern with appearance, often confused with arrogance, is the product of a fear to lose social identity (*ibid.*). They need to appropriate space symbolically, and shape it in their own image. However, this sake for distinction generates further exclusion. The use of the verb “spill out” seems to evoke the image of little animals such as mice. Often associated with minority ethnic groups, mice challenge a sense of morality, cleanliness and order (Sibley, 1995). In the western world, such virtues are associated with whiteness, which is threatened by dirty, defiled and unmoral blackness (Beider, 2015; *ibid.*). With respect to the association between children and wildness, Sibley (1995) draws attention to the famous American TV advertisement for Persil detergent. Here wild nature is represented as the natural habitat of children, who appear with dirty clothes and faces. They are therefore depicted as uncivilised creatures. Sibley (1995) notes that in the commercial, the mother is attributed a civilising role. She uses Persil to purify her children and return them to society. This image relates to the stereotypical role of mothers in the western world as the main responsible for bringing up and educating children. At the same time, mothers are considered guilty if their children’s behaviour is wrong, or they fail to be accepted within society. This is the stereotypical image that the American and British middle classes have constructed with regards to working-class and immigrant mothers (Valentine, 2017). In East Village, social housing mothers need to ensure that their children adopt “positive” behaviour:

“I don’t like the way some of the children behave, and I tend to kind of try to stop being mixed up in things that are not positive. Because sometimes in the courtyard you have children who would ruin plants, and would running around and making noise and upsetting other residents who are not so accommodating for whatever reason”. (Samira, Female, Black British, Office manager, Single mother, Social renter)

Samira has interiorised a westernised representation of motherhood. The symbolic power of the white middle-class operates in her experience as a BAME mother without explicit coercion. Once again, symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1986a) is at play.

However, the social housing parents who do not participate in the classification struggle to gain the symbols of distinction have a different point of view. For them, the courtyard is a safe place where children can play while they are busy in their house, cooking,

cleaning or maybe relaxing after work. Alexandra lives in a townhouse. Her flat, therefore, has direct access to the courtyard. She is frustrated about the rules and regulations that impede her family from enjoying this space, which is just on their doorstep:

“The kids play out every noon again, but not as much as other children. Because we find they stop the kids from doing everything. They’re not allowed to ride bikes, they’re not allowed to go on their scooters, and they’re not allowed to play with balls. So sort of what are they meant to do when they go outside? I mean and there’s always a lot of complaints!” (Alexandra, Female, White British, Disabled social renter)

Zana is upset because of the passive aggressive behaviour of some neighbours, who film children while they are playing:

“Some neighbours, they always complain when children play in the courtyard. They phone the agency and they say children are on their own making noise. They come there and they send the children upstairs. I don’t know the reason... When I send my children there... I don’t send them every time to the courtyard. But when I send them there I always stay on the balcony watching them. But even that they always complain. Some of them they don’t have children and they don’t want the noise and they don’t understand. Some of them film the children playing. I don’t know why they do that! When they see children playing they get cameras and they start filming them. I don’t know why!” (Zana, Female, Black African, Part-time childcare assistant, Single mother, Social renter)

Zana is the only mother who commented on the filming. Regardless, this shows how rules and regulations legitimate the most powerful resident groups’ attitudes, enabling them to impose their symbolic domination and their aesthetic values on the way communal areas are designed and can be used. However, such logics are detrimental to the least powerful residents, such as social housing families and their children, whose behaviour is constructed as deviant and therefore punishable. The filmers may be looking for evidence of “unruly” activities in the courtyard, so that they can refer back to EVML in the hope that sanctions are imposed on the undesirable courtyard users. Thus, the field of semi-private space becomes their realm, and an extension of their houses. Nonetheless, some of the affluent residents do not agree with the limitations imposed on the children:

“I know there’s a lot of kids in my courtyard, so they use it quite a lot and it’s more for the kids to play. I know that one of the complaints with the neighbours is that it’s too noisy. But for me I’d rather have the kids to have somewhere safe to play, so I don’t mind it. Sometimes I do because the noise carries, it goes too noisy. But I would rather the children be safe, so for me doesn’t matter. I use the balcony more, to be honest”. (Katy, Female, White British, Marketing manager, Shared owner)

The Triathlon manager recognises that there are too many restrictions with respect to what children are allowed to do in the courtyards. However, the freeholder, QDD controls 51% of EVML, while TH controls the remaining 49%. Therefore, the former has the final word on these issues, and they want to keep their private tenants happy:

“There is an attempt to micromanage, and it’s a struggle. Some of the rules are unrealistic; all they are very punishing of ordinary family life. You know if I lived in one of those blocks, with the quod at the bottom... I have children, they are big now but when they were little, the idea that my children wouldn’t go down and play, and have a network of other children in the block, and be able to... It’s just so terrible! But that’s what we have. So we have a set of rules that were devised you know as part of the negotiation about what kind of place this will be, and it’s a kind of fantasy; it lacks any kind of understanding of social psychology. It’s something I think it has to do with the Olympic fantasyland”. (TH manager)

The contestation over children playing in the courtyards has dominated discussions between the East Villagers and EVML. Nevertheless, other reasons why residents avoid the courtyards were mentioned by the interviewees:

“I never use the courtyard, to be honest. I don’t know what to use it for. Everybody is looking over you there. Do you know what I mean? You can’t sort of do barbecues over there. Not really sure what you can use it for. If I wanna take a sunbath I’m gonna go somewhere else better than the courtyard. You can’t play football there, you can’t play any sports. So what am I gonna use it for?” (Jack, Male, White British, Self-employed estate agent, Private renter)

Given that the flats face the courtyard, there is lack of privacy. Moreover, rules and regulations not only stop children from playing; they also stop adults who wonder what it is actually possible to do there. It would appear that the courtyards are just meant to be non-places. They provide a decor for the plots but lack amenities:

“I’d like to see the space [in the courtyard] better utilised, with accommodation for children. And just for dogs there’s not like litters or gazebos or barbecues. It has a couple of trees and

that's it. I'd like to see more things there to drop more people in the common space [...] I don't use it also because I live at the edge with the Olympic Park, so I'd rather go there". (John, Male, White American, Waiter, EVRA vice-chair, Private renter)

Therefore, as some residents suggest, the liminality of the courtyard space needs to be countered by filling it with more amenities that could encourage interactions. Yet, as the next section highlights, this need is hindered by the formalisation of relationships.

5.5 Formalisation of Relationships

Minton (2012) notes that the London 2012 post-Olympic neighbourhoods are characterised by high levels of control. EVMML employs private security not only to protect residents from real and perceived external threats – as discussed in Chapter 6 - but also to “protect” them from each other. This could be viewed as the freeholder invading the private sphere of residents to regulate their relationships. Yet, as we saw in Chapter 2, Bauman (2003) notes how white middle-class GCs' residents do not want to live simply on islands of similarity. They also want to minimise contact with their fellow residents. In recognition of this, EVMML encourages the East Villagers to not engage with each other when there is a dispute that needs to be settled. They are advised to refer to security or management, which will adopt the measures deemed necessary to resolve the issue:

“We as shared owners are one group. We have different representations from the renters. So it's better if you get back to your management office and they then communicate with the renters. I think individual communication doesn't work [...]. We had a meeting in the school with all the shared owners, and they explained to us who to contact and if we have problems what to do”. (Taylor, Male, White European, Freelance designer, Shared owner)

This is a recurrent theme in the interviews. When there is a problem, residents just call the security. For example, if a night party is too noisy:

“It's easier to call the security. I know it's straight above me but it could be... Because it's a courtyard. The bad thing about courtyards is that it carries on tremendously well. So sometimes at night can be really disturbing. But I just call the security and then it's sorted. There's no problem at all!” (Joseph, Male, White European, Project manager, Private renter)

Simona highlights that even when residents try to take initiative, the East Village security team recommends calling them, instead of trying to speak to the people who are causing the disturbance:

“Few months ago, I came back home at night and there was like kids, not kids but grown people. I see them smoking on the fire stairs and the smell was just horrible, and I know wasn’t weed was something else., I don’t know what it was. So I went mad [...]. I was so angry and I had to call the police, there’s East Village security. But I went to speak to them [...]. The police said: ‘you have to stay home and call us, you don’t have to cause like fights’” (Simona, Female, Mixed Latino/Middle-Eastern background, Casino dealer, Social renter)

This formalisation of relationships does not foster the establishment of social networks, even if it might satisfy the expectations of many East Villagers. Residents from different and even similar socio-economic backgrounds rarely have the opportunity to find ways to get along, without the intervention of the management in the sphere of interpersonal interactions. The literature review discussed Neal et al.’s (2017) work, which suggests to interpret “community” as a verb, as negotiating things together. Even sorting out tensions is necessary in an intercultural context to identify ways of getting along with one another. In an ordinary neighbourhood, when there is a maintenance issue or some tension between neighbours, people need to talk. In East Village it is different. The formalisation of relationships is another example of how the GLL policies make residential experience similar to that of a hotel, where it is up to the management to resolve issues for their guests.

5.6 Conclusion

The security features of East Village’s plots have transformed them into multiple GCs. Moreover, the tenure distribution thwarts social mixing and facilitates the construction of “us” – the rightful East Village residents - and “them” - the interior “other”: classed and racialised social renters. This cannot be considered as an unintended effect of the landlords’ housing policies. On the contrary, it serves the formation of middle-class identity and the need to generate categories of distinction (Bourdieu, 1986a). This othering process also involves the construction of a “good” middle-class motherhood as

opposed to a “bad” working-class motherhood, which we can observe in the shared owners’ local mothers’ groups, as well as in the criticism of social housing parents about their children’s “unruly” behaviour in the courtyards.

In spite of the policymakers’ claims, East Village is not a cohesive community. On the contrary, it has several different communities. There are the private and intermediate renters on short-term leases who are ready to leave as soon as their life circumstances change. There are the shared owners who have invested in their flat and become defensive when they feel that their material and emotional interest in the neighbourhood is threatened by “deviant” behaviour. What these two groups have in common is a temporary sense belonging. Even though they develop a sense of moral ownership over the neighbourhood, this is just an intermediate stage in their residential trajectories. They are still young and their family and professional lives are very much in evolution. Because of concerns with social reproduction, the need for more space, and the desire to buy a house, most of them will move out eventually.

Social renters are enthusiastic to live in East Village and develop a sense of belonging to the neighbourhood too. Many of them engage in a classification struggle in order to gain the symbols of distinction and align themselves with the most powerful resident group. Symbolic violence operates in the experiences of these individuals, whom, in order to distance themselves from BAME and working-class identification, denigrate their own experience. However, many struggle with living costs, and experience “weak fixity” in place (Paton, 2014). Neoliberal housing policies have made social housing in the neighbourhood unaffordable for low and even some middle-income residents.

With the exception of shared owners, the level of neighbourly interactions is rather low within the East Village’s GCs. This is due to the transient character of the various communities, and the freeholder’s interference in the interpersonal relationships of residents when, for example, a dispute needs to be settled.

These considerations will be carried further into Chapter 6, which will focus on public space.

Chapter 6

Public Space

6.1 Introduction

This chapter investigates how GLL's spatial practices produce public space in the context of East Village, and identifies which social and ethnic groups' preferences such a space valorises. It also focuses on social interactions in this field. The chapter draws on interviews with residents and managers, observation, and documentary analysis. It is important to bear in mind that together with the ownership of 51% of the apartments, GLL purchased the freehold. It owns communal areas and the public ground in the neighbourhood, and controls 51% of EVML.

Section 6.2 highlights "ground control" in East Village (Minton, 2012), which refers to the tools that developers have employed to increase surveillance. Section 6.3 discusses the socio-spatial divide between East Village and the wider Stratford area, as well as it brings forward the analysis of the East Villagers' sense of belonging, drawing on Savage et al.'s (2005) conceptualisation of elective belonging and Watt's (2009a) discussion of selective belonging. Section 6.4 discusses the importance of aesthetics as a community value, via Duncan's (2004) work on consumption of landscapes of privilege. Section 6.5 focuses on how the East Village and QEOP managements emphasise contact with nature, as residents buy into an idyllic paradise, which resembles a rural village. It also highlights how this representation of space is being jeopardised by the prospect of new developments, which will eat into the existing green spaces. Section 6.6 examines East Villagers' sense of community and social interactions.

It will be argued that the landlord's spatial practices pander to the dispositions of young, white middle-class professionals, and the East Villagers' develop a spatially selective sense of belonging; while there is a low level of neighbourly interaction.

6.2 Ground Control

In “Ground Control” Anna Minton (2012) notes that the neighbourhoods around the QEOP are privately owned. East Village is the first of the new London post-Olympic neighbourhoods. As discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, GLL has created a housing product that is meant to be attractive for early career young professionals. In order to satisfy the need to generate categories of distinction, and appease the anxieties that this group feels towards diversity, GLL delivers high levels of security, not just in the plots, but also in the Village’s public space. This task has been facilitated by the security apparatus that the Olympic developments have been equipped with since the run up to the 2012 games (Fussey and Coaffee, 2012; Minton, 2012), and that EVML has inherited from the ODA. EVML operates 24/7 CCTV, and employs security guards to patrol the neighbourhood. In partnership with the LLDC and Westfield shopping centre, EVML hires Metropolitan Police officers to engage in additional policing in their areas. EVML, the LLDC and Westfield shopping centre security teams collaborate and share knowledge. They can track people, for instance, across the Olympic Park towards East Village. The control centre in the Village may get phone calls from the CCTV room in the Park saying that there are “suspicious” people coming from one area to another. The control centre in East Village can then pick up the images and monitor the situation accordingly (Interview with a GLL manager). As Chapter 2 showed, space securitisation is experienced negatively by the local low-income black youth of Stratford, whose accounts highlight how in the run up to the 2012 games, they were stopped by police in the QEOP, and subsequently dispersed (Kennelly, 2016; Kennelly and Watt, 2013).

Alongside space securitisation, EVML and the LLDC apply rules and regulations in the public realm of East Village and the Olympic Park (Fussey and Coaffee, 2012). For example, it is not permitted to enter ponds and canals, have a barbecue outside of the designated areas, put up gazebos or large umbrellas, and so forth¹⁷. Some of these rules and regulations are posted on signs at various points in the Park, as Figure 7 shows. Although guidelines might be useful to encourage visitors to respect the place and other

¹⁷ For more information on rules and regulations in the QEOP visit: <https://www.queenelizabetholympicpark.co.uk/guidance-note-for-picnics-on-queen-elizabeth-olympic-park>.

users, there is a sense that some of those applied by EVML and the LLDC are excessive. Those applied by the latter result in the *de facto* privatisation of the Park, even if the area is publicly owned (Minton, 2012).

Figure 7: Rules and Regulations in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park



(Source: Paul Watt)

Rules and regulations, coupled with space securitisation, aim at creating a fully predictable and sterile space where white middle-class individuals live in isolation (Bauman, 2003). According to Low (2004), GCs should have walls and gates that enclose the public space adjacent to the houses. However, Atkinson and Blandy (2013) suggest that even semi-walled or non-walled developments with security features such as CCTV and rules and regulations, which regulate the use of public space, should be included within the definition of GCs. During my observation in the neighbourhood's public space and reflections on security, I thought of East Village as a gated community made up of multiple gated communities. The first set of gates that I, as an outsider, came across is symbolic: it consists of the perceived insularity of the Village and its aesthetically

pleasing environment. Parklands, flowerbeds and cleanliness beautify the neighbourhood to valorise the perceptions of white middle-class residents, but alienate lower-class and ethnically diverse individuals living in the surrounding areas. The second set of gates is not as physical as walls could be: it consists of CCTV and control rooms that, however, can be as effective as blocks of bricks. The third set of gates is the most material of the three, and consists of the secured entry doors and gates that impede strangers from accessing the 11 plots where the apartments are located. They are therefore multiple GCs.

In this quote the GLL manager discusses the rationale for implementing high level of security in East Village:

“If you look on the police website for crime mapping, mapping of incidence, you’ll see that there’s quite a high incident of crime in the Stratford area. The incident of crime obviously is a negative aspect that potentially affects our letting prospects. So security is a very key consideration for us in terms of East Village as being a vibrant, friendly neighbourhood. Needs residents to feel secure!” (GLL manager)

In effect, the crime map on the London Metropolitan Police website (see [police.uk](https://www.police.uk)) shows that in June 2019, 735 crimes were reported in the Stratford and New Town ward. 532 were around Stratford Station and Stratford Centre (old part of Stratford), while an outstanding 0 were reported in East Village, Westfield and the Olympic Park (New Town). The only exception in the New Town was Stratford International Station, where 8 crimes were reported¹⁸. It is not specified what crimes were committed. These figures, however, confirm Atkinson and Blandy’s (2013) argument that in the contemporary world, safety and security has become a commodity that GCs’ residents purchase from developers. In the interview quotes below, the generation of socio-spatial boundaries with respect to Stratford, experienced as a lower-class and dangerous place, is a recurrent theme.

¹⁸ The Stratford and New Town crime map is available at: <https://www.police.uk/metropolitan/00BB02N/crime>.

6.3 Elective or Selective Belonging? The Divide between East Village and Old Stratford

The GLL and LLDC's spatial practices draw a separation line between East Village and the QEOP on one side, and Stratford and East London on the other side. The area where East Village has been built was part of the Stratford postcode E15. Cohen (2017) notes that its separation from the surrounding areas is reinforced by the creation of the new E20 postcode for the QEOP. This is meant to distinguish the new Olympic Park developments from Stratford E15 and to avoid local gangs' claims over the newly built Park and neighbourhoods (*ibid.*). The interview quotes below suggest that as the East Villagers cross the railway bridge that separates E20 and E15, they have the impression that they are entering a different realm: from East Village, which is green, modern, tidy, clean, well-maintained and safe, to Stratford, which is poor, ethnically diverse, rough, dirty and dangerous. I referred to this above as the symbolic set of gates that characterises the East Village GC. Such symbolic gates are reinforced by the insularity of the neighbourhood, which is evoked by Taylor:

“I don't know if you have realised this but we are almost on an island. There is a railway around, and this means to come here you always have to cross a bridge. So it's kind of a little island, and then anything you need you go to Westfield. I'm very tempted to take the tube and go elsewhere as fast as I am [...]. As soon as you cross the bridge to get out you are in a different city almost. It's very strange, the disconnect”. (Taylor, Male, White European, Freelance designer, Shared owner)

The socio-spatial boundary between E20 and E15 is very relevant in the East Villagers lived experiences, when they develop place-based categories of distinction (Bourdieu, 1986a). Chapter 5 discussed an othering process that the affluent East Villagers perpetuate in their dealings with social renters, who are perceived as the interior “other”. They also draw on this process to distinguish themselves from the lower-class, ethnically diverse population of the surrounding areas, which is depicted as materially and morally inferior: the exterior “other”. Drawing on Bauman's (2003) theorisations, such othering process can be seen as a manifestation of mixophobia: a way to avoid confronting diversity and therefore feeling uncomfortable.

Moreover, Chapter 5 argued that an elective sense of belonging (Savage et al., 2005) emerges in the lived experiences of the East Villagers. They claim moral ownership over

their place of residence because of its modern design, aesthetically pleasing environment, middle-class population, and - for shared owners - social interactions. However, when the East Villagers' discuss their sense of attachment to place in relation to the old part of Stratford, "selective belonging" (Watt, 2009a) emerges. Many East Villagers draw clear socio-spatial boundaries between their neighbourhood and the old part of Stratford, because of the diversity that characterises the latter. For this reason, they do not elect the whole of Stratford as the residential choice congruent with their lifestyles. The East Villagers talk of two Stratfords: the new, white middle-class East Village, and the working-class and ethnically diverse old Stratford located across the bridge. However, there is a difference in tone between professionals in the public and arts sectors on one side and professionals in the private sector on the other. The former group's accounts convey more sympathy with regards to issues of social inequality, as also Bacqué et al. (2015) have argued in their study of the London middle-class. For instance, Lina regrets such a separation:

"I think [Stratford] it's got quite a different feel to East Village. It does feel quite separated in many ways, which is a shame, because that should be part of Stratford, rather than being a separate place. It does feel that there is one side of the railway track and another side of the railway track". (Lina, Female, Asian, Community worker, Leaseholder)

Linda – a school teacher, originally from the area - notes how East Village has opposed socio-economic characteristics compared to the rest of East London:

"New East London, new milieu to London. Different community is here, new universities here. It's its own city, got its own vibe, which is good, it's all right. But what does that mean for the local people here, around here, living-wise? It's a good place to live, if you can afford it". (Linda, Female, Black British, School teacher, Shared Equity)

Similarly, Jade – another teacher in an East London school - notes that the socio-spatial boundary between the two areas is very clear in the residents' minds. Like many others, Jade uses the term "bubble" to highlight the divide between East Village and the QEOP on one side, and Stratford and East London on the other:

"I think there is a real divide between what is now being built out of the East Village. It's kind of like a bubble around everywhere else. Because I think there's a lot of poverty that we don't see until we leave this East Village bubble [...]. Here is where posh people live, if you want to put it

that way, and then there is the rest of Stratford, that it's old and it's not very nice to live in. I think there is a very clear divide between this is the new and this is the old. This is where you know people with a bit more money can afford, and that is where people who don't have that much money can go to live". (Jade, Female, White Canadian, School teacher, Intermediate renter)

As we saw in Chapter 2, Butler (2003) notes that the middle-class residents of Barnsbury (Islington) use the term "bubble" to describe their lives in close proximity to socio-ethnic difference, without having any real contact with it. As mentioned above, the middle-class East Villagers working in the private sectors are less sympathetic towards the old part of Stratford and its residents. Their words convey an appreciation for the Village's environment and disgust for the material - and therefore moral - decay of the surrounding areas:

"It's a bubble [East Village], really nice, gentrified, a lot of investments, really nice shops, the flats are really nice. It's a bubble, completely different from Stratford and the rest of East London. It's a really nice bubble!" (Alan, Male, White British, Software developer, Leaseholder)

"The area is a bubble of modern and contemporary design within an area of less contemporary and modern assets. So further outside if you go to Leyton, which is literally five minutes away, things start to become less developed. They start to become a little bit more rundown. I've been there a few times you just notice there's a big split between the Olympic Village and outside the Olympic Village. If you go to the Stratford Centre, they call it a shopping centre, but you notice there is a difference between here and outside. It's a bubble!". (Tom, Male, White British, Student, Private renter)

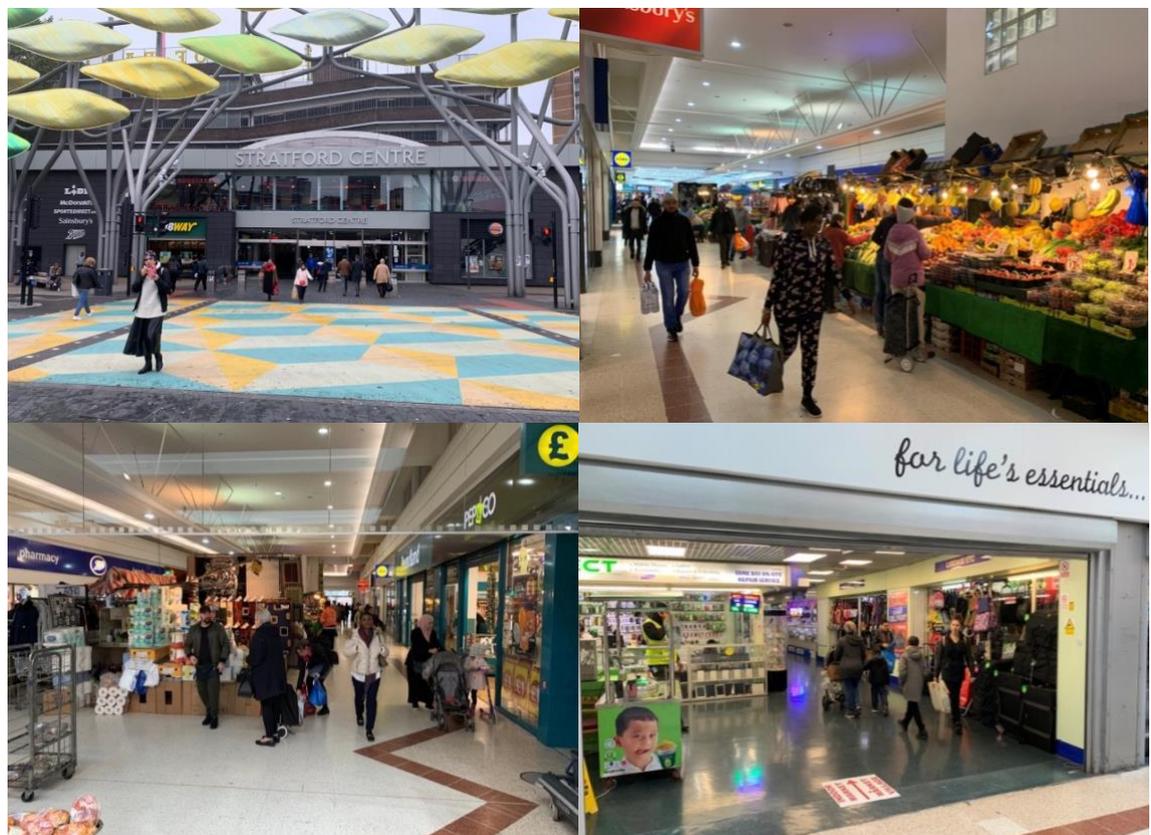
"There's not much going on in the rest of Stratford, and I'm not sure what the ownership is but I don't know why the old Stratford Centre... I don't know why it's still there. It's just... It's ugly! There's nothing good happens in there. I don't know why it's still there to be honest. But maybe people just refuse to develop it. I don't know but I just never go there. I just live in the new stuff. There's nothing going on in Stratford to be honest". (Jack, Male, White British, Self-employed estate agent, Private renter)

The Stratford Centre is still there because it is a working business and an important meeting point. It provides affordable and diverse shops and entertainment for the low-income, multi-ethnic Stratford population. However, fear and anxiety in relation to the built environment and the socio-ethnic difference that characterise it are frequent.

Stephan's quote below highlights how East Village has a totally different atmosphere from the rest of East London:

"The old Stratford Centre on the other side of Stratford it feels very East London. Maybe it's because buildings are older, and if you walk through Stratford Centre at night, there's a lot of people who are sleeping rough in there. And that makes me feel aware... Not in danger but that I have to be aware of my personal safety a bit more because there is a real risk that I might be robbed or something like that. You know the feeling when there is a lot of people who don't have a lot around me... [...]. There's a few people around that look a bit sketchy, some people obviously on drugs. So I try to be a bit more cautious". (Stephan, Male, White Australian, Research advisor, Private renter)

Figure 8: The Stratford Centre



(Source: Piero Corcillo)

As several authors have argued, women are often harassed by male individuals who construct public space as a masculine territoriality (Begun, 2008; Crouch, 2009; Viswanath and Mehrotra, 2017). Several women living in East Village feel in danger when they go to the old part of Stratford. Magda, for example, feels frightened by the comments of some young male individuals:

“It’s not very nice. I don’t feel very safe when I go there. So I don’t go there unless I have to. Sometimes I use Lidl for my shopping, but it just takes too long and too stressful. It doesn’t feel very safe over there. There’s a big contrast and divide, definitely! [...]. I think that young men and teenagers that are there and can say something to you and they can be quite offensive. And also at night-time, when the shops close it’s got a lot of homeless people in there and skateboarders in there [the Stratford Centre] ... It’s obviously sad that there’s homeless there, and they’re obviously fine, they don’t do anything wrong. It just doesn’t feel safe to walk through there. I just don’t have a nice experience there, because there’s a lot of youth congregating that sometimes can say things”. (Magda, Female, White British, Quantity surveyor, Private renter)

Other female East Villagers do not report verbal aggressions, but they have similar feelings, especially during night time:

“It’s got a different feel, I’m not so happy to walk around some of that at night, whereas I feel totally comfortable here. It’s got a different feel and a different character. I don’t spend that much time in the rest of Stratford. I suppose there’s more poverty, more need there”. (Gill, Female, White British, Student, Private renter)

“I’ve been on the other side at the bus station, and what’s that shopping mall called... Stratford Centre. So I have been in there, that was quite chaotic for me. I haven’t been there that much, it was mainly for the mail, I needed to post something. It’s not an area where I would frequently go, and I wanna go”. (Anna, Female, White European, Housewife, Private renter)

The East Villagers experience mixophobia (Bauman, 2003) – a feeling of anxiety about diversity - when they leave their “bubble” of safety to go into old Stratford. Their encounters with diversity such as black youth and rough sleepers, as well as the poor quality of the built environment, are not pleasurable experiences. The mall’s thoroughfare is public. Thus, when the shops close down at night it becomes the territory of skateboarders and a refuge for rough sleepers. The former are teenagers who take advantage of the nocturnal emptiness of the mall to congregate, where they find a ground for their skateboarding. Being empty at night, it becomes a perfect place for the Stratford youth to have fun and play out their identity, given that they are likely to be expelled from other places that could accommodate their needs (Kennelly, 2016). The rough sleepers find in the Stratford Centre a refuge from sleeping in the street.

Contrary to the majority of their neighbours, some professionals in the public and arts sectors describe the wider area in a positive way, and recognise in it sources of cultural value. By developing a sense of moral ownership in relation to the wider area, they display what Savage et al. (2005) define as elective belonging:

“I think the rest of the Stratford area is an amazing place! There is Stratford Theatre, it’s a nice building, there’s comedies on Monday. The shops are cheaper. It has different dynamics. I tended not to go there that much, but I started to more and more. So I think it’s cheaper, it has different dynamics in terms of the socio-economic kind of feel. It’s a bit more real, but there’s some quite good... You know I’ve been here for three years and now I’ve got friends from Leyton who are introducing me to you know the real context. So I’m getting to know it a bit better and I do enjoy it yeah!” (Nathan, Male, White Australian, School teacher, Shared owner)

Nathan’s words explain how the East Village environment insulates residents from the wider Stratford context, thus fostering selective belonging (Watt, 2009a) and mixophobia (Bauman, 2003). Richard recognises the divide between East Village and the old Stratford area. He is used to going out in Hackney Wick, where there are bars, restaurants and clubs. This bohemian environment attracts arts professionals like him. He also expresses excitement and curiosity for Stratford’s sources of cultural capital:

“I feel because the Village is here and Stratford is there, I never pass through it. But I was there yesterday because I had to buy something. I go there sometimes but I don’t pass through it. With the rest of the Stratford area I don’t engage as much as I would like. I don’t go to the theatre or the cinema enough. I feel like it’s separate”. (Richard, Male, White British, part-time PhD student/part-time lecture in the arts, Shared owner)

As this section has shown, Nathan and Richard’s views are in the minority. Most of the residents feel scared and disgusted by the otherness that characterises the old part of Stratford, which is perceived as a dangerous place.

6.3.1 The Olympic Power of Naming

Watt (2009a) discusses how middle-class individuals mobilise what Bourdieu (1991) refers to as the “power of naming” to create a symbolic distance between their neighbourhoods and nearby working-class areas. As we saw in Taylor’s and Tom’s quotes above, the East Villagers use the expression “Olympic Village” to generate

categories of distinction with respect to old Stratford, which draw on the different built environments and levels of cleanliness. Similarly, some interviewees comment that when asked where they live, they do not say Stratford. Rather, they say that they live in the “Olympic Village”. The reason for this seems to be that associating their home with an area with a bad reputation such as Stratford could be detrimental to their residential-based prestige:

“I tell people I live in East London, and then I tell people I live in the former Olympic Village. I don’t tell them I live in Stratford, because Stratford has a whole different connotation to the East Village. [...]. Stratford was an area I always avoided before moving to East Village. I never came here before in my life, because it has a terrible reputation”. (Michael, Male, White Canadian, Self-employed marketing expert, Private renter)

Kalidou does not explicitly mention Stratford’s negative reputation as the reason why he would not say that he lives there:

Kalidou: “I would say that it’s very close to the Olympic Stadium. So to most people I would say this is the Olympic Village. When I moved here initially and I spoke to friends about where I live I just said I live in the Olympic Village. And people instantly, geographically can associate the Olympic Village with East London”.

Interviewer: “Why don’t you say Stratford?”

Kalidou: “I don’t say Stratford I say the Olympic Village because people can easily pick that up. Because Stratford is more generic”. (Male, Black African, Entrepreneur, Intermediate renter)

Michael and Kalidou – as well as Taylor, Tom and others - mobilise the Olympic power of naming to reinforce the socio-spatial boundaries with the surrounding areas. The symbolic power of the Olympic Legacy is also deployed by naming the buildings and the streets after Olympic athletes or facets that can be immediately associated with the 2012 games, as Cohen (2017) has noted. Examples include Tukana Heights, Vesta House, Celebration Avenue, Galata Heights, Victory Parade and so forth. The Olympic Legacy, therefore, contributes to the area’s distinctive character and fosters selective belonging (Watt, 2009a).

6.3.2 Social Renters and Belonging

The social renters who are originally from Stratford and elsewhere in East London perceive a sense of belonging to the wider area. Samira – a middle-class social renter – is attached to both East Village and Stratford thanks to her longstanding social networks:

“I think I have quite a good connection, cause I’ve lived near Stratford, so I’ve got friends and family who live in the Stratford area. So I’ve got quite a close relationship with both Stratford and East Village”. (Samira, Female, Black British, Office manager, Single mother, Social renter)

As discussed in Chapter 7, several social renters, including BAME working-class single mothers, cannot afford to shop, have a meal or drink in East Village’s shops and restaurants. In fact, GLL selects and allows upscale retail services only. Moreover, in certain cases, ethnic origin alienates those who do not interiorise whiteness from the Village’s shops. Stratford is different: shopping streets are cheaper and more ethnically diverse. Therefore, they often go and use the shops and restaurants on the other side of the railway. They familiarise themselves with that area and develop a positive relationship with it:

“I go to Stratford a lot, not Westfield, Stratford Centre. I go there a lot, I use the shops there. There’s a different mix, ‘cause Stratford Centre is totally different from Westfield. Stratford Centre you have more variety, more mix. But Westfield and East Village you’ve got just one trend you have there”. (Margaret, Female, Black African, Public worker, Single mother, Social renter)

Savage (2010) points out that the politics of belonging create winners and losers. GLL delivers a product which is attractive to young early career professionals. This may be appreciated by those BAME East Villagers who possess sufficient levels of economic and cultural capital to align themselves to the mainstream socio-ethnic group. However, GLL’s approach creates a sense of psychological dislocation (Jeffery, 2018) that challenges the sense of belonging of those social renters whom feel alienated from the Village’s public space. Their lifestyles are not congruent with the white middle-class habitus of many East Villagers. Kinje notes how on the other side of Stratford there is more freedom to express one’s identity, whereas in East Village she feels constrained:

“I’ve got friends and family there. Of course it is nice to live here, it’s closed, it’s a bit private, so it’s nice. Ok, here you feel a bit restricted, whereas out there nobody cares, you do what you wanna do. Here I do feel like I’m being watched all the time. You have to be a certain way. Here they think they are special! I mean I can live both places, out there and here. I don’t care, you know? Because I don’t judge anyone”. (Kinje, Female, Black African, Home Office worker, Single mother, Social renter)

Those social renters who moved to East Village from outside East London do not have many local connections. They feel the divide between the “bubble” and the surroundings. In a similar way to their wealthier neighbours, their sense of belonging is spatially circumscribed:

“It’s a good area [East Village]. But it’s just like it’s a good area next to a bad area. So I wish they could continue to expand and do the good work and the nice houses all around. But it’s just like this area is really nice, but there is also some areas that are really bad. Also Newham in general doesn’t have a good reputation”. (Zoya, Female, Black African, Part-time interpreter, Social renter)

Classification struggles are at play in the experience of several social renters. By criticising the materially and morally run-down environment of the working-class and ethnically diverse Stratford area, they distinguish themselves from Stratford residents with similar scion-ethnic backgrounds as theirs. Living in East Village is a distinctive symbol, which is used to align with white middle-class identity. Simona – whose account is below - is a working-class single mother. She is not originally from East London but works in the old part of Stratford and is quite familiar with that area. Thus, she does not have a feeling of repulsion towards it. Nonetheless, she notes that the East Village “bubble” generates negative perceptions and judgments about the surrounding areas:

“I live here and I work there. I know both areas. Whereas if you just live in this area you’d be scared to go to that area because you’ve been so like... I don’t know you’ve been like princessified! After you’ve lived here and everything is so different you start forgetting what it is like in the real world. I’m going just down the road, everything changes”. (Simona, Female, Mixed Latino/Middle-Eastern background, Casino dealer, Single mother, Social renter)

Olga has contradictory feelings. On the one hand, she recognises the sources of cultural capital in the old part of Stratford. On the other hand, she participates in the classification game to demonstrate that she is distinct from those of her same social

class living on the other side of the railway bridge and aligned to the dominant social group in East Village. Olga seems to experience an interior struggle and negotiation between mixophilia and mixophobia (Bauman, 2003), attraction and repulsion, appreciation and condemnation:

“I use the Stratford circus where the theatre is a lot. I use a lot that area. I don’t know the other side of Stratford very well. So I can’t have an opinion apart from the shopping centre where I shop and I tend to go in and out as soon as possible. It’s not really a place where I want to hang out, but it has a lot of things in there, interesting things, and cute things. So I go there. And the theatre where we go with pleasure and we try to get involved in the activities they have there”.

(Olga, Female, Black European, Own account hairdresser, Single mother, Social renter)

Classification struggles, experienced as fear of crime and dislike for the run-down Stratford built environment, generates socio-spatial boundaries and a sense of selective belonging (Watt, 2009a) in the lived experiences of several East Village social renters.

6.4 Aesthetics of Community

As discussed in Chapter 2, imposing certain aesthetic preferences on neighbourhoods and homeplaces is a means by which powerful groups demonstrate their symbolic domination over the field of public space and form place-based identity (August, 2014; Bourdieu, 1991; Duncan, 2004; Low, 2004; Sibley, 1995). Often, this happens against the backdrop of and in contrast to an outside world: a stereotyped constitutive other that does not look as nice as their own world (*ibid.*). The interview quotes that we have discussed above suggest that a similar process occurs in East Village, where most of the residents produce their identity by generating socio-spatial boundaries drawn on the contrast between the cleanliness, tidiness and beautiful landscapes of their neighbourhood, and the dirt, disorder and ugliness of the wider Stratford area and its residents. In East Village this process informs the habitus of white middle-class individuals. They become the resident group holding the legitimate lifestyle within the neighbourhood field. The Village’s environment requires high levels of maintenance. GLL understands the importance of living in an aesthetically pleasing environment for its customers. This aesthetic creates a product for visual consumption (Duncan, 2004), and

GLL's tenants are happy to pay more for it so as to increase the prestige of their homeplace. Thus, categories of distinction are generated (Bourdieu, 1986a). EVMML employs gardeners and street cleaners who work on a quotidian basis to look after the streets, the sidewalks and the green areas, and to ensure that they are kept tidy, clean and visually appealing:

“The management company also is advised by Comical Broadgate Estates who are very well known for managing public ground in London that Londoners – thousands of Londoners – use every day, like Broadgate Circle where the public ground is managed to a high standard. And we think that the product East Village is fantastic inside the apartments, but outside the apartments should be as well maintained. I should add to that the vision of the Management Company is to deliver best value and high standards”. (GLL manager)

However, these practices risk restricting access to space. In the context of class and race oppression, the least powerful social groups are constructed as inappropriate users of space (August, 2014). Considerations of aesthetics lead to the sterilisation of public space, and imply that the number of actors in this field must be limited (Duncan, 2004; Low, 2004). In East Village this is done via a variety of strategies. Firstly, the people who live there – even in social housing - are selected through a set of economic, cultural and social criteria that we discussed in Chapter 4. Secondly, the selection of upmarket retail facilities mostly attracts to the shops, restaurants and the adjacent public space affluent residents and customers, as discussed in Chapter 7. Thirdly, ground control restricts the number of ways in which the public realm can be used. Everything that happens must be planned and authorised by the freeholder. No residents' initiatives, events or street stalls are allowed, if they go contrary to QDD's vision. Duncan (2004: 7) argues that the landscape as an aesthetic production acts as a subtle but powerful mechanism of exclusion. Commenting on Olympics-related urban regeneration, the privatisation of public land and space aestheticisation, Minton (2012) draws on data from an interview with Baroness Ford, the head of the Olympic Park Legacy Company (the company in charge of managing the QEOP before the LLDC was appointed). In the interview, Ford sets out her aesthetic aspirations for the Park, which is to transform it into a place such as the great estates of Belgravia and South Kensington, two of London's most affluent areas. However, Ford fails to mention the fact that the aristocracy of the nineteenth century built those neighbourhoods in a pre-democratic era. Those streets and squares

were private and closed to the common population. Minton (2012) observes that the new Olympic neighbourhoods are characterised by the same model of aesthetically appealing and privatised space. In continuity with this pattern, GLL produces the East Village public realm as an attractive “product” for its affluent residents/customers. Nevertheless, GLL and its tenants fail to acknowledge the social inequalities that these practices generate.

Let us bear in mind that East London is one of the most ethnically diverse areas in the UK (Watt and Bernstock, 2017; Wessendorf, 2013, 2014), and over 70% of the Newham population is BAME according to the 2011 Census. Smith (2015, cited in Viehoff 2015: 190) points out that BAME individuals feel alienated from the QEOP because they do not share the same aesthetic values as the white middle-class, upon which the area has been designed. However, we must also bear in mind that socio-ethnic differences among BAME individuals counts. Therefore, they cannot be considered as a homogeneous group (Barwick, 2018). Middle-class BAME residents appreciate and enjoy the GLL’s policies, as they allow for an appropriation of the symbols of distinction:

“We always kind of like say it feels like you are on holiday when you come into this area. In the sense that it has that kind of feel, because it’s new and it’s very kind of well-maintained and clean and you’ve got the Westfield there. It kind of like has a holiday feel to it”. (Gina, Female, Black British, Health visitor, Social renter)

The characterisation of East Village as a hotel that we are discussing throughout this thesis finds confirmation in Gina’s words. Building on Benson and Jackson’s (2013) argument that middle-class claims to belonging are also based on place-imagining, we can note that here the neighbourhood is imagined and represented as a holiday place. While in Bacqué et al. (2015) this representation of space is based on the presence of private sport and leisure facilities, in East Village this also relates to the aesthetics of the area, thoroughly looked after by the management. Hence, residents – like the guests of a holiday village - do not have to worry about anything. They just consume the pleasing environment. However, further excluding the outsiders coming from the surrounding areas, the spatial practices implemented by GLL are likely to exclude working-class BAME social renters. The interview excerpts below suggest that on the one hand, these individuals might feel unwelcome when they walk around the Village. On the other

hand, there is the impression that affluent East Villagers expect that anyone who lives or uses the neighbourhood adheres to the hegemonic aesthetics categories of the place:

“Here you can tell! You have to even dress in a certain way. You could tell not messy. Even if you go out with this [African headgear] in your head you have to do it in a nice way. Do you understand what I’m saying? [...] Because they look at you like ‘you look messy’. I feel like you know maybe I need to make it tight, make it look fits properly. Maybe I’m going to Sainsbury’s with my tracksuit or your t-shirt yes? People look at you funny like ‘you are different’. Even when you are passing the road here and you’re not dressed in a certain way, people in the car you can see they are looking at you ‘you are different, you look local’. Do you know what I’m trying to say?” (Kinje, Female, Black African, Home Office worker, Single mother, Social renter)

This is an example of how ethnic minorities and working-class women may feel psychologically dislocated in the East Village public space, as more affluent residents make them feel out of place. The system of values, norms, and practices that become hegemonic in the neighbourhood facilitates the association of working-class and BAME identity with disorder and lack of morality, as already argued in several studies regarding socio-spatial exclusion (see for example McKenzie, 2015; Skegs, 1997; Sibley, 1995). This stigmatised perception of difference, which Kinje notes, locates the “ugly” and “disordered” BAME bodies elsewhere, outside of the Village where they do not belong. The affluent East Villagers approve the spatial practices that the freeholder implements, because they legitimise the way they distinguish themselves, and position the “locals” in a morally and socially subaltern position. Private renters live in separate blocks from the other residents. Therefore, when they first move into the neighbourhood, they do not necessarily notice that there is social housing, which is experienced as classed and racialised otherness. Some were surprised when they saw BAME individuals walking around:

“I didn’t expect so many Muslims here, not that I’m racist but it’s just something I didn’t expect”. (Mei, Female, Asian, Student, Private renter)

When Kevita is asked if she has noticed any tensions in the Village, it would appear that she associates the word tension with the presence of social renters and ethnic minorities:

Kevita: “I wouldn’t say tensions, but we have just noticed that there is other people living here”.

Interviewer: "For instance did something happen?"

Kevita: "Nothing, no tensions!" (Female, Asian, Doctor, Private renter)

Kevita seems to become defensive when asked if something happened with these individuals. The impression is left that both Mei and Kevita feel uncomfortable with the presence of ethnic minorities. They have a BAME background as well, but they have interiorised whiteness (Sibley, 1995). In the quote below, we can note another mixophobic reaction after a nocturnal encounter with teenagers hanging out in the Village:

"A lot kind of teenagers, school children, are kind of attracted to the area during evening times. Loads of groups of boys hang out, and they work out in the kind of gym area, there's a sort of outside rock wall and bars, and they congregate there with music and they do some working out, and they quite intimidate people. For example the Portland Lake if you walk there at certain times at night they'd be congregating on the benches smoking weed. It's difficult walking through there peacefully when they are there because they are just there with their music smoking cannabis!" (Maria, Female, Asian, Pharmacist, Shared Equity)

In informal conversations with residents and shopkeepers, I was told that some of these teenagers live in the Village; others come from the nearby surroundings. In the interview with a Triathlon Homes manager they commented that over time, they have managed to convince GLL to spend slightly lower amounts of money on space securitisation, and to tolerate inoffensive unconventional behaviour of small groups of three or four people. In effect, these teenagers do not seem to have engaged in aggressive behaviour towards Maria. Nonetheless, she feels intimidated and anxious about their presence.

6.5 Nature and the Loss of a Landscape of Privilege

The East Villagers' representations of space present some elements of Bacqué et al.'s (2015) characterisation of the rural village. In relation to their case studies of West Horsley and Effingham in the London commuter belt, these authors argue that middle-class residents emphasise rural landscapes in their accounts of their neighbourhoods (*ibid.*). Similarly, the East Villagers romanticise their neighbourhood and describe it as having a countryside feel. From this idyllic representation, they derive a sense of

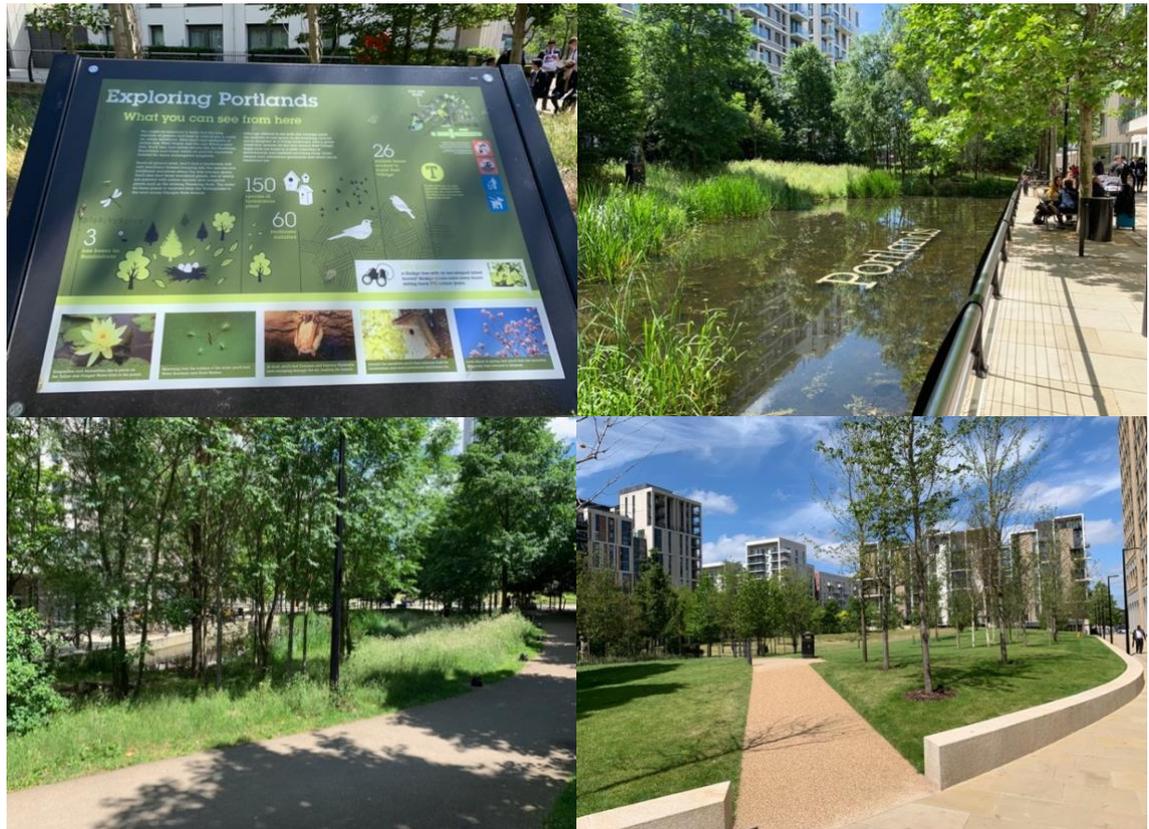
privilege based on contact with nature. Duncan (2004) explores the role of greenery in suburban place production, which generates a sense of community through the creation of natural reserves, gardens and parks to beautify homeplaces.

GLL recognises the symbolic value that living near nature has for affluent residents, and thus reproduces glimpses of natural and wild landscapes in East Village. Contact with nature is delivered for residents' visual consumption. The area is advertised as a green island that offers a retreat from the chaos of London:

“You’ll find parks and public gardens dotted across the former London 2012 Athletes’ Village, from the working waterscape of the Wetlands to the community hub at Victory Park. Literally next door, you can enjoy the biggest park built in Europe for 150 years: the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, home to sporting venues, 35 km of paths and nature trails, and 25 acres of green space” (Eastvillage.com: N.p.).

Bourdieu (2005: 23) argues that developers utilise advertising strategies that pander to already existing dispositions of consumers in order to exploit them. They use poetic language to evoke the lived experiences of home seekers. Similarly, GLL mobilises words such as parks, gardens, waterscape, and community, that recall experiences and images associated with houses and the relationship between homeplace and public space. As we will see below, another keyword in the GLL advertisement is “dotted” nature.

Figure 9: Nature in East Village. Portland in Victory Parade and Victory Park



(Source: Piero Corcillo)

Based on the consideration that the regeneration of brownfields can address social and environmental decline (Atkinson et al., 2014), the LLDC highlights that building neighbourhoods that provide green areas and open space, and facilitate contact with nature, is a key component in their Local Plan: “Improving the relationship between people and the environment creates social, psychological, economic and environmental benefits. Regeneration provides opportunities to increase connections between built structures, waterways and green spaces to improve this relationship” (LLDC, 2015: 70). Regeneration should therefore promote contact with nature and wildlife as a positive community value. Moreover, the Local Plan states: “When shaping the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, policy and research were applied to develop a high-quality, biodiverse and resilient environment that creates shared benefits for both people and wildlife” (LLDC, 2015: 71). However, the impression is created that GLL and the LLDC produce nature in East Village and the QEOP for the visual consumption of the London-based middle-class, which is happy to buy into aesthetically pleasing environments and exchange economic capital with the symbolic capital that living near nature provides. Thus, once profitability

is maximised by building residential developments, the same could be done with the plots of land where no planning permission is in place to build on.

Figure 10: Nature in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park



(Source: Piero Corcillo)

In the interviews, the celebration of the East Village’s bucolic environment and the consequent uniqueness of such a landscape in London’s otherwise urban aesthetic is a recurrent theme. The construction of space as a green natural reserve contributes to the imagining of the neighbourhood as a rural village and as a retreat away from the chaos of the city:

“When you come to East Village, or even in the Olympic Park you wouldn’t believe that is in London, because of the open space and all the trees. You are walking around and you think it was in the countryside, and also in the Park it’s just so nice! Peaceful, everything is friendly yeah...”. (Jane, Female, Mixed British/Asian background, Unemployed single mother, Social renter).

Anna notes that telling relatives and friends how idyllic the East Villagescape is, and inviting them over to see it, is something she is proud of:

“What I normally tell people who haven’t been here is that they should come up here and see it, because it’s beautiful with the Park, the greenery and the Village area. Because it’s so quiet. I mean we are in London and we can have the window open during the night, and it’s quiet”.
(Anna, Female, White European, Housewife, Private renter)

GLL’s strategy to stimulate pre-existing disposition of home seekers is effective, especially when evoking contact with nature into the minds of white middle-class individuals. Michael has interiorised another of GLL’s advertising slogans “Best place to live” (GLL, 2014; 2016) and much of the GLL’s advertising repertory:

“I always describe it as a great place to live, because you are 20 minutes into the City of London and you have here fresh air, a lot of green, new buildings, new parks, cycling canals, everything. This is the best place to live in London!” (Michael, Male, White Canadian, Self-employed marketing expert, Private renter)

Large housing corporations such as QDD exercise symbolic violence also on white middle-class individuals with the support of the state, as Bourdieu (2005) has argued. On the one hand, the neoliberal state shapes the housing market in such a way that housing options are limited for the new middle classes, whom do not possess very high amounts of economic capital. In London, they need to look for a privately rented accommodation, or for a shared ownership option, given the highly inflated cost of owning a property outright. On the other hand, by emphasising aesthetics and contact with nature, QDD triggers a process that acts under the level of consciousness to persuade them that their residential solution is the best that they can desire. Katy highlights how the East Village’s environment and sense of community fosters boundary making that distinguishes East Village from the surrounding areas and the rest of London. The Village’s romanticised image reminds her of the country village where she was born and brought up:

“I describe it as a village. So it’s like nowhere else in London. It has a village environment and that’s where I’ve grown up. It’s like an independent village within the centre of London”. (Katy, Female, White British, Marketing manager, Shared owner)

Nevertheless, closeness to nature and distance from London’s chaos are illusory; not only because as the result of urban regeneration these aspects are artificial, but also because a large part of the greenery is being replaced by other developments. Two 26-

and 30-storey tower blocks are being built in the middle of Victory Park, which was the largest green area in the Village. In addition, there are plans for the construction of other towers, which will take over most of the open space, and will change the Village's skyline – the 11 original blocks are 10 to 12 storeys tall, and will block the view that many residents currently enjoy. In addition, five new neighbourhoods (Chobham Manor, East Wick, Marshgate Wharf, Sweet Water and Pudding Mill), which will provide about 24,000 new homes, are being built around the Olympic Park. At the time of writing, Chobham Manor – the first of these new neighbourhoods that borders the northern side of East Village – has been completed. Together with other developments in Hackney Wick, Fish Island and Stratford, the new residential complexes will bring over 100,000 new residents into the QEOP by 2031 (LLDC, 2015). In addition, the Stratford Water Front and the southern part of the Olympic Park are going to host the Educational and Cultural District, which is currently being built, and should be finished by 2021. The Educational and Cultural District will host a new University College London campus (UCL East), the London College of Fashion, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the Sadler's Wells Theatre (LLDC, 2016, 2017). The new constructions are taking over the open space in the Park, further reducing the green areas available for residents and visitors. The rural village environment that GLL and the LLDC advertise was one of the main reasons why several residents bought into "the East Village product". Nevertheless, within 20 years, East Village and the QEOP will become a new and densely populated part of the city. The urban chaos that the East Villagers want to avoid is going to be there soon. Figure 11 shows what East Village will be like when the new developments are completed.

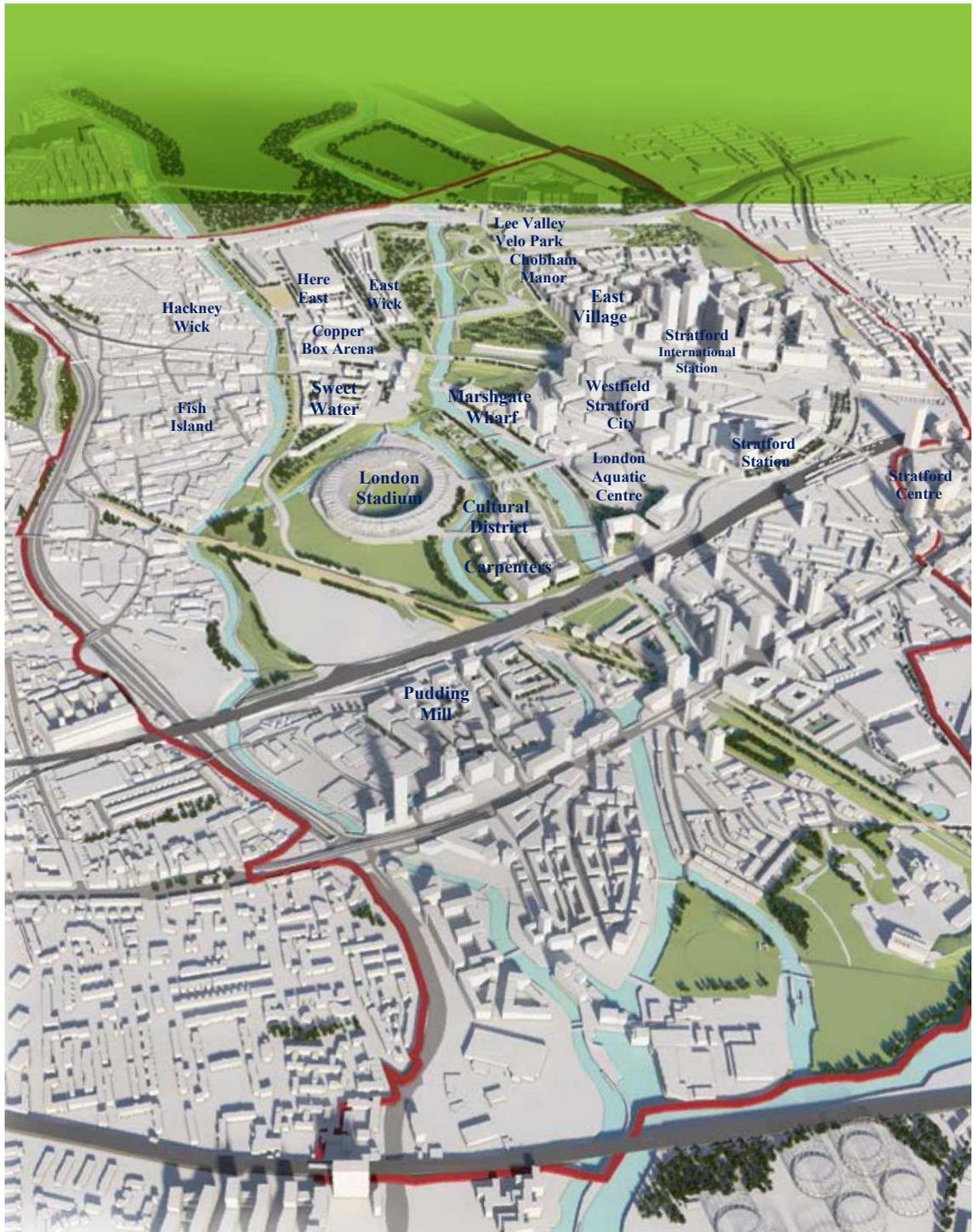
Figure 11: New East Village Heights



(Source: LLDC, 2014a: 32)

In Figure 11, we can observe the sharp contrast between the dimensions of the original blocks and the new ones, and how the latter are dramatically changing the skyline. Moreover, Plots N 8 and N 16, which include two 26- and 30-storey towers and two 12- and 15-storey blocks respectively, are taking over most of Victory Park, considerably reducing the amount of green areas in the neighbourhood. Finally, Plots N 6 (two 25- and 28-storey towers) and N 18-19 (two 36-storey towers) will further reduce the amount of open space available (LLDC, 2014 a, b). What is left of Victory Park - the gardens, the ponds and the dots of wildlife in Victory Parade - will still provide the “dotted” nature necessary to advertise the image of a green village. Figure 12 offers a map of the QEOP and its related developments.

Figure 12: Map of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park's Developments



(Source: LLDC, 2015; Names added by Piero Corcillo)

Within a few years, what is described as the largest park built in Europe in the last 150 years (Eastvillage.com) will be reduced to a limited green area between East Village,

Chobham Manor, East Wick, Sweet Water and Marshgate Wharf. Some greenery will also remain around the London Stadium. As we can see in Figure 10, the part of the Park that borders East Village has been produced as a biodiverse area which, the LLDC claims, hosts several animal and vegetal species (LLDC, 2015). East Village and the new Olympic neighbourhoods will still be marketed as areas where greenery, wildlife and biodiversity are an integral part of the urban fabric. However, only “dotted” greenery will remain once the area is fully developed.

Unsurprisingly, the new developments have resulted in generalised animosity, anti-urbanism, and anti-development stances among the East Villagers, as they will negatively affect the distinctive character of the area. Loss of greenery becomes loss of a landscape of privilege, community values and place-based identity:

“I wanted to have a bit of green. This is what it was advertised first, even though all the green is disappearing now. It’s called the Village, but it’s not gonna be a village anymore [...]. The garden [Victory Park] doesn’t exist anymore cause they decided to build a massive building. And when I moved in I wasn’t told there’ll be a massive building in front of us. Loads of people had bought and then we received some letters telling us they were building a block and I didn’t know! [...] In about 5 years’ time it’s gonna be extremely crowded. The Park is gonna be crowded, the swimming pool is gonna be crowded, everything is gonna be crowded. So the point of this place was to live in a village, a little community, and it’s becoming different”.

(Marine, Female, White European, School manager/teacher, Shared owner)

Marine’s evocation of nostalgia for the lost community seems to be nostalgia for the aesthetics of community related to the greenery that is disappearing, and the consumption of romanticised landscapes (Duncan, 2004). Marine feels that her material and emotional interests as a homeowner are threatened by the increasing number of people that are moving into the new developments. The rural village is being transformed into an ordinary piece of city, and the small community immersed in the green where everyone knows everyone is not there anymore:

“It’s getting busier and busier, and more crowded and more crowded. They are building in Victory Park, so people can’t use that space anymore. And also they are going to build in the Olympic Park as well. So I think this is gonna reduce the sense of community a little bit more. We are gonna lose a lot of green space. I’m disappointed with the loss of green space, and

disappointed about the [increasing] amount of people “. (Nathan, Male, White Australian, School teacher, Shared owner)

“The reason why it was so great it’s because it was so empty. It forced people to branch out and be friends with other groups. Maybe when it gets bigger people start to change. We are not sure what will happen”. (Thomas, Male, White South-African, Surveyor, Shared owner)

Zoya also expresses nostalgia for the lost rural idyll and what Victory Park was like before they started the construction of the new tower blocks. The romantic villagescape and the greenery that they were promised are now disappearing, resulting in a loss of amenities:

“The first impression that we had when we moved here was a lot of green areas, loads of gardens! But now since we moved in they’ve started to build houses, more houses and all the green areas now are disappearing. Like down here [in Victory Park] there was an open space that was really green. Now they are building other houses. So they’re not living up to their promise, ‘cause this is what we were attracted to, open areas where people can walk and be free and enjoy the good weather. Now everywhere is building building building”. (Zoya, Female, Black African, Part-time interpreter, Social renter)

The East Villagers, regardless of their socio-economic condition, cannot oppose the forces of global and local capital that are developing the area, having been mobilised by the Olympic regeneration machine (Broudehoux, 2016; Fox Gotham, 2016). Kinje highlights the lack of power that residents experience with respect to the plans for developing the area:

“The worst thing around here is they’re building too much houses! We’re paying a lot of money to live here but they’re building too much! Look here [Manhattan Gardens Tower beside Stratford international Station]. It’s nice for me to sit and look into Westfield ok? Now they’re gonna come and build something in there. They’re gonna block my view, we’re gonna be too much. Who do we speak to, we don’t want it!” (Kinje, Female, Black African, Home Office worker, Singla mother, Social renter)

Theodor is an older private renter. He would like to live in a quiet and tranquil area. He does not seem interested in the sources of cultural capital that the new venues in the cultural district will bring to the area, and he would rather maintain the tranquillity and privilege of the rural village:

“I think the fact that they are putting too many blocks of buildings here, I think that you have it’s going to be destroyed. Instead of having blocks that are going to fit in the area you’ve got 32-storey blocks down here [in Victory Park] that are facing where I live. Over here [at the edge with the Olympic Park] you are going to have two tall blocks, and you’re gonna have the tall block down at Stratford International Station. And then they are going to take up the space as you go down to the Copper Box Arena. There’s gonna be too many buildings here I think. And they are going to build in the places that are facing the swimming pool. It’s nice to have a cultural area, but there might have more culture than what we need. It’s a shame!” (Theodor, Male, White British, Retired, Private renter)

The doubt that the Cultural District is going to deliver real benefits for local residents is a legitimate one. In addition to increasing property value, it is probably going to increase the number of visitors to the area, making it less liveable for local people. In the following section, we will see how the loss of green space is also taking away spaces where social interaction could occur.

6.5.2 Green space and Social Interactions

Parks and green spaces are suitable spaces for neighbourly interactions (Atkinson et al., 2014; Jones et al., 2015; Neal et al., 2017, 2018). During my observation in Victory Park - before the works for the new blocks started – I noted that on warm days, many people used that space. There were young people, as well as families with children. The adults were sitting or lying down, sunbathing, having a drink, or picnicking. People who were sitting on the grass next to each other had a chance to chat and get to know each other. It was also a place for children to play together, thus creating relationships. Even parents whose children were playing together had an incentive to start up conversations. Because of its position in the middle of East Village, with all the blocks set around it, Victory Park was a focal point; it was a large green space with grass and small hills, which attracted the residents. Victory Park was a place where people from different socio-economic backgrounds could meet, interact and possibly establish relationships. There is a mismatch between the LLDC’s (2015) policy aims to promote community building and provide recreational space by delivering green space, and the actual outcomes. As we saw above, GLL even advertises Victory Park as a “community hub” (Eastvillage.com).

A portion of the Park is still there (See Figure 11). However, it is much smaller than it was before. In addition, it is obviously unpleasant to lie down in a green rectangle in the shadow of two massive tower blocks. As Zara and Alexandra highlight below, now that the new blocks have taken over Victory Park, there are fewer occasions for neighbourly interactions and fewer spaces for children to play:

“This green space that was here when the buildings weren’t here, you would see people, everyone would be out there sitting there, enjoying there, and that’s why you’d make friends! Because you would meet other people and you start talking to them. That’s how you make friends. If you don’t have these spaces how are you supposed to meet people and make friends?” (Zara, Female, Asian, Researcher, Intermediate renter)

“The buildings around here are taking up a lot of the greenery and it’s very noisy. The kids can’t play in certain areas now because of the buildings. I think it’s a big shame that they are building the big thing there in the middle, opposite to Sainsbury’s, because it’s taking a lot of the area. The children were playing with the little park things there. It’s kind of ruined what it looks you know”. (Alexandra, Female, White British, Disabled, Private renter)

The green areas could provide space for social mixing. Nevertheless, when it comes to sacrificing them to increase revenues, considerations about social mix and residents’ interactions do not appear to be of primary importance. The same logic seems to drive the LLDC. The corporation’s Community and Business Team officer mentions an interesting initiative that could foster social interactions between residents from different socio-economic backgrounds: The Mobile Garden City. The idea was to develop a community of food growers and to encourage people to come together:

“One of them [projects to bring the community together] is the Mobile Garden City. We created a mobile garden, which is essentially food growing, and we worked with a lot of East Village residents to get them along. And so they really enjoy that space. We’ve got residents from Leyton, Stratford and it was a great community space for them to do social events, but also to help them maintain the garden. And over the course of the one year and a half [the period in which it was open] we had over 2,500 people that came along. And a lot of East Village residents would come on a weekly basis to look after the garden”. (LLDC Community and Business Officer)

The garden was on part of the land where Chobham Manor has been built. The reason why it was mobile was because it was a meanwhile use project¹⁹, which aimed to empower the local community. In essence, they needed to start building on that land. According to the manager, the garden was going to reopen next to the Copper Box Arena (see Fig. 12 p. 197), and it would stay there until they needed to move it off again to develop that area. At the time of writing (November 2020) the Mobile Garden City had not reopened. Despite repeated requests via email, the LLDC did not provide an explanation. Creating occasions and places for social interaction seems subordinated to generating revenue by developing the area.

6.6 Public Space and Social Interactions

As noted in Chapter 5, the majority of the East Village's private and intermediate renters are not interested in establishing social networks with their neighbours, since they are on short-term leases. Shared owners are planning to live in the Village for a longer period of time, and tend to familiarise themselves with neighbours from similar socio-economic backgrounds, as a way to form common bonds as a group of home owners. With respect to early career young professionals – who make up the majority of the Village population – Wessendorf (2014) has argued that they are not keen on mixing with their neighbours. On the one hand, several East Villagers avoid community in the sense of seeking contact with their neighbours. On the other hand, the way in which GLL controls public space and the socio-spatial practices that they implement constitute additional limits to the interaction between residents, especially between those from different socio-economic backgrounds. In a neighbourhood where several ethnic groups live together, interactions and even confrontations over the use of public space are crucial to make such groups understand and find ways to feel comfortable with each other (Jones et al., 2015; Neal et al., 2017, 2018; Wessendorf, 2014)

Ground control, and the formalisation of relationships that we discussed in Chapter 5, do not facilitate social interactions. In this way, the affluent East Villagers perceive a

¹⁹ This term refers to the short-term use of temporary empty buildings and other spaces until they are used for what has been decided.

sense of community through the prism of GLL's controlling mechanisms, as manifested in how it looks after public space, and provides services such as security, sport activities and events. GLL is a company of the kind discussed by Atkinson and Blandy (2013) and Blackshaw (2010). It has replaced public authorities in providing residents with services and recreational space. Although the East Villagers regularly pay their council tax, the Newham council has limited jurisdiction in the neighbourhood. Only the streets are publicly owned. The pavements, the squares, the parks and gardens are owned by GLL. Even waste collection is carried out by the landlord. Thus, Michael and many other interviewees have developed a sense of community based on the landlord's practices:

Michael: "I don't think there is an overall sense of community per se [...]. But there is something special about that. You are not just living anywhere ok?"

Interviewer: "What do you mean?"

Michael: "So, when I come home I know I've come to my community, because it has its own security, level of tidiness, organisation. Get Living London looks after everything! So I get a sense of community from the structure. But I don't think people feel 'oh I live in East Village!' right? It feels you live there, but the heart is not part of it". (Male, White Canadian, Self-employed marketing expert, Private renter)

Michael metaphorically uses the word heart to explain that his sense of community does not derive from interactions with neighbours. He has developed a special chemistry and a sense of moral ownership with his place of residence as described in Savage et al. (2005). This derives from the way the landlord prioritises the preferences of white middle-class individuals like him, and looks after the neighbourhood. Again, this sense of belonging is spatially selective (Watt, 2009a), because Michael and many East Villagers draw clear socio-spatial boundaries between their neighbourhood and the wider Stratford area. These boundaries are reinforced by the GLL's socio-spatial practices:

"In a way you feel like you are different from when you come outside of here or you're going to like Plaistow, you could see the difference! When you come from there and you come here you could see we are a small village. Even though we don't know each other. I don't know maybe they need to do more activities to know each other... Nobody knows anybody... You do feel a sense of community you could see the difference, some sort of atmosphere, a bit of safeness..." (Kinje, Female, Black African, Home Office worker, Single mother, Social renter)

“I think it’s a very nice atmosphere, and I feel like everybody who lives here likes to live here, and likes to be part of it. But I don’t really mix much [...]. It’s certainly a nice place to be, yeah”.

(Jack, Male, White British, Self-employed estate agent, Private renter)

These quotes show how a sense of community does not derive from interactions. Several residents perceive a sense of community from the events, activities and sport classes that are held in the public ground. Even though many of them do not participate in such events, and if they do they tend not to mix with strangers, they enjoy the neighbourhood feel that such events generate. Notably, none of these events are organised by residents. What happens must be planned and controlled by GLL:

“Everything is here, everybody is here, you have everything. They organise a lot of stuff, you can go on a Sunday morning to the yoga if you want. If you wanna do a barbecue you can just book a place in the barbecue areas. I know they do also the open cinema during the summer. So as I could read [from the newsletters] I think it’s a really nice place, there is a lot of sense of community”. (Luana, Female, White European, Waitress, Private renter)

Enrique also notes how the events that GLL organises in the public space generate a sense of community in the Village, without necessarily implying that one needs to participate in them. However, he holds a more critical view than his neighbours. According to him, this shows how constructed the vibrancy and atmosphere of the Village are:

“It feels like when GLL organises things that normally I cannot do anyway, but there is this thing that they have to push things to happen, like a cinema outdoors, there is now the Sunday market. So all these things that push to create a sense of community. My feel is like there is an interest to create a vibrant atmosphere as quickly as possible from a place that didn’t exist before [...]. Some days you see a lot of people and there’s a lot of things going on, and you see a lot of people on the green areas doing things like classes and I didn’t even know they existed. And some other days there is no one. It’s very strange!” (Enrique, Male, White European, Freelance dancer, Shared owner)

Enrique contrasts the moments of the day when something that GLL organises is going on and there are people around, with moments when no events or activities are happening, and suddenly the public space becomes empty. In my observations after this interview, Enrique’s words resonated in my mind, and I imagined the East Village’s events as shows, which are held in the public space that GLL uses as a theatre. When

the show is going on, the theatre is full. When it ends, the spectators leave, and the theatre becomes empty. The spectators might enjoy the show, but when they go to the cinema or theatre, they are not likely to familiarise with the person sitting next to them. Similarly, the East Villagers who attend the shows might enjoy them, but – as we will see from the quotes below - they keep themselves within their circle of old friends or family. The residents are not asked or permitted to organise activities and events autonomously. It is the management that takes care of everything, including the activities that residents should do during their stay. If they can or want to participate, it is possible. Otherwise, like the guests of a holiday village, they just relax and watch:

“You go out on a Sunday and there’s a lot of people, a lot of families, with kids having breakfast while I’m going to work. There’s the kind of little park and there are people doing yoga. You see all these happy faces and you forget you are going to work instead. It looks like not real almost. I remember the first Sunday after I moved here. I went out in the morning and I saw all these young families with children walking around and it was so peaceful and quiet and I told myself: ‘Where am I?!’ It looked like I was in a dream!” (Luana, Female, White European, Waitress, Private renter)

Luana has enjoyable experiences in the East Village “theatre”. The happy faces walking by the market and the people who participate in the yoga classes are like extras in the Sunday morning “show”. This fantasised place-production is typical of post-Olympic neighbourhoods. Everything is perfect; everything shows how successful the place is. However, as Broudehoux (2016) has argued, the risk is that this could be taken as the reality should be, further marginalising the least powerful individuals who do not fit in, and thus delegitimising their presence in the city.

When I undertook observation at the Sunday market, the majority of the attendees seemed affluent residents from the way they dressed; while working-class BAME individuals were in the minority. The event did not seem very popular. 100 to 200 people participated in each of the four times that I attended between May and June 2017. I was impressed by the way the event was produced. If one compares it to Brick Lane, probably the most popular East London market, a sharp difference can be noted. Even though in recent years Brick Lane has increasingly become a tourist attraction, thus partly losing its original character, in this market diversity, busy streets and stalls can still

be experienced. The variegated odours that come from the food areas, with different eateries from all over the world, the mess and even a bit of dirt, make it feel real. On the contrary, in the East Village market everything is extraordinarily tidy and clean. The sellers smile all the time. It seems like they are actors performing a show. It feels surreal. It even feels slightly depressing. One day I approached one of the shopkeepers who was selling cupcakes, and I asked her how she had decided to get involved in the East Village market. She answered that it was GLL that had contacted her and proposed that she should have a stall there. As it happens for the shops, the sellers are probably all selected by GLL in order to create the atmosphere that they need. Unlike ordinary urban markets, a seller cannot decide to buy a space and start a business there without the freeholder's input. The seller I spoke to was selling five small cupcakes for £10. At another stall sandwiches were sold for £7. These prices are probably unaffordable for working-class individuals and single mothers, such as those who participated in this study.

In terms of social interactions, two social renters stress that even though the events that GLL organises may bring residents out into the same place, this does not necessarily make them establish relationships:

“They do a lot of things in the Village, but I feel like people are still very separate and they don't mix with each other. When there was the Easter egg event everyone is on their own doing it. It didn't feel like everyone was doing things together”. (Alexandra, Female, White British, Disabled, Social renter)

“I don't think there's a lot of community life. I just feel most times everyone do their own things. And I think that sometimes they should be more proactive about things that are happening within East Village. It takes more than dropping letters in letter boxes [...]. East Village needs to do more to promote community life within East Village. They shouldn't leave it just to emails and posters”. (Margaret, Female, Black African, Public worker, Single mother, Social renter)”.

For Josh and his partner events such as the Sunday market might bring the East Villagers into the same place, but this does not result in the establishment of social networks. Josh and his partner enjoy being in a community of similarity, but they also enjoy minimising contact with neighbours:

“We like to be part of the community but we also like to keep ourselves to ourselves. So we like to enjoy the events like the market on Sunday, which I think is brilliant and it brings people

together, but it doesn't necessarily make people talk to each other". (Josh, Male, White British, School teacher, Private renter)

The comparison between the quotes of these two social renters and Josh shows a different degree of commitment to neighbourly interactions. As discussed above, young middle-class renters like Josh are ready to move as soon as their life circumstances change. On the contrary, for social renters like Alexandra and Margaret, establishing networks with neighbours would be important, as they possess lower amounts of social capital than their more affluent neighbours.

As we saw in Chapter 2, Rosenblatt et al.'s (2009) study of an Australian MPC suggests that in these kinds of developments, residents perceive an imagined sense of community (Anderson, 1991) from the services and practices that the developer provides. The interview quotes above confirm this argument. Many East Villagers perceive an imagined sense of community, which is a result of the complete package that GLL delivers ready to be consumed. On the contrary, it is uncommon to identify community as doing and negotiating things together, between residents with different socio-ethnic origins, as described by Neal et al. (2017). Social interactions occur in the local groups of affluent residents and the small groups of working-class single mothers that we discussed in Chapter 5. They also occur in the Village's shops and restaurants. However, as discussed in Chapter 7, the neighbourhood's retail infrastructure arouses the preferences of young and white middle-class individuals, and alienates lower-class and BAME individuals.

6.7 Conclusion

A number of socio-spatial practices and aesthetic norms become hegemonic within the field of public space. East Village is a gated community made up of multiple gated communities. They are defended by symbolic and material gates that serve the need to generate categories of distinction from the nearby old Stratford.

Many East Villagers feel disgust for the poorly maintained built environment and human heterogeneity that characterises the other side of the railway track, where they locate

an exterior “other”. The East Villagers’ sense of belonging is therefore spatially selective (Watt, 2009a), as they draw clear socio-spatial boundaries between their neighbourhood and the surrounding areas.

The East Village’s hegemonic norms alienate difference. Some working-class BAME social renters feel judged and unwelcome, for instance, for their dress codes. They are deemed to be an inappropriate presence if their lifestyle is not congruent with the dominant white middle-class habitus. Therefore, they experience what Jeffery (2018) defines as psychological dislocation. However, other social renters engage in a classification struggle (Bourdieu, 1986a) that persuades them to develop negative judgments of old Stratford and its residents, whose socio-ethnic backgrounds is, in reality, similar to theirs. They do this in order to align themselves to their affluent neighbours.

GLL withholds the power to organise activities and events in the neighbourhood public space. This realm is used like a theatre where shows are held to entertain residents, and to convey a community atmosphere. However, such a community atmosphere rarely translates into social interactions. The analysis of the GLL’s policies, the residents’ lifestyles, as well as the related socio-spatial exclusionary issues will be expanded in Chapter 7, which looks at the East Village’s neighbourhood facilities.

Chapter 7

Neighbourhood Facilities

7.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the East Village's neighbourhood facilities, highlighting how the various resident social and ethnic groups are able – or unable - to use them. It also discusses to what degree these spaces are suitable for encounters and interactions between residents from different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds. The discussion draws on interviews with residents, managers, and staff from East Village facilities, as well as participant observation, documentary analysis and survey data. It is important to bear in mind that the freeholder QDD owns the retail units and the sport facilities within the East Village. As for the public ground, GLL manages these spaces on behalf of the landlord QDD.

Section 7.2 discusses the importance of world-class facilities and transport links in choosing East Village as a place to live. Section 7.3 highlights that the landlord intends to reproduce ABC retail spaces. Section 7.4 draws attention to the sport facilities and organisations in the Village and the QEOP, which are meant to encourage a sporty lifestyle as part of the Olympic Legacy (LLDC, 2015). Section 7.5 focuses on how the health centre community café offered a place where people from different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds could meet and interact. Section 7.6 highlights the issues that have emerged in relation to the Chobham Academy – a state primary and secondary school built as part of the East Village plans.

It is argued that also the field of neighbourhood facilities appeals to white middle-class individuals. Thus, it becomes evident that the practices and categories that become hegemonic in East Village, are intentionally cultivated by GLL.

7.2 Best New Place to Live

In 2014 East Village won the London First and Mayor of London's Award for planning excellence, being identified as the "Best New Place to Live" (East Village London, 2014). This slogan has become one of the freeholder's mottos and is presented in GLL's promotional and marketing material (Humphry, 2017). One of the components that was taken into consideration when honouring East Village with this award was indeed its "fantastic and outstanding community facilities", which are available to its residents (East Village London, 2014: 1). World-class and modern facilities were already in place when QDD purchased their share of East Village. They have made the place a profitable investment:

"It just was a fantastic opportunity because of the scale. And then if you add in the mixture of proximity to transport, fantastic transport links, the planning that the Olympic Delivery Authority had envisaged for legacy, in effect you had all the ingredients for a community. The school, the public ground, the health centre. It was a complete package! Because my understanding, and I am not particularly familiar with other business models... Other companies... It's quite difficult to make private rented sector businesses work when haven't got scale. If you go in and you just have 100 units with nothing around it's hard to make it work. That is my understanding". (QDD manager).

As Benson (2014: 3100) points out, neighbourhoods offer the opportunity to accumulate various forms of capital. Thus, world-class facilities – retail outlets, sport venues, transport links, schools – are important to generate categories of distinction (Bourdieu, 1986a). They are therefore an incentive for middle-class people to buy into the East Village package:

"We were impressed with the facilities nearby: great transport, a lot of restaurants, loads of good places to eat, supermarkets and Westfield on our doorstep! [...]. There's a lot of places where you could do sports, cycling, go walk, go running. So it has certainly met our expectations, if not exceeded them". (Josh, Male, White British, School teacher, Private renter)

Middle-class individuals' residential choice is often based on their need or desire to live close to their workplaces (Bacqué et al., 2015; Benson, 2014). The East Village's convenient location, in close proximity to Canary Wharf and the City, is a recurrent

theme in the interviews with affluent residents, when asked to comment about the reasons why they chose to live there:

“I actually encouraged two of my colleagues to move here, because it’s a very easy commute for us to work and it’s very modern. You have tube lines that bring you to central London, and soon we’ll have Cross Rail!” (Katy, Female, White British, Marketing manager, Shared owner)

These enthusiastic accounts seem to confirm the policymakers’ promises that residents will enjoy facilities and services (Meredith, 2012). However, not always all of them have equal access to such services and facilities, as it happens in relation to retail facilities.

7.3 Retail Facilities: Consumption and Lifestyle

As discussed in Chapter 2, local shopping streets in global cities around the world develop a super-diverse character (Vertovec, 2007; Zukin et al., 2015). Shopkeepers and customers come from a wide variety of migrant and ethnic backgrounds (Zukin et al., *ibid.*). Migrants from the Global North tend to open shops in affluent and gentrified neighbourhoods. For instance, in Azabu-Juban, an upscale Tokyo neighbourhood, Zukin et al. (*ibid.*) explain, there are old artisanal shops selling home-made kimonos, as well as a French patisserie, an English tea shop, and a New York-style café. In contrast, migrants from the Global South open shops in traditionally working-class areas such as Mirroringhu, a low-income district of the Shanghai periphery, whose low-cost shopping streets look like those of any other city around the world.

The retail facilities in East Village are all independent – there are purposely no chains – and are tailor-made for its young, white middle-class residents: Italian, French and English style cafés, a pizzeria, sophisticated Indian and Chinese restaurants, a beauty salon, locally-grown organic fruit and vegetable shops, a butcher, and so on. QDD is trying to reproduce ABC Inner London shops, such as those of Shoreditch High Street, Brick Lane, Bethnal Green or Hackney. Thus, GLL – on behalf of QDD - has selected shops and restaurants that are mostly food-based and are meant to convey a sense of community and ordinary life. In this sense, they are reminiscent of those that characterise Bacqué et al.’s (2015) case study of Peckham (Southwark). The landlord

chooses the retail facilities that better suits their business model. Even stores with an ethnic sounding – such as Indian and Chinese restaurants – need to comply with western standards of aesthetics, order and cleanliness. In addition, not all the shops that Zukin et al. (2015) describe as being part of any global city’s local shopping streets can be found in East Village. There are no radio and TV repair shops, no stationers, and no corner shops, as these facilities would ruin the atmosphere of the area (Cohen, 2017).

Figure 13: An East Village Shopping Street



(Source: Piero Corcillo)

The shops are therefore present to complete the environment that the greenery and aesthetics of community have created. During my observations, I noticed that several shops open up and close down over a short period of time. This happens because rather than being based on normal business practices, they need to comply with QDD’s vision for the place:

“Our vision is to create a very vibrant, well-maintained, neighbourhood [...]. Just recently we have increased the amount of retail provision, restaurants, other services that are for local convenience. We weren’t able to get those facilities in early enough in the pioneering days when residents first occupied East Village. That was a shame and I think its vibrancy is now starting to happen, because we’ve got that extra retail restaurants. We worked out the public ground and we’ve carried out a number of events”. (QDD manager)

One of the most popular East Village retail services is the Italian coffee shop where part of the questionnaires for the EVS were collected: Caffé Sofia. When Juliet – a former Caffé Sofia waitress – is asked how she would describe the café, she answers:

“I would say it’s a hipster café. I would say it tries to present itself as artisan, and they do make their own bread and cakes, and I think the quality is good. But I think the products are as much as the interior of the café, and its location is as it is the actual products. I’ve watched the customers, and part of the value that they see in the cake or coffee they’re buying it’s the way it’s presented. Then they take a photograph and they Instagram it, and it’s part of their sort of establishing their identity I suppose. They’re willing to pay this higher price for cakes and coffee not only do they eat and drink, but they take photographs of it, and that has value to them”.

(Juliet, Former Caffé Sofia worker)

Zukin et al., (2015) argue that for middle-class individuals, artisanal products, or locally-produced goods, delivered by cyclists or small vans, have a higher cultural value than products coming from poor countries and produced by low-waged workforce, imported by big planes and delivered to the shops, having been stored in warehouses:

“Maybe because I’m French but I really like my little shops and my market, and they are providing them, which is fantastic! So when I want my fruits and vegetables I would rather go to Ginger Meant [a local shop] than a supermarket. If I want a coffee I would rather go to Caffé Sofia than Westfield, which is crowded. It’s very nice, very friendly. I think that the shop manager is clever. They seem to be doing a fantastic business. They’ve built up a relationship with the customers, we feel like welcome. They welcome the kids, they have very nice atmosphere”. (Marine, Female, White European, Chobham Academy teacher/manager, Shared owner)

For the East Villagers, independent artisanal shops are a source of cultural and social capital in the fields of neighbourhood facilities. Caffé Sofia and Nicola - the owner - have the same function for local residents that the bookshop mentioned by Bacqué et al. (2015) has in Peckham. They become a symbol of the middle-class identity of the place. During my observation in the café, I was able to see how Nicola and his waiters act as social entrepreneurs. Jacques, the vice manager, does very valuable work for the business, as he builds up relationships with customers. He offers them free bread, so that they come back. When one shops in a supermarket or a chain café, the staff are not always friendly and welcoming. Caffé Sofia’s manager and staff are friendly, but this comes at the price of buying their products. I observed how some affluent people living there with their families went to this coffee shop on a regular basis. Jacques puts a lot of effort into building strong relationships with them, speaking with them, and babysitting their children, which goes beyond the average staff and customer relationship.

Figure 14: Caffé Sofia



(Source: Piero Corcillo)

The atmosphere, ambience and the way products are presented prioritise the habitus of white middle-class individuals (Bourdieu, 1986a). “A local shopping street translates the aesthetic markers of consumers’ tastes, from preferences for specific colours to textures and interior design, into cognitive signs of social status” (Zukin et al., 2015: 13). Juliet’s quote, reported below, shows how products and place image are important. Media images and consumer tastes are a key component of local shops and the products that they offer. The media can diffuse influential images of the local shopping street. Nowadays, the storeowners of upscale retail services create websites to attract a specific type of clientele. By displaying the stores’ interior design, as well as the goods that they sell, they seek to entice their customers (Zukin et al., 2015). The East Village shops are promoted through online marketing too. However, it is not down to the storeowners to do so; it is GLL that advertises the neighbourhood’s shops on its website:

“Get Living London, they were there quite a lot taking photographs for their publicity material. So suddenly they would come in and they would sit someone down, a model in a chair and she

would be wearing the classic sort of hipster lifestyle stripy t-shirt, corky glasses or something like that you know... She comes for a coffee and they'd move the furniture, and they start to take photographs for their website. Just in the middle of the day, everyone else was in the café, it wasn't closed or anything. They wouldn't even come over and say is it ok? They just did it!"
(Former Caffé Sofia worker)

This episode shows the vision that GLL has for the shops in the Village. The selection of businesses that occupy the retail units serves the landlords' marketing and branding strategy. They are like props for them to decorate East Village. Thus, this is not just a straightforward landlord-tenant relationship. Rather, QDD has got more power and control. It is the retail unit's owner; its housing management arm, GLL, selects the storeowners, and controls the sociodemographic composition of the neighbourhood (See also Chapter 4). As it is in control of the different actors, GLL coordinates its actions to advance its own interests. It captures the power to open up a shop, and retains it for itself. In order to please the landlord, the businesses have to accept this unbalanced power relationship. As Juliet explains, GLL allows a discount to those businesses who contribute to realising the landlords' vision:

"I remember him [the storeowner] saying 'cause you know with restaurants and things if they're doing well in the first year there's not much anticipation' [in terms of deposit and rent]. I think Nicola was paying a minimum rent, because he's trying to grow the business". (Former Caffé Sofia worker)

If the shops are economically and ethnically homogeneous though, BAME working-class residents are not given the opportunity to mix with other residents, and they are excluded from the community. At its best, a local shopping street can be inclusive and be a place for encounters with difference. At its worst, it can be exclusive, and can lead to segregation in terms of race, ethnicity, class or gender (Zukin et al., 2015). The East Village shopping facilities tend to assume the latter form. Thus, the social interactions that occur there are between affluent residents mostly.

7.3.1 Café Spaces: Class, Ethnicity and Social Interaction

As mentioned above, the hipster ambience of the shops and restaurants mostly attracts young professionals. Table 12 below shows the use of East Village's most popular retail

facilities according to the EVS participants' housing tenure. Notably, 111 out of the 211 total respondents declared that they use the café, 108 participants use the pub, and 144 use other shops and services.

Table 12: Retail Facilities Users' Housing Tenure

Facility	Housing Tenure	%
Caffé Sofia	Social Rent	5%
	IMR	11%
	Shared Ownership/Leasehold	23%
	Private Rent	60%
	Total N = 100%	111
Pub	Social Rent	8%
	IMR	11%
	Shared Ownership/Leasehold	24%
	Private Rent	56%
	Total N = 100%	108
Other Shops and Restaurants	Social Rent	15%
	IMR	10%
	Shared Ownerships/Leasehold	25%
	Private Rent	49%
	Total N = 100%	144

(Source: EVS, 2017)

It can be observed that the number of social rent participants using the retail facilities is dramatically lower than the percentages of respondents in the other housing tenures – especially if we consider private renters and shared owners. If, for instance, we look at

Caffé Sofia, only 5% of users are in social rent, whereas 11% are intermediate renters, 23% are shared owners, and 60% are private renters. Therefore, Caffé Sofia seems the realm of middle-class individuals. With regards to the local pub, the numbers do not differ dramatically: 8% of those participants who have declared to use it are social renters, 11% are intermediate renters, 24% of the pub users are shared owners, and 56% are private renters. If we look at the data regarding other shops and restaurants, the proportion of respondents in the various housing tenures are less unbalanced but still considerably different. 15% are social renters. Thus, it would appear that also some working-class social renters use them. However, as discussed below, several social rent interviewees have declared that they mostly use the Sainsbury's Local for urgent shopping in the Village, whereas they tend to do the rest of their shopping elsewhere. It must be also noted that the percentages regarding intermediate renters are low (11%, 11% and 10% for each facility respectively) because – as we saw in Chapter 4 – only 11% of the total Village's housing stock (294 units) is for IMR.

Moreover, if we consider that 14.5% of the total housing stock (410 apartments) is for shared ownership/equity/leasehold, we can note that the three percentages regarding home-owning participants of the retail facilities are on average nine point five percentile points higher. We could interpret this as another indicator of their symbolic domination not only in the housing and semi-private space fields, which we observed in Chapter 5, but also in the field of neighbourhood facilities. At the same time, this is also the realm of the young early career professionals housed in private rent and IMR. If we consider that, according to the interview data, the café and the pub are the most popular retail services of the whole of East Village, where social interactions occur, we can note that the majority of the social renters do not mix with the overall community. Thus, the othering process that identifies them as the interior "other" is evident even when we look at the retail facilities. They lose the struggle for belonging in various neighbourhood fields. This is confirmed by the interview data, where many even better off working-class social renters have stated that the only shop that they regularly use in East Village is the Sainsbury's Local:

Mariana: "I do my shopping at Aldi [outside East Village] but for everyday little things normally I go to Sainsbury's. It is small, but if you need something urgent you can go there [...]. Sainsbury's

[in East Village] is quite expensive. Especially because we have another one in [old] Stratford, and if you compare the prices they're very different!"

Interviewer: "How affordable are the other shops in East Village for you?"

Mariana: "I suppose it's too expensive... It's not that affordable. The pub I find it ok.... Yeah... The fruits and vegetables shop because it's home-grown it tends to be more expensive".
(Female, Black European, Housewife, Social renter)

Like Mariana, many other social renters tend to do their shopping outside of the neighbourhood, because they can find more affordable products in the old part of Stratford and in the other surrounding areas. Daniel links the fact that the shops in the Village are upmarket to the fact that the neighbourhood is the former London 2012 Athletes' Village:

"The thing is I'm on benefits, so I can't complain. If I had children yes, it would be hard because one cup of coffee is about £3.50. So if it was me, my wife and some kids it would be tough. But I think the area is expensive for a lot of reasons. Westfield there, plus the area is living off the Olympic Legacy, so think about it! It was where the Olympics was held! This area is living off the name of the Olympics. All the famous athletes lived here. That's why it's expensive". (Daniel, Male, Black British, Disabled, Social renter)

Daniel remarks on how the symbolic value that the Olympics give to the area is the reason why East Village's shops and restaurants are so expensive and therefore exclusionary. The Olympic Movement's commitment to tackling social exclusion (IOC, 2002) appears inconsistent and illusory. The accounts of those who experience the legacy demonstrate that in reality the outcome is the opposite of the promise. Kinje expresses frustration at the shops' price levels:

"Everything is so expensive here. You know even an ice-cream bar, something I dunno for children, it's really expensive! [...] I mean they've got a beauty salon, have you seen the prices? Come on ridiculous! If I go doing my nails in Stratford, old shopping centre it costs me £25. Why am I gonna pay £40 plus here? For what? Because it's East Village? Come on... It looks nice there but I won't go there... Charge £25 and we'll all stop going to Stratford. Charge £25 and you'll be overbooked even... Because everybody would come to you! To be honest I wasn't gonna ask you to come because when you talk about these things you get upset! It's annoying! Because who is gonna listen to you, where do you get chance? So you understand? Why in the Village you just make it for one? Why do you put us here then? You want to exploit us, and at the same

time cheat us... It's not fair! You put us here and then you decide we're not part of you". (Kinje, Female, Black African, Home Office worker, Single mother, Social renter)

The shops' exclusionary practices target not only residents' different economic conditions, but also their ethnic identity. As we saw above, GLL only selects upscale Global North retail facilities. There is nothing in the Village for lower-income ethnic minorities:

"What they could do is, I've noticed if you want to go shopping for African food you have to go as far as maybe Charlton, to get something. There is no mix, it's all British food that they sell here. So I'd have a shop that sells maybe Indian stuff, Turkish... and also for hairdressing, I've been there before and they only do certain types of hair, so for that I still have to go out and get my hair done. [...] They [the shops] are expensive. They're not that affordable. Everything within East Village is more expensive. I'd like to see some more affordable, more variety basically, yeah". (Margaret, Female, Black African, Public worker, Single mother, Social renter)

In the neighbourhood – especially in the socially rented units – there is a consistent BAME population. Those in working-class occupations that do not possess sufficient amounts of economic and cultural capital to afford and frequent the East Village shops are excluded from their westernised eateries and their corresponding atmosphere. Ethnically diverse retail services seem to be pushed back:

"I'd love one of these shops to do like... Because I'm from Ghana, Africa. So I want to do like our jewellery and our costumes nice exclusive ones. And I would like to do it in the Village, because you know you would find different people. I can't afford the shops. They are expensive! I went to ask and they [GLL] said to me £9,000 deposit and for a space like my living room £25,000 a year! Come on who has got this money for a beginner?... And it is not busy in here! I want to bring African unique stuff [...]. It's a nice Village but they have to give everybody chance". (Kinje, Female, Black African, Home Office worker, Single mother, Social renter)

Kinje's classification struggle is not a struggle to appropriate distinctive signs (Bourdieu, 1986a), but is another kind of struggle that Bourdieu (*ibid.*) mentions: the struggle to redefine these distinctive signs to include different cultural taste. It is a struggle to legitimise ethnic difference. If we compare these words with Juliet's quote above about the convenient economic conditions that Caffé Sofia's owner was offered, we notice that GLL has no intention to redefine the legitimate lifestyle within the neighbourhood field. Thus, they push back those shops that do not attract the white middle classes. The idea

that Kinje had in mind would provide Black Africans with a shop to cater for their tastes. Nevertheless, migrants' shops and meeting points are deemed to threaten public order. Therefore, they need to be located outside of the Village.

Chapter 2 discussed several studies on social interaction in café spaces, which argues that BAME groups and long-time residents of gentrifying ethnically diverse neighbourhoods are preoccupied with the rapid spreading of hipster café spaces, as they do not feel welcome in them (Jones et al., 2015; Neal et al., 2017; Wessendorf, 2014). Neal et al. (*ibid*) note that not all cafés are the same. Hipster cafés are exclusionary spaces, which do not cater for low-income BAME individuals. Despite their pretentious localism, they are still a product of globalisation (Zukin et al., 2015). They do not have the embedded localism, familiarity and unfocused atmosphere typical of local low-cost cafés, as described by Hall (2012). In these local cafés, everyone can play out their identity without constraints. According to Neal et al. (2017), even though chain cafés and restaurants such as Costa and Nando's are products of globalisation, they are likely to foster social interaction between people from different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds. "In contrast to their apparent homogeneity as corporate non-spaces, they allow people to fill them with their own uses and meanings, which might be influenced by ethnic and national identity" (Neal et al, 2017:92). Bauman (2003) explains this paradox arguing that in cities where perpetual change affects familiar landmarks, people look for the rare comfort, predictability and orderliness of McDonalds and Starbucks. Here one can feel secure in a familiar environment, and be certain to get what they expect. BAME customers, therefore, share tables, and start up conversations in the queue, with the staff, or at the self-cleaning points (Neal et al., 2017). These interactions might remain superficial, but in East Village's cafés and restaurants even such superficial inter-ethnic interactions do not seem to occur but between residents from similar socio-economic backgrounds. The data in Table 13 illustrate the ethnic backgrounds of the EVS participants who declared to use the shops.

Table 13: Retail Facilities Users' Ethnic Background

Facility	Ethnic Group	%
Caffé Sofia	White British	50%
	White Other	23%
	Black	5%
	Asian	15%
	Mixed	5%
	Total N = 100%	111
Pub	White British	50%
	White Other	25%
	Black	11%
	Asian	10%
	Mixed	3%
	Total N = 100%	108
Other Shops and Restaurants	White British	46%
	White Other	22%
	Black	12%
	Asian	5%
	Mixed	1%
	Total N = 100%	144

(Source: EVS, 2017)

We can observe that the respondents who use Caffé Sofia are overwhelmingly white. 73% of the respondents declared a white British or white other background. The

numbers are very similar with regards to the pub, where 75% of the respondents declared a white background. Similar to the data related to the shop users' housing tenure, the percentages regarding other shops and restaurants are slightly more balanced. 68% of them have a white background, thus representing over two thirds of the total sample. Notably, white British people account for half of the users of both Caffé Sofia and the pub. Moreover, 25% and 24% of the café and pub users respectively have a BAME background. Table 14 breaks down the data in Table 1 in order to look at socio-economic differences between retail facilities' BAME users.

Table 14: Retail Facilities BAME Users' NS-SEC

NS-SEC	%
1 Higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations	27%
2 Lower managerial, administrative and professional occupations	31%
3 Intermediate occupations	5%
4 Small business employers and own account workers	2%
5 Lower supervisory and lower technical occupations	2%
6 Semi-routine occupations	5%
7 Routine occupations	5%
8 Not working and unemployed	5%
9 Students	16%
Total N = 100%	55

(Source: EVS, 2017)

Table 14 suggests that the majority of BAME participants who use the shops and restaurants are middle-class individuals. In effect, 27% are in higher managerial and professional occupations, while 31% are in lower managerial and professional occupations. Moreover, 5% are in intermediate occupations, 2% are small business owners and own account workers, and an additional 2% are in lower supervisory and

lower technical occupations. Therefore, they can be considered as better off working-class individuals. Moreover, 5% are in semi-routine positions, 5% are in routine positions, and another 5% are unemployed. Thus, only 15% are part a precarious working-class. We must notice that this 15%, and even the 9% with better off working-class backgrounds could just use the Sainsbury's Local, as other working-class residents have mentioned in the interviews. Finally, almost all of the 16% that are students are in private rent, with the exception of two who are from IMR and shared ownership. Therefore, they are likely to be affluent home and international students. If we add them to those in higher and lower managerial and professional occupations, the percentage of middle-class BAME respondents using shops and restaurants' reaches a dramatic 74%.

The retail facilities' selection policy, which GLL applies in the neighbourhood, is a source of symbolic and cultural capital for the affluent East Villagers. Nonetheless, their atmosphere and price levels exclude the working-class BAME East Village and Stratford populations. One could argue that although the shops in East Village are generally overpriced and their atmosphere is culturally homogeneous, there are plenty of affordable and ethnically diverse retail facilities in the surrounding areas of Stratford, Leyton and Hackney Wick. Even in the ground floor of Westfield shopping mall there are some affordable shops. Thus, the ethnic minorities and working-class East Village residents can find low-cost retail services to match their tastes, just a short walk away from where they live. Nonetheless, because there is a shortage of community space in the area, the most popular cafés and restaurants – such as Caffé Sofia – are the main points where people meet and get to know each other:

“Before it was only Caffé Sofia and the local pub. And now Village Bank Garden is open, Mamma Lands is open, vegetable shop... So I think they really contribute to things like community, because it's more people coming in and out of places rather than just going straight to their homes from the station. So yeah I feel like there is a sense of community. When I walk in East Village there isn't once that I'm not stopped two or three times by people that I know, which is kind of what you expect when you live in a village environment”. (Lina, Female, Asian, Community worker, Leaseholder)

Again, this and the account below evoke the representation of the urban village, as described by Bacqué et al. (2015), whereby proximity to a retail infrastructure through

which one can develop social networks is one of the primary factors that inform place-based middle-class sense of belonging:

“When the movers came early morning I was so hungry and we went down to Caffé’ Sofia to buy coffee. And because we had nothing, we were sleeping just in the bed and we had nothing, here was a mess and we were waiting for the next shipping, and the lady who was working there gave us this packet of biscuits, like a welcoming present. And it was just so nice to be welcomed in the area with that hospitality actually. It was very empty; there was not so many other shops here at that time. And having Caffé Sofia was just my kind of corner stone where to sit and meet people in the area. So that was where I started to talk to people, in Caffé Sofia, and it was easy to meet people living in the area”. (Anna, Female, White European, Housewife, Private renter)

Thus, the East Village-based middle classes imagine themselves as a community by using the shops as a venue for interacting with other neighbours. Moreover, they claim moral property over the neighbourhood’s retail infrastructure.

7.3.2 I Don’t Want a Chicken Shop on My Doorstep

The sense of selective belonging (Watt, 2009a) that we discussed in Chapter 6, is also stimulated by the different types of retail facilities that are in East Village compared to those of the surrounding areas. The trendy shops and restaurants of the Village exist in contrast to the downscale migrants’ shops of Stratford. The white middle-class East Villagers, particularly private sector professionals, are not sympathetic towards other residents, who would like to see more affordable and ethnically diverse shops, as this would make the area look disorderly and therefore damage middle-class sensitivity (Bacqué et al., 2015). In Inner London gentrifying neighbourhoods, the middle classes directly intervene when they feel that their place imagining does not correspond to reality; in a top-down managed place like East Village, they hand over responsibility to the freeholder to maintain the symbols of distinction in exchange of economic capital:

“They [the shops] are deliberately going for middle-class things, and actually they are one of the tensions. Because there are different types of people who live here, you’ll often see some people who would like a fried chicken shop which of course will never happen. Because Get Living London will not have a chicken shop in East Village. It’s way too middle-class for that. So they want something that is never going to happen. I don’t know if they know that it’s never

going to happen, but it's not happening. But yeah I like the shops in East Village [...]. It doesn't really create much of a tension. But it's something that they would like that doesn't exist. Whereas I don't want a fried chicken shop here, because that's not what I want on my doorstep. Get Living London would never accept a chicken shop here. It will just never happen! So I don't need to worry about it". (Alan, Male, White British, Software developer, Leaseholder)

Alan's words exemplify the thoughts of the majority of the shared owners and leaseholders. As discussed in Chapter 5, they have invested – emotionally and financially - in their flat and in the area. Therefore, their main concern is to protect their investment and to make it grow; and they are averse to anything that could jeopardise it. They are not concerned about the possibility that these could open, because in the moment they sign their lease, they *de facto* hand over responsibility for preserving the neighbourhood's aesthetic and cultural value to the freeholder. Private renters express similar concerns to the shared owners:

Theodor: "I don't think they [low-cost shops] would fit the area, here is like a different world. We're still in Stratford but it's not like there, it's completely different. We know to keep the place the way it is everything needs to be a little more expensive. I don't want a chicken shop here, I can go to Stratford for a chicken shop and things like that. I think they've got the right combination at the moment. I don't know what else is to come, but it's not bad".

Interviewer: "Although people from social housing would like to see something more affordable for them..."

Theodor: "I don't answer for them, I'm not in social housing. It would be wrong for me. I don't know what people circumstances are. My circumstances are not like that. So I don't think it would be much of a problem for them as it is. But there seems to be a difference between the other side of the rail and this side. The cheaper shops are over there [...]. That sounds awful but it's a fact of life. So I think this area seems to have the right combination at the moment. We know they look slightly upmarket, but it's a new area, that's what they are looking for". (Theodor, Male, White British, Retired, Private renter)

The affluent East Villagers develop a sense of moral ownership over the neighbourhood and its retail infrastructure; they draw clear socio-spatial boundaries between East Village and the old part of Stratford that, once again, generates selective belonging (Watt, 2009a). The upmarket trendy shops belong "here", in the Village; the ethnically diverse, downscale shops – as well as their working-class customers - belong "over

there”, the other side of the railway track, which is dirty and disorderly. In this regard, Sibley (1995: 60) tracks class-based geographies of defilement in post-war Britain, where working-class roadside cafés and shops were perceived as a threat to the purity of middle-class countryside areas. The 1948 “Town and Country Planning Act” gave local authorities in England and Wales power to control and “eradicate disorderly developments”, contributing to the exclusion of the working-class from affluent areas such as Sussex and Essex (Sibley, 1995). In East Village, the power to eradicate or prevent the opening of undesirable retail services is up to the freeholder: QDD. There is no need, therefore, for a piece of legislation from central or local government; a GLL’s decision is sufficient. Geographies of defilement can be traced in the accounts of many affluent East Villagers. However, a minority of private sector professionals display some sympathy towards the needs of the working-class East Villagers, although they are unwilling to give up the cultural value of the neighbourhood’s shopping streets:

“There’s also another type of persons here and they can’t shop here. I think they have been clever as well, there has been a lot of high quality. I’d be fine [with low-cost shops], as long as it is keeping with the area I think. They are quite nice these shops, they don’t have big lights. Regardless how much the shops charge it shouldn’t be a chain. I think it’s good to have small independent retailers. And then if you open a takeaway or a chicken shop they leave a lot of rubbish. I just imagine all the kids throwing chicken on the floor. You know I imagine the whole scenario of London... But yeah I would have no problem with low-cost shops. It’s just maintaining certain standards”. (Alexander, Male, White British, Legal services, Intermediate renter)

The above quote shows a tension between sympathy towards the needs of the lower-income population and concerns about maintaining moral ownership over East Village. The affluent East Villagers do not want chain cafes as those described by Neal et al. (2017), where people with different ethnic backgrounds could spend time. Moreover, the Dionysian image of children (Valentine, 2017), who would contaminate the environment by throwing chicken on the floor re-emerges as a disincentive for having low-cost retail outlets.

Public sector professionals are split on this issue. Lina, for instance, is concerned with protecting her investment. Thus, she agrees with the majority:

“There are a lot of corner shops in Stratford. So like if you want to shop in Lidl or you want to buy chicken you could move to Stratford, it’s not that far. I feel quite strongly to the chicken shops because I think this is somewhere should be healthy as part of the Olympic Legacy. So it should be encouraging fruits and veg places, rather than fried chicken to open up”. (Lina, Female, Asian, Community worker, Leaseholder)

Lina invokes the Olympic power of naming symbolically (Bourdieu, 1991), to claim moral rights over East Village. Chicken shops would not fit into a post-Olympic neighbourhood, as the legacy should promote healthy eateries. However, the fact that McDonald’s and Coca Cola, probably the unhealthiest food and drink brands on earth, were among the major sponsors of the London 2012 Olympic Games (Watt, 2017) does not create much animosity. Some public sector professionals, in particular school teachers, are keener on the idea of allowing low-cost shops, because it would be fair to the least affluent residents. As Bacqué et al. (2015) have noted, this fraction of the middle-class is more sensitive to issues of social inequality. This is also related to the fact that they themselves struggle with the prices at times, as their wages are lower than those of private sector professionals:

“Here I think they’re trying to gentrify and this you know for the people in social housing I doubt there is a lot of social housing who use the restaurants and stuff here very much. So yeah I would welcome that. Even simple things like to get a haircut. I go to Stratford because it’s cheaper. If you get a haircut here it’s gonna cost you a ridiculous amount of money”. (Stephan, Male, White Australian, School teacher, Shared owner)

“I think some of them [the shops] are very overpriced. So for example if I go to the pub and I want a pint of beer, I think it’s more expensive than anywhere else. I think it’s a good selection, but I mean good for people who have a little bit more money. I’d be fine [with cheaper shops] I mean chicken shops is not the end of the world”. (Jade, Female, White Canadian, School teacher, Intermediate renter).

Despite being unable to afford the prices, some better off working-class social renters agree with their affluent neighbours. Olga, for example, has interiorised the unequal power relations that become hegemonic in the area and perceives them as fair and just (Bourdieu, 1991). She is subject to symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1986a) such that her words convey a sense of subjugation:

“Nearby there’s things that are more affordable for those who can’t really afford it... I think the shops that are around at the moment are pretty nice and you know people do use them... Most people in East Village can possibly afford the shops... [...]. For me for example I am social and I think that certain stuff are expensive. But I can use them to treat myself from time to time. If I have a necessity I go where it’s cheaper, which is on the other side. You have the Stratford Centre which is incredibly affordable, and then you have East Village which is more upper-class. And I think it’s actually a good balance. I agree with the other people when it comes to attracting... We don’t want to attract too much of... You know when you make things affordable you attract all the types of clientele, and sometimes bad clientele [...]. It’s just up to us to know where to shop and what to do. I can’t tell East Village to have more affordable shops you know what I mean... They want a more upper-class kind of environment, so I understand that the shops are like they are. But you know people need to understand that East Village was created to be more upper-class and a more expensive area of Stratford you know...”. (Olga, Female, Black European, Own account hairdresser, Single mother, Social renter).

Like Alan and Theodor above, Olga claims that East Village is meant to be an upper-class area of Stratford. This goes to the heart of the Olympic promise. The Olympic Village is experienced as something very different from what it was supposed to be: a 50-50 affordable-private, socially mixed development (London 2012, 2004; Meredith, 2012). The way in which residents make sense of the reality that unfolds around them is a bias in favour of the white middle-class.

7.4 Sport Facilities

As discussed in Chapter 2, Bacqué et al.’s (2015) work attests that building community through leisure and sport activities is typical of the place imagining of the vacation village, which characterises neighbourhoods such as Oak Tree Park, a gated community in South-West London. Thus, being part of a leisure organisation or frequenting a sport facility helps middle-class residents to develop a sense of belonging to the place (*ibid.*). Neal et al. (2017) argue that interaction in sport groups and organisations offers the opportunity to establish social networks across the boundaries of social and cultural difference. As discussed in relation to public space (Chapter 6), this idea is related to Neal et al.’s (2017) concept of community as conviviality: as “doing stuff” and negotiating things together. Conviviality therefore fosters mutual understanding and helps residents

from different socio-economic backgrounds to find ways to share places (Jones et al., 2015).

One of the key dimensions of the Olympic Legacy is to encourage the inhabitants of the Olympic Park neighbourhoods to adopt a healthy and sporty lifestyle (LLDC, 2015). With an awareness of the importance that sport activities have for middle-class individuals, for both maintaining a healthy lifestyle and for feeling like a local, GLL provides sport venues and classes as part of the complete East Village package. As we saw in Chapter 6, similar to Bacqué et al.'s (2015) ideal type of the vacation village, several East Villagers' representations of space are based upon leisure and sports activities; even though, often, they do not participate. Regardless of it, they convey sense of belonging and community. In Bacqué et al. (*ibid.*) case study of Oak Tree Park, it is the residents' action that maintain the playgrounds and organise sport classes. By contrast, in East Village, which is managed like a hotel, this is up to GLL, which plans and manages, and residents – like “guests” - take part if they wish.

The sport and leisure classes, and the playgrounds within the Village, are free. Therefore, a positive impact could be that residents from different socio-economic backgrounds can use them. There are football and tennis pitches, free body exercise grounds, and playgrounds for children where Our Parks – a sport organisation funded by GLL- runs yoga classes, boot camps, and other group exercise classes. Everyone (not only East Village residents) can register online and participate free of charge. Our Parks started as an organisation based and running activities in East Village, subsequently expanding to the whole of East London. There is also a gym that has a membership fee of £29.95 per month, and is run by Better, one of the major London gym chains. Table 15 below shows to what extent EVS participants from the various tenures use the sport facilities in the neighbourhood. Notably, 122 out of 211 total respondents declared that they use the gym, and 144 stated that they use the playgrounds.

Table 15: Sport Facilities Users' Housing Tenure

Facility	Housing Tenure	%
Gym	Social Rent	10%
	IMR	9%
	Shared Ownership/Leasehold	24%
	Private Rent	57%
	Total N = 100%	122
Playgrounds	Social Rent	21%
	IMR	7%
	Shared Ownership/Leasehold	23%
	Private Rent	49%
	Total N = 100%	144

(Source: EVS, 2017)

The absolute majority of the participants using the gym are private renters, who make up 57% of the total. This figure amounts to six percentile points higher than the overall percentage of PRS properties in the neighbourhood. 24% are shared owners/leaseholders. This is a relatively high figure, if again we consider that this tenure makes up only 14.5% of the total housing stock. Despite the fact that the gym membership fee should be accessible for middle-class and better off working-class households, as several East Village social renters are, only 10% of the gym using respondents are in this housing tenure. The latter percentage is considerably lower than the others; but unlike the shops, none of the interviewees stated that they find the gym expensive. Several social renters declared that they do not engage in gym activities. The reasons vary. In some cases, being working people and at the same time parents of young children, they do not have much time left to practise sports. Others declared that they use gyms elsewhere in the QEOP (Aquatic Centre and Copper Box Arena) and in Newham. The reasons for this are either that they are originally from Newham, and therefore they

prefer to keep using their old gyms, where their social networks are, or because facilities such as the Aquatic Centre have both a gym and swimming pool for adults and children. Because most of the social renters are families, these facilities better suit their needs. Furthermore, social renters tend to be older than residents in the other housing tenures; therefore, the former tend to be less sporty than the latter.

Turning attention to the playgrounds, 49% of the EVS participants who use them are private renters, 23% are shared owners, and 21% are social renters. With respect to the playgrounds, the majority of users are private renters and shared owners. However, in contrast to the gym data, private renters are not the absolute majority. The percentage of shared owners using these facilities is higher than the overall percentage of shared ownership properties in the Village. On the contrary, the percentage of social renters is lower than the overall percentage of social rent apartments (21% and 25% respectively). Nevertheless, the two figures do not differ dramatically. Being mainly social rent households families with children, they use the football pitches, as well as the playgrounds for children. Moreover, in a similar trend to the shop data, the percentages of intermediate rent respondents using the sport facilities are in line with the percentage of IMR properties in East Village. 9% of the gym users and 7% of the playground users are intermediate renters. Table 16 shows to what extent the different ethnic groups present in East Village use the sport facilities.

Table 16: Sport Facilities Users' Ethnic Background

Facility	Ethnic Group	%
Gym	White British	47%
	White Other	20%
	Black	13%
	Asian	15%
	Mixed	5%
	Total N = 100%	122
Playgrounds	White British	41%
	White Other	17%
	Black	18%
	Asian	17%
	Mixed	9%
	Total N = 100%	144

(Source: EVS, 2017)

With regards to the gym, if we sum up the percentages of white British and white other, we can note that over two thirds of the respondents (67%) are white. The BAME population accounts for the remaining 33%. With regards to the playgrounds, the difference between white and BAME participants who use it is more balanced: 58% are white, whereas 42% have a minority ethnic background. With respect to the gym, the percentage of BAME respondents is not massively lower than the overall percentage of BAME EVS participants (39.1%); this is a six percentile points difference. With respect to the playgrounds, the percentage of BAME respondents is almost three percentile points higher. Given that the sport facilities do not present the same price level and culturally homogeneous atmosphere as shops and restaurants, the different socio-economic background of BAME users is not in itself an obstacle.

As a member of the gym from August 2016 to January 2018, I could observe that the residents of the surrounding areas – especially young BAME individuals - use it as well. The gym and the other sport facilities are regularly used by the residents of the surrounding areas. They dilute the sharp separation between old and new Stratford. The EVS data and participant observation suggest that some social mixing occurs in the sport facilities, at least in terms of people from different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds sharing these spaces. Even though BAME individuals living in East Village are overall less marginal than those living in Stratford and other surrounding areas, the latter are not *a priori* alienated, which differs markedly from the case of the shops.

We will now focus on the interviews to understand how far sharing space and participating in the same exercise classes result in the establishment of social networks between residents from different housing tenures and ethnic backgrounds. Residents from different backgrounds highlighted how sport activities convey a sense of community and localness. For several people, this is the only occasion when they spend time with their neighbours and the residents of old Stratford:

“The gym is probably the thing that I have in common with my neighbours, otherwise nothing else. [...]. I go to the gym, I see pretty much the same faces for several months. That’s community! ‘Cause the gym you know is different than the shops. And I just hang out with everyone I do get along with. But if I think about it, for example I work out with people who are parents of kids who are coming there ‘cause they wanna stay fit, and I get along with them and we get along together. Or I work out with people who are you know bachelors or whatever it is. But the status doesn’t matter. Your family status or your social status doesn’t matter. If we get along then we’ll do things together”. (Kalidou, Male, Black African, Entrepreneur, Intermediate renter)

Many interviewees refer to the people they train with as “not really friends” but more than strangers: as acquaintances:

Alexander: “In the Village I know quite a few people from the football. I am used to play football on the Wednesdays, every Wednesday. So I know maybe 30 to 40 people from that, and we have a really good sort of group. And we come here [to the local pub] after ends. But they’re acquaintances, not really friends of mine. They’re just people I play football with once a week and I don’t... I wouldn’t say I’d go for a drink with them”.

Interviewer: “What mix of people do you see in the football group?”

Alexander: “There’s a few social housing, not many. A lot of people I think are shared ownership. Yeah I would say 70% is shared owners and the rest is a mix of everything else”. (Male, White British, Legal services, Intermediate renter).

Similar to the gym, in the football groups there are instances of social mixing. This mixing may not lead to the establishment of friendships. Nevertheless, contrary to what we observed in the retail facilities, in these places some level of inter-ethnic and inter-class conviviality occurs. Jade notes that in the Our Parks activities, white middle-class individuals tend to be the majority, as indeed is the case in the whole neighbourhood. Nevertheless, there is a reasonable mix of socio-ethnic backgrounds:

“The group that I hang out with is Our Parks, which is funded by GLL to try and get people active [...]. I’d say it’s mixed, definitely mixed. You’d see more white middle-class people than people who are not as well off. But I’d say there’s a good fair mix”. (Jade, Female, White Canadian, School teacher, Intermediate renter)

There is still a sense that GLL’s main purpose is to provide residents with sport facilities and activities to stimulate the dispositions of white middle-class residents, for whom it is important to keep a sporty and healthy lifestyle. Nonetheless, such activities and facilities also provide occasions for social mixing between people - from East Village and the surrounding areas – with different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds to mix together. This is facilitated by the fact that they are not closed to the broader public, and they are either free or relatively low-cost. However, an exclusionary issue that falls in the intersection between ethnicity and gender has emerged from one interview. In particular, this relates to the multiple exclusions experienced by Muslim women in the Village:

“I’d like to have also a gym that caters for Muslim women, that maybe has just a few classes that’s only for females. You know, just having like a small section. So that’s for me stuff that I would change about East Village”. (Zara, Female, Asian, Researcher, Intermediate renter)

As a Muslim woman, Zara cannot use the East Village gym, because it does not have a section for women only. Providing this would offer an important space for the Muslim women who live in the Village, and the possibility to mix with other female users of the gym.

Many East Villagers use the sport facilities in the Olympic Park: The Aquatic Centre, the Copper Box Arena, and the Velodrome. As part of the Olympic sporting legacy, these venues have the same membership fee as the East Village gym. The Olympic Stadium (now London Stadium), however, is not part of the facilities open to the public to practise sports. Even though it is still publicly owned, the stadium is now the ground of West Ham United. Because it was not an ideal solution for the club, Newham council paid £40 million to convince West Ham to move in. This decision triggered angry protests among the fans, who would have preferred to keep their old historical ground in Upton Park. While being paid to move into the London Stadium, the owners of West Ham United sold the old ground's land to a developer, which is building private apartments (Fawbert, 2017). This decision is highly controversial. As we saw in Chapter 1, Newham council claims to have insufficient funding to address housing need in the borough. However, they used £40 million of taxpayers' money to pay West Ham. It therefore appears that housing need is not a priority. Moreover, the new development that will replace Upton Park will have no social or affordable housing (*ibid.*). Thus, during the football season, the London Stadium is the ground of West Ham United, while in the summer it hosts athletics and cultural events. Therefore, residents of the surroundings cannot use it to practice sports:

“I want to say that the Olympic ground I know it belongs to West Ham, but I like athletics. They should open it up again! They should open it up for everybody, so that everybody can go there and do training. The track, I'd love to go, it's lovely! It's silly, what is it there for? Open up the track, not the pitch, the track! We would run! Unfortunately my children are big now, they would not be interested, but start up some training, something for kids you know?” (Kinje, Female, Black African, Home Office worker, Single mother, Social renter)

The sport facilities and the Olympic Stadium (now London Stadium) are the essence of an Olympic Games sporting legacy (IOC, 2013). Opening them up to people for the purpose of practising sports equates to the fulfilment of such a legacy. In the QEOP, however, the sport facilities are open to the public as long as this does not interfere with more profitable activities.

7.5 The Sir Ludwig Guttman Health and Wellbeing Centre

During the Olympics, the Sir Ludwig Guttman Health and Wellbeing Centre functioned as the Olympic Medical and Doping Centre for the Games. After the London 2012 Olympics, the site was readapted for NHS purposes (Guttman.nhs.uk). Being an NHS facility, the Centre offers free healthcare services, which are accessible to East Village residents, and the residents of the surrounding areas. Table 17 below shows to what extent EVS participants in the different housing tenures use the health centre. Notably, 135 out of 211 total respondents declared that they use it.

Table 17: The Sir Ludwig Guttman Health Centre Users' Housing Tenure

Housing Tenure	%
Social Rent	25%
IMR	9%
Shared Ownership/Equity/Leasehold	23%
Private Rent	43%
Total N = 100%	135

(Source: EVS, 2017)

Table 17 illustrates a contrasting trend to the one observed in relation to the retail facilities and the gym. Similar to the playgrounds, this data is more balanced in terms of users from the various housing tenures. Thus, 25% of the respondents are social renters. This is exactly the same percentage as the apartments available for social rent in the neighbourhood. IMR users comprise 9%, which is slightly lower than the percentage of apartments available for IMR (11%). The percentage of shared owners (23%) is higher than the overall percentage of shared ownership/equity/leasehold in the Village (14.5%). Finally, private rent users amount to 43%. This figure is eight percentile points lower than for the private rent accommodation, which accounts for 51% of the total housing stock. This trend could also be linked to this being an upmarket housing tenure, which caters for affluent individuals, some of whom might use private healthcare services. Conversely, as the East Village health centre is owned by the NHS (and therefore free), working-class

individuals are more likely to use it. Table 18 shows to what extent EVS participants from the various ethnic backgrounds use this facility.

Table 18: The Sir Ludwig Guttmann Health Centre Users' Ethnic Background

Ethnic Group	%
White British	42%
White Other	16%
Black	23%
Asian	13%
Mixed	6%
Total N = 100%	135

(Source: EVS, 2017)

The white British and white other respondents who use this facility account for 58% of the sample. As a consequence, the BAME users account for 42%.

In the first three years after East Village opened up to residents in 2013, the health centre provided a community café where the East Villagers could meet and run community activities. However, in 2016 the café closed down, and residents no longer have the possibility to use that space to meet and run activities:

Jane: "There has been a big issue, because where the health centre is there's community space there, but we can't use it!"

Interviewer: "Why?"

Jane: "I don't know, it's a long issue that has been going on between NHS and East Village Trust, and I don't really know the issues 'cause I'm not on the Trust. But yes East Village Trust is working really hard to try and get the space. There was a café there, it got closed down and then the church [of England] you know its volunteers took it over for six months, but the lease

was up and then they had to close. So now it's just sitting there doing nothing. And that's what is missing in this community, it's a community centre". (Jane, EVRA chair)²⁰

Zara expresses disappointment. The health centre community café was important, as it offered the East Villagers an opportunity to get to know each other and to do things together:

"Apparently nobody can decide who is supposed to run the East Village community centre, so it's just stubborn, which was really sad, really sad! So when I went there, that was like I met people, and now I would see them on the street and they would say hi, nothing more now. If you had stuff like that running, that's how you can meet people; you can meet your neighbours you know... So yes I think there is a lot that is missing". (Zara, Female, Asian, Researcher, Intermediate renter)

As we saw above, Zara is a Muslim woman. She and her husband - architect - are in a financially comfortable situation. Therefore, she could use places such as Caffé Sofia or other shops to meet neighbours. Less affluent Muslim women in the Village cannot use the shops – as previously discussed - because they are expensive; they cannot use the pub as they do not drink alcohol; and they cannot use the gym as there is not a female only section. A community café would help them to develop a relationship with their neighbours and the neighbourhood.

The TH manager was asked via email why the community café in the health centre closed down, and what issues are preventing it from opening again. The manager answered that the project has not gone smoothly for two particular reasons. The first is that East Village Trust has struggled to negotiate a lease with the health centre, as it is now owned by NHS Property Services (a government agency responsible for all the health buildings in England and Wales). This organisation runs on a commercial basis, and their requirements, the TH manager argues, are impossible for them to agree to. The second reason is that the £1 million endowment for community activities cannot be touched.

²⁰ East Village Trust is a registered charity. It was established as part of the 2012 S106 Agreement for the development, with £1 million put into a restricted fund to provide the funding for a community centre at the Sir Ludwig Guttmann Health and Wellbeing Centre in the Village. The purpose of the Trust is to establish and run the community centre for the benefit of residents. The trustees come from: GLL, TH, the LLDC, Chobham Academy, and four representatives of the East Village community. The Trust is entitled to take out a lease for two floors of accommodation in the health centre (Email correspondence with a TH manager, April 2018).

Thus, the Trust can only use the interests that it generates, but this is insufficient to enable them to prepare the rooms at the health centre, or to pay for the ongoing management of the space. The estimated cost is in excess of £150,000. The café was run on an informal basis, but the room was not set up with the appropriate equipment to meet health and safety requirements for food preparation. Thus, given the lack of funding, they decided to close it down (Email conversation with a TH manager, April 2018).

The East Village community café therefore closed down for financial reasons. Providing a community space where residents can meet and interact, regardless of their socio-economic status, is not a priority. TH is concerned with cutting as many costs as possible (Humphry, 2019). GLL invests money from the service charge to maintain the public ground to high standards, so as to create the vibrant and trendy image that it wants for the Village. Part of the money from the service charge could be used to run a community centre. GLL chooses to invest in marketing campaigns to promote East Village as a vibrant community (Eastvillage.com). They even hold events in the public space for the same purpose. However, when it comes to funding a non-economically valuable community space for the benefit of all residents, the money is not available. This shows the weakness of the S 106 agreements when it comes to obtaining community gains from developers, as discussed in Chapter 1 (Bernstock and Poynter, 2012). The school and the health centre have been realised with public money, despite the original commitment of Lendlease, which built the Village, to fund the construction of these venues (Bernstock, 2014). QDD purchased 1,439 housing units, the retail units and the East Village's freehold for £557 million (Kollewe, 2011). This is a massive discount on the market value. In addition, they obtained planning permission to build 2,000 additional apartments in the neighbourhood. Public authorities such as the ODA and the LBN could have at least bound QDD to deliver and provide the necessary funding for running a community centre in East Village; especially if fostering social mixing was a genuine policy aim (Meredith, 2012). However, they did not, because in the era of neoliberal urban restructuring and austerity urbanism, private interests are more important than collective ones (Peck, 2012; Vainer, 2016).

7.6 The Chobham Academy

The Chobham Academy is a state-owned primary and secondary school that has been built as part of the East Village plans. People under the age of 18 are not part of this research. Therefore, this study has not looked at social mixing among the academy's students. The following discussion is therefore based on limited evidence. However, several interviewees and EVS respondents have children who study in the East Village school. In this section, we will focus on these data to obtain an overview of social mixing within the Chobham Academy.

The field of education is a crucial one for middle-class individuals, as it is a means to acquire cultural capital and guarantee their social reproduction (Bacqué et al., 2015; Butler and Robson, 2003). Thus, considerations about living close to a high-performing school or away from one where there is too much social diversity are important to either encourage or discourage middle-class households with children to choose a certain area (*ibid.*). The Chobham Academy's webpage states:

"The Academy will develop a positive and enterprising attitude amongst its students. You will always find: Traditional uniforms with smart and tidy students; Self-disciplined well-maintained students who are respectful of each other and their teachers; A personal best culture with students who look forward to coming to school each day; Well-trained resourced teachers who are ambitious for every student and ensure they are making the progress expected or preferably doing even better." (Chobhamacademy.org.uk: N.p.)

On the one hand, the school's values make it desirable for middle-class parents. On the other hand, the sociodemographic characteristics of the students, who are largely from social housing, generates feelings of animosity.

Table 19: Chobham Academy Users' Housing Tenure

Housing Tenure	%
Social Rent	51%
IMR	7%
Shared Ownership/Equity/Leasehold	12%
Private Rent	29%
Total N = 100%	41

(Source: EVS, 2017)

Unlike the other neighbourhood facilities considered above, Table 19 demonstrates that the absolute majority of respondents who have children in the Chobham Academy are social renters. They account for 51% of the participants. Moreover, 29% of the users are in private rent, 12% in shared ownership, and 7% in IMR. Table 20 shows the ethnic background of the Chobham Academy users.

Table 20: Chobham Academy Users' Ethnic Background

Ethnic Group	%
White British	15%
White Other	10%
Black	52%
Asian	17%
Mixed	7%
Total N = 100%	41

(Source: EVS, 2017)

In this case, we can observe an opposite trend to what we saw in the data related to the other facilities. Only 25% of participants whose children use the school have a white background (the white British are 15% and the white other are 10%); whereas 75% of

respondents have a BAME background, with the black users accounting for 52% alone, while the Asians are 17% and the users with a mixed ethnic background represent 7% of the total.

There are two reasons why the number of Chobham Academy students in social housing is considerably higher than for the residents in the other housing tenures, and that the number of students with a BAME background is higher than the number of white students. Firstly, the households in social housing – 67.7% of which are BAME - are mostly families with children, whereas in the other three tenures there are much fewer households with children. As discussed throughout this thesis, the East Village’s population is for the most part composed of young early career professionals, the majority of whom are likely to be single. Secondly, the socially rented flats were allocated before the other apartments. Therefore, the children in this tenure secured their places earlier. In addition, in order to fill up the classes when the Village was still not fully occupied, the school accepted pupils living in the old part of Stratford. The EVS only regards East Village residents. However, the presence of Stratford residents is confirmed by the interview quotes below. The BAME Stratford residents are less affluent than those who live in the Village (Elahi and Khan, 2016). This and the fact that those who arrived later could not find a place has led to feelings of animosity:

“I live 200 metres away [from the Chobham Academy] and my son moved in with me and he was unable to have a place. He was number 200 in the waiting list, or some crazy number, which I was upset about ‘cause one of the reasons why I chose here cause there’s a school nearby. I thought if my son joins me he’ll be going to the school. That is lie! And they should be very clear in all the communication. Living in the community does not guarantee you get a place in the school. So he has to go upon a tube and go for 20 minutes. They market there is a school here and then you can’t get in. When they opened up the Olympic Village, the school opened, they moved in the social housing, those people came in and then everybody from the area applied and the school got full before the rest of tenants came in. So real disgrace!” (Michael, Male, White Canadian, Self-employed marketing expert, Private renter)

As we saw in Chapter 6, Michael has a negative opinion about the old part of Stratford. As a middle-class parent, he is concerned with the diversity that his son would interact with if he went to a school across the bridge. This could have “negative” consequences for his son’s upbringing as a middle-class individual. Therefore, he prefers to send him

20 minutes away, where he found another high-performing school. Marine is a resident and a teacher/manager at Chobham Academy. She explains the point of view of the school on these issues:

“It’s a school that most of people are complaining about, because at the beginning we needed to brand us as a school. So we took some people... we took some kids from the old Stratford. At the beginning, when we just started we had loads of classes with 10 kids. The problem is that now, since then, there are loads of families who want to get their kids in there. There is an issue that the way the school works they get priority if it’s a sibling, so there is people actually have been able to come in and thanks to them the school is running. The problem is that some of the people who live this issue now are quite aggressive towards these other people because they think they have taken their place and it’s true! So you’ve got several ways to get in the school, if you have some kind of statements: disabilities of some kind, if you are from Stratford and you have a three years old sibling you get priority; and then there is distance to the school, and that’s where it becomes ridiculous. We are not that far away but there’s so much demand!”
(Marine, Female, White European, School teacher/manager, Shared owner)

Similar to the sport facilities, the school is an exception to the sharp separation between old and new Stratford. However, this worsens the feelings of animosity and the negative sentiments towards the residents of the old part, such that some would like to extend the spatial segregation of the Village even to the school, as the deviant presence of working-class BAME children in the GC’s academy is perceived as an intrusion that corrupts the purity of the East Village’s educational infrastructure. Akmal is in social rent. He moved into his flat quite early – 2013 - and therefore his daughter has secured a place. He has an Asian background. However, as many others in his tenure, he has engaged in a classification struggle (Bourdieu, 1985a) to align himself with the white middle-class East Villagers. As we saw in Chapter 5, he decided to leave his old accommodation in Tower Hamlets to escape from Inner London cramped living conditions, and other BAME working-class individuals:

“It could be a world-class school but it is not. One of my friend’s sons was bullied by other kids, he was beaten up. And they didn’t do anything. Because there are children who don’t live in East Village, and they shouldn’t allow children from outside to come here because they make this kind of problems. If it is the neighbourhood’s school it should be only for people who live in the neighbourhood. The people who live here know how to live, because there is a management and they can’t do anything wrong, otherwise they get penalised. But people

outside don't. And to be honest, they took some teachers from ethnic minorities like Indians and it's not good! I'm not racist but I don't like it" (Akmal, Male, Asian, Legal associate, Social renter)

The symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1986a) that Akmal is subject to, leads him to overtly denigrate his own ethnic background. Akmal's account could be seen to embody a rather aggressive form of whiteness (Beider, 2015; Sibley, 1995), as well as a sense of internalized racism. As Pyke (2010: 551) describes, this refers to the "internalization of racial oppression by the racially subordinated".

Another controversial issue is the way in which the Chobham Academy's management and teachers seem to conceive and interpret education, although it has to be noted that there is limited evidence to support this point. Only two parents have expressed discontent about teachers' interactions with their children. It would appear that they try to inculcate in "unruly" working-class children discipline and respect for order (Valentine, 2017: 3):

"They are very strict on silly things [...]. Like children had to have their planner every day when they walk in and hold it and show them. They're not allowed to hold certain shoes like Kickers. On the first day when kids start secondary, if they have the wrong uniform on they send them home. You know parents can get it wrong. They might get the wrong trousers, the wrong shoes... You can't penalise the children you know? My son, his haircut, he had a bit of kind of long at the back, he wasn't spiky at school but they said he had to cut the back off otherwise he had to go in isolation. The teachers use the detention freely to show their authority. My son is very intellectual, very polite, and he got detention because he had to borrow a pen or he got out of the seat and he got a detention. Once my son didn't come home from school for nearly one hour and I was like 'where is he?' We went to the school and we found out he got a detention. They had to text the parents but they didn't bother to do that. I've tried to speak to teachers but they don't seem to care to be honest ". (Alexandra, Female, White British, Disabled, Social renter)

Teachers also seem to encourage pupils to choose certain courses of study as part of their educational package, which are considered more "valuable" than others:

"He [her son] wasn't happy at Chobham Academy. He was in the top set and he wanted to do music and drama and sports. They wanted him to do academic subjects and do a Baccalaureate. He picked his subjects on the last day before the end of term last year, the end of the academic year. A teacher who was brand new, who wasn't a teacher, was a manager, took him out of

class, sat him down, made him change all of his options. He comes home and told me, so I went up the school and I got the guy and I said, 'I want a word with you' and he said, 'What?' 'Why are you doing this to my son?' He said, 'Well his father's an academic, his mother's an academic.' I said, 'The boy is my son, he does what he chooses, his subjects he chooses'. And he said, 'Well stupid people do the subjects like drama and music'. So they saw drama and music not as subjects worth doing, but somewhere to dump children that were not academic (Susy, Female, White British, Researcher, Former intermediate renter).

We are therefore left with the impression that even the Chobham Academy's management prioritises the dispositions of white middle-class individuals and attempts to stimulate their development throughout children upbringing.

7.7 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated how the dominant aesthetics, norms and values have been intentionally cultivated by GLL – on behalf of QDD – to attract young, white middle-class individuals. This has been done, for example, by selecting upscale shops and restaurants. Even though this state of things generates further exclusion, most of the affluent East Villagers are averse to low-cost retail units opening up in the neighbourhood, as this would upset their middle-class sensibility, and dilute the categories of distinction and socio-spatial boundaries that they draw between East Village and the old part of Stratford. For the same reason, the fact that many Stratford children have secured a place at Chobham Academy creates a feeling of animosity.

The East Village's sport facilities and classes are more inclusive than its shops and restaurants. Some level of social interaction between residents from different socio-ethnic backgrounds occurs in these spaces. However, this is limited to the time in which residents use sport facilities and leisure groups. In reality, developing a sense of community based on interactions does not seem to be a priority for GLL, which prefers to convey a sense of community by organising sport and leisure classes, which satisfies the desire of young middle-class individuals to keep themselves healthy and fit.

The lack of consideration for the least affluent residents' needs is confirmed by the fact that there is no funding allocated to running a community café in East Village's health

centre, as the initial plans indicated. This is a lamentable outcome, as this space would provide an environment in which individuals from all housing tenures and ethnic backgrounds could interact and mix with each other.

Conclusion

This research has critically examined policy aims and outcomes related to social mixing in the housing redevelopment of the London 2012 former Athletes' Village – now East Village. It has contributed to existing literature that evaluates the legacy of the London 2012 Olympic Games. It has also focused on how urban space is classed and racialised through these processes. The research has looked at four key neighbourhood dimensions: housing, semi-private space, public space, and neighbourhood facilities. Drawing on Benson's (2014) suggestion that we should think of neighbourhood as a field, we have considered these four dimensions as fields, where actors compete to generate categories of distinction (Bourdieu, 1986a), accumulate various forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1986b), develop sense of belonging (Savage et al., 2005), and interact with neighbours (Neal et al., 2017).

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, there is an existing body of literature on East Village (See Bernstock, 2014; Cohen, 2017; Humphry, 2017, 2019; Swan, 2017; Watt and Bernstock, 2017). However, further research evidence was needed in order to systematically investigate the implications of its post-Olympic housing redevelopment, the lived experiences of residents, and what relationship they develop with each other, the neighbourhood, and the broader areas of Stratford and Newham.

Existing research on social mix tends to attribute primary importance to class (see for example Cohen, 2017; Davidson, 2010; Olagnero and Ponzo, 2017) while considering ethnicity as a subtheme; vice versa, other social mix research focuses primarily on ethnicity (see for example Jones et al., 2015; Neal et al., 2017; Wessendorf, 2014). There is need for additional research giving equal importance to issues of class and ethnicity in socially mixed developments, as this study has attempted to do. In addition, current literature concentrates on the different preferences of middle-class residents and those who live in social/public housing; while overlooking intra-class and intra-ethnic differences (see for example August, 2014; Davidson, 2010; Tissot, 2014). By focusing on the various perceptions of residents in a number of tenures (i.e. shared ownerships, IMR and PRS), as well as on the different perceptions of social renters across a variety of socio-ethnic backgrounds, this work has attempted to expand the understanding of

social mixing processes. Below are some critical reflections on a number of key thematic areas that connect the previous chapters: the East Villagers' habitus, belonging, othering and interactions. I conclude with some critical reflections on the lessons that should be learnt from the East Village project, as well as some policy recommendations. Before this, the limitations of this study will be briefly discussed.

Limitations of the Study

The most relevant limitations of this study are linked to the EVS. The 211 collected questionnaires are indicative of the East Village's population socio-demographic trends. Moreover, a comparison of the EVS to the 2011 Census data regarding the Stratford and New Town ward, and the LBN, have outlined the contrast between the East Village and the broader areas socio-demographic fabrics. However, given that East Village has a population of over 6,000 inhabitants, the EVS is not statistically representative of the overall population. In addition, middle-class individuals are more willing to come forward for social research compared more marginal social groups (Savage, 2015). This issue could have affected the sample. Another limitation consists of the six-year difference between the 2011 Census data and the EVS, which was undertaken in 2017. Thus, the data related to the ward and the borough could not correspond to their socio-demographic composition in 2017. Moreover, the short format has allowed to find more interviewees; but it has not allowed to expand the questions and ask more information, for example, about the residents' occupation and income, which would have allowed a more detailed analysis of their class positions. In conclusion, the EVS is at best indicative of the socio-demographic trends in the neighbourhoods. These issues could have been partly addressed if questionnaires distribution and collection had started earlier than April 2018, and a more representative sample had been obtained.

A similar consideration can be made with respect to the interview guide, which did not contain questions about the participants' income. Moreover, the relationship of the East Villagers with the old part of Stratford has been broadly explored. However, the same has not been done with respect to the Hackney Wick area - located just across the QEOP - as well as with other areas of entertainment and consumption in East London and

beyond. An analysis of this theme could have expanded the understanding of the East Villagers social geographies.

The East Villagers' Habitus

Various processes, practices and actors come together to produce an environment that panders to the dispositions of white middle-class individuals. Their habitus becomes dominant within the neighbourhood field. Therefore, the ambitions of social mixing are not met in practice. A number of points can be made in relation to these findings. First of all, the analysis of TH's housing policy documents has revealed that the least marginal of social housing applicants are selected and allowed to move into the neighbourhood. The EVS suggests that the East Village social renters are more affluent than those living in Stratford and Newham. Yet, the former's ethnic backgrounds are similar to the latter. The social mixing goals are further jeopardised by design, which separates the various housing tenures. A number of categories become hegemonic within the neighbourhood field: safety, order, modern built environment, greenery and aesthetically pleasing landscapes. They generate categories of distinction with "old" Stratford, foster a sense of selective belonging (Watt, 2009a), and therefore reproduce socio-spatial exclusion.

Space securitisation reduces fear of crime, and fosters the sense of living on an island of similarity that keeps diversity and strangers at a distance (Bauman, 2003). In this regard, it has been argued that East Village is "defended" by material and immaterial gates that generate multiple gated communities. The first set of gates is symbolic and consists of the aesthetic norms that dominate the neighbourhood. The lived experiences of residents highlight that the symbolic gates are also represented by a form of physical insularity, given that East Village and the QEOP are surrounded by a number of railways, and therefore can only be accessed by crossing a bridge. The second set of gates is almost invisible, but not ineffective, and is composed of 24/7 CCTV and security guards that monitor, patrol and if necessary expel unwanted visitors. The third set of gates is the most physical, and consists of the secured entry doors and gates that impede strangers' access to the various plots, each of them therefore being a separate GC.

This environment has been intentionally cultivated by GLL on behalf of the landlord QDD. This is demonstrated by the events, leisure and sport classes organised in the public space, and the selection of ABC shops and restaurants that prioritise the preferences of young, white middle-class residents, and stimulate their sense of selective belonging (Watt, 2009a); especially when compared to the low-cost and superdiverse retail- infrastructure of Stratford and other surrounding areas.

Belonging

The East Villagers' narratives of belonging reflect several elements of Savage et al.'s (2005) concept of elective belonging. They claim moral ownership over the neighbourhood. They attribute magical characteristics to the area, which are based on vicinity to transport links, easy commute to central London, aesthetically pleasing landscapes, trendy shops and restaurants, and sport facilities. At the same time, they draw clear socio-spatial boundaries between East Village and the old part of Stratford. While the former is aesthetically pleasant, safe, tidy, clean, white and middle-class, the latter is ugly, dangerous, dirty, ethnically diverse and working-class. Their sense of belonging is therefore spatially selective (Watt, 2009a). The Olympic power of naming fosters selective belonging, and is invoked as a symbol of the distinguished character of the prestigious Olympic Village and the "rough" surrounding areas.

Additional research was needed on the narratives of belonging of young middle-class individuals on short-term leases or even on shared ownership, which, in many cases, have proven not to be long-term residential solutions. East Village private and intermediate renters decide year by year – in certain cases even less – whether or not they will continue living in the area. This is due to the desire to buy a house, or the job market flexibility, which encourages them to frequently change job and residential location. Shared owners have bought their flat or at least part of it. Therefore, they plan to live there for a longer period of time. However, because of considerations such as social reproduction, or desire for more space and greenery, they express the desire to move out eventually. These young middle-class individuals still develop a strong sense of moral ownership over the neighbourhood, even though their narratives of belonging

include an element of temporality. Again, residential experiences in the Village are similar to being guests in a hotel. When we go on holiday we have a fantastic time; but we know that the experience is time limited. Similarly, the East Villagers love living in the neighbourhood. Nonetheless, they are aware that sooner or later they will move out, because they are young and their life circumstances will change.

The social renters who are originally from or work in Stratford - or elsewhere in East London - have family members and friends who live there. Stratford is the location of their social networks, as well as meeting points, shops and leisure facilities, which they continue to use. Therefore, they maintain a strong sense of belonging to the wider area. However, many feel that their right to belong to East Village is questioned by the neoliberal policies that shape it. As a consequence of the TH housing policies, they struggle with high rent and living costs, such that they are unsure whether they are going to be able to live in the area in the future. Paton (2014) describes this feeling of uncertainty as *weak fixity in place*. Moreover, the norms that become hegemonic in semi-private and public space construct those who do not display white middle-class dispositions as unable to fit in the neighbourhood. Working-class and BAME residents are also alienated from the shops, either because they are unable to afford them, or because they feel unwelcome in their environment. For these reasons, they lose the struggle for belonging in the various neighbourhood fields, where they perceive themselves as being out of place, and therefore experience psychological dislocation (Jeffery, 2018). In addition to excluding working-class and BAME individuals who live in the old part of Stratford, the landlords' housing policies and spatial practices exclude working-class and BAME East Villagers as well. They are perceived as the "other".

Othering

This thesis has identified two othering processes that the East Villagers trigger to generate categories of distinction (Bourdieu, 1986a). The first othering process is directed at social renters, who they perceive as the interior "other". In this way, working-class and BAME individuals' "unruly" behaviour is seen to threaten the moral order of the Village. In Chapter 5, we saw that this othering process is also informed by the

housing tenure distribution, which facilitates the identification of “us” - the hardworking and respectful neighbours - and “them” - the unruly and lazy social renters. Those social renters whom engage in the classification game to align themselves with white middle-class identification agree with this criticism. Symbolic violence is at play in their residential experience, as by attempting to distance themselves from those of similar socio-ethnic backgrounds in their housing tenure they “other” their own socio-ethnic origin.

As mentioned above, the East Villagers draw clear socio-spatial boundaries between the Village and the old part of Stratford. Thus, the second othering process is triggered and directed at the residents of the surrounding areas, who are perceived as an impure, criminal, dirty and defiled underclass that needs to be kept out of the “bubble” or the “island”, as the East Villagers describe their neighbourhood. Again, those social renters who have internalised the class struggle over the appropriation of distinctive symbols interiorise this criticism - despite the fact that they have similar ethnic backgrounds as the Stratford residents - as a means to demonstrate their fit in East Village. They are subject to symbolic violence, as in perceiving the separation between the Village and Stratford as just and fair they repudiate their own experience.

These othering processes have been extended to working-class children and their parents. Chapter 5 has discussed the stigmatisation of social housing children playing in the courtyards. Chapter 7 has explored how the Stratford children studying at Chobham Academy are perceived as intruders. They are accused of corrupting the morality of the neighbourhood with their unruly and at times “bullying” behaviour. In this regard, a gendered aspect of social distinction has emerged. This occurs along the boundaries that separate a “bad” East Village motherhood as opposed to a “good” East Village motherhood. The former is identified in the incapacity of the social housing mothers to correct the disruptive behaviour of their children in the courtyards. The latter is identified in the mothers’ groups where only white middle-class parents are allowed.

Interactions

In East Village, the level of interaction tends to be low. In Chapter 5 we saw that private and intermediate renters tend not to mix. They are not going to live in the area for a long period of time, and they do not put too much effort in getting to know their neighbours. On the contrary, shared owners do. For them, community, intended as doing things with their neighbours, is a way to cohere as a class of homeowners, exhibit the success of the neighbourhood, and protect both their financial and emotional investment in East Village. Similarly, interactions occur in the small networks of single mothers living in social housing, who help each other out with their kids.

As discussed in Chapter 6, events such as the Sunday Market or the fireworks display bring people into the same place, but they do not necessarily make them talk to each other. Like spectators in the East Village “theatre”, they assist to the show, but they do not familiarise themselves with other spectators. In Chapter 7, we saw that the interactions that occur in the shops and restaurants are between white middle-class residents. Because of their price levels and atmosphere, these enterprises cater for affluent residents. The sport groups and facilities are the only sites where interactions between residents with different socio-ethnic backgrounds occur. However, they are limited to the time when residents practice sports and train together, rarely resulting in the establishment of friendships. A community centre could be a place where people from different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds could meet. However, the landlords do not consider this to be a priority worth spending money for. Therefore, this much-needed facility is currently not available on site.

The London 2012 Athletes’ Village: An Inclusive or Exclusive Legacy?

The themes and issues discussed throughout this thesis demonstrate that East Village has become a place that actively reproduces the exclusion of working-class and BAME individuals. The marginal and ethnically diverse East London population has had limited benefits from the housing redevelopment of the London 2012 former Athletes’ Village, which goes contrary to policy makers’ claims (London 2012, 2004; Growth Boroughs,

2009). Nearly two thirds of the EVS respondents are in middle-class occupations, while only one third and one fourth of Stratford and Newham's populations respectively are in these occupational groups. Moreover, approximately 60% of the EVS respondents have a white background, whereas only 40% of Stratford and 20% of Newham's populations are white.

East Village is the domain of neoliberal subjects driven by the rationale to accumulate various forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1986b). Those who are not successful, or those who are not driven by economic rationales, do not fit in. The government and the ODA were aware that the legacy of the event was not going to be inclusive. A state that delivers affordable/social housing through the Olympics and PPPs legitimises the logics of social inequality. The impression is therefore left that the promises were not much more than a marketing stunt:

"I could see it was going to be quite a divisive outcome. I thought there would be quite a backlash that all these promises were made and they were lies. [...]. If you wanted to improve community conditions in East London and you had £9 billion to spend, would you build the Olympic Park? I don't know. It's like Donald Trump isn't it? The Olympics and Trump. They both promise things they can't deliver and then people are surprised. The promises were made up! Forget the promises. Forget all the stuff about the community benefits". (LDU officer)

The influence that powerful corporations have been able to exercise on the British government through the London 2012 Olympic project has produced a dystopian neighbourhood; one that is unique at the moment, but that could proliferate in the near future if the neoliberal urban consensus remains unchallenged. Despite the presence of many GCs and MPCs in London, seldom can we observe an actor such as QDD, which captures part of the power that public authorities exercise over urban space, as well as capturing the power that residents exercise over their neighbourhood, and uses it to deliver its package. QDD is the freeholder, it owns 51% of the housing units, the public and retail space. Many public services, such as policing, waste collection and street cleaning, are not carried out by the local authority but by the EVML on behalf of the landlords. The East Villagers cannot spontaneously organise events, street parties or demonstrations in their neighbourhood. Due to the formalisation of relationships, they cannot even sort out tensions between themselves without the intervention of the

landlord. Such a level of micromanagement is rare. A private actor – QDD – has partially replaced public authorities in exercising sovereignty over the neighbourhood, and uses its power to decide who belongs and who does not.

Symbolic violence is exercised not only on the social renters who separate themselves from their socio-ethnic origin in order to be recognised as legitimate East Villagers, but also on more affluent residents. Through powerful advertising messages QDD panders to the dispositions of young, white middle-class individuals to persuade them that East Village is the “best place to live” (GLL, 2014). In reality, given the constraints of the London housing market their options are limited. QDD exploits the demand for rentable housing to extract economic value. However, even white middle-class residents find themselves powerless when the “green Village” that they have been sold is taken over by the new constructions, which eat into the green landscapes that they longed for.

There are many policy lessons that prospective Olympic host and candidate cities should learn if tackling exclusion were to become a true aim pursued by the Olympic Movement (IOC, 2002). With respect to the UK, social rent levels should be completely detached from property value, and not be higher than one third of the local borough’s median income. Considering the flexibility and insecurity of the job market, further deductions should be applied to facilitate those households whose heads are unemployed or working part-time. Moreover, affordable housing should be capped at not more than 60% of the market level; and households with an income higher than £50,000 per year should not be eligible for it. Moreover, a PRS cap should be introduced; so that middle-income households whom are unable to find social/affordable housing can rent at a fair price. This would also prevent areas such as Stratford and New Town, which received massive in-flows of Olympics-related public investments, from becoming unaffordable for the existing low-income and ethnically diverse population. These policies should be applied especially in London and the South-East of England, where property values are very high (Watt and Bernstock, 2017).

Furthermore, public, leisure and retail space in socially mixed neighbourhoods built with public investments should not be sold to bodies such as QDD; whose particular interest is to attract affluent residents capable to pay the upmarket rent. Such spaces and

services should be truly affordable, and constructed in ways that include, instead of alienating BAME individuals. For example, less money should be invested in space securitisation and aestheticisation. More resources should be allocated to support low-cost housing, as well as retail and leisure space that cater for all of the socio-economic and ethnic groups that lived in the area before a new urban regeneration process begins.

Appendix 1

Interviewees' Socio-Demographic Profile

Name (Pseudonym)	Previous Address	Housing Tenure and Flat Size	Sex	Age	Ethnic Background	Occupation	Partner (if living with them) or Other Household Members' Occupation	Number of Children (if living with them)
Akmal	Tower Hamlets	Social Rent (2-bedroom)	Male	50	Asian	Legal associate (full-time)	Sale assistant (full-time)	1
Alexandra	Croydon	Social Rent (4-bedroom)	Female	30	White British	Unemployed (disabled)	Unemployed	4
Daniel	Havering	Social Rent (2-bedroom)	Male	35	Black British	Unemployed (disabled)	None	None

Gina	Waltham Forest	Social Rent (1-bedroom)	Female	45	Black British	Health visitor (full-time)	Security (full-time)	1
Jane	Elsewhere in Newham	Social Rent (3-bedroom)	Female	40	Mixed (Scottish-Asian)	Unemployed	None	4
Kinje	Elsewhere in Stratford	Social Rent (3-bedroom)	Female	47	Black African	Home Office worker (full-time)	None	3
Margaret	Barking and Dagenham	Social Rent (2-bedroom)	Female	34	Black African	Environmental Health worker (full-time)	None	2
Mariana	Elsewhere in Newham	Social Rent (3-bedroom)	Female	39	Black European	Unemployed	Railway construction (full-time)	3
Ode	Elsewhere in Newham	Social Rent (4-bedroom)	Female	47	Black African	Unemployed	None	4

Olga	Camden	Social Rent (2-bedrooms)	Female	35	Black European	Own account hairdresser (full-time)	None	1
Rebecca	Elsewhere in Newham	Social Rent (3-bedroom)	Female	39	Black African	Unemployed	Unemployed	3 (1 disabled)
Samira	Elsewhere in Newham	Social Rent (2-bedroom)	Female	38	Black British	Office manager (full-time)	None	1
Simona	Islington	Social Rent 2-bedroom)	Female	26	Mixed (Latino- Middle Eastern)	Casino dealer (full-time)	None	1
Zana	Redbridge	Social Rent (3-bedroom)	Female	51	Black African	Childcare assistant (part-time)	None	3
Zoya	Lewisham	Social Rent (3-bedroom)	Female	51	Black African	Interpreter (part-time)	BBC broadcaster (fill-time)	3

Alexander	Elsewhere in Stratford	Intermediate Rent (2-bedroom)	Male	27	White British	Legal services (full-time)	School teacher (full-time)	None
Antonella	Islington	Intermediate Rent (3-bedroom)	Female	29	White British	Administrative professional (full-time)	1 accountant, 1 software developer (full-time)	None
Jade	Elsewhere in Stratford	Intermediate Rent (2-bedroom)	Female	27	White Canadian	Secondary school teacher (full-time)	Legal services (full-time)	None
Helen	Tower Hamlets	Intermediate Rent (2-bedroom)	Female	36	White British	Publisher (full-time)	Software developer (full-time)	None
Kalidou	Southwark	Intermediate Rent (2-bedroom)	Male	26	Black African	Entrepreneur (full-time)	None	None

Rhys	Tower Hamlets	Intermediate Rent (2-bedroom)	Male	30	White British	Software developer (full-time)	Publisher (full-time)	None
Susy	Elsewhere in Newham	Intermediate Rent (2-bedroom)	Female	50	White British	Researcher (full-time)	None	2
Zara	Cambridge	Intermediate Rent (2-bedroom)	Female	30	Asian	Researcher (full-time)	Architect (full-time)	1
Enrique	Elsewhere in London	Shared Ownership (1-bedroom)	Male	36	White European	Freelance dancer, Yoga trainer (full-time)	PhD (part-time) Lecturer (part-time)	None
Katy	Oxford	Shared Ownership (1-bedroom)	Female	29	White British	Marketing manager (full-time)	None	None

Marine	Elsewhere in London	Shared Ownership (3-bedroom)	Female	32	White European	School teacher/manager (full-time)	Data analyst (full-time)	2
Nathan	South London	Shared ownership (1-bedroom)	Male	39	White Australian	Secondary School teacher (full-time)	None	None
Richard	Hackney	Shared Ownership (1 bedroom)	Male	44	White British	PhD (part-time) Lecturer (part-time)	Dancer – Yoga trainer (full-time)	None
Taylor	West London	Shared Ownership (3 bedrooms)	Male	28	White European	Freelance designer (part-time)	Restaurant manager (full-time)	None
Thomas	Kensington and Chelsea	Shared Ownership (3-bedroom)	Male	33	White South-African	Surveyor (full-time)	Recruitment agent (full-time)	None

Linda	Waltham Forest	Shared Equity (1-bedroom)	Female	29	Black British	Secondary School teacher (full-time)	Technician (full-time)	None
Maria	Caterham	Shared Equity (1-bedroom)	Female	32	Asian	Pharmacist NHS (full-time)	None	None
Alan	Colchester	Leaseholder (3-bedroom)	Male	27	White British	Software developer (full-time)	Software developer (full-time)	None
Lina	South London	Leasehold (1-bedroom)	Female	27	Asian	Community worker (full-time)	Architect (full-time)	1
Anna	South Korea	Private Rent (3-bedroom)	Female	50	White European	Unemployed	Project manager (full-time)	None
Gill	Jersey	Private Rent (2-bedroom)	Female	50	White British	Student	None	None

Jack	Redbridge	Private Rent (2-bedroom)	Male	39	White British	Estate agent (full-time)	Estate agent (full-time)	None
John	USA	Private Rent (3-bedroom)	Male	48	White American	Waiter (part-time)	IT manager (full-time)	1
Joseph	South Korea	Private Rent (3-bedroom)	Male	46	White European	Project manager (full-time)	Unemployed	None
Josh	Barnet	Private Rent (1-bedroom)	Male	31	White British	Secondary school teacher (full-time)	Marketing (full-time)	None
Kevita	Canada	Private Rent (2-bedroom)	Female	25	Asian	Medical doctor (full-time)	Medical doctor (full-time)	None
Laura	Westminster	Private Rent (1-bedroom)	Female	20	White European	Student	None	None

Luana	Elsewhere in Newham	Private Rent (3-bedroom)	Female	27	White European	Waitress (full-time)	1 Waiter, 2 paramedics (full-time)	None
Magda	North London	Private Rent (3-bedroom)	Female	28	White British	Quantity surveyor (full-time)	2 marketing experts (full-time)	None
Michael	Canada	Private Rent (2-bedroom)	Male	54	White Canadian	Marketing expert (full-time)	None	1
Mei	Camden	Private Rent (3-bedroom)	Female	20	Asian	Student	2 students	None
Stephan	Tower Hamlets	Private Rent (3-bedroom)	Male	39	White Australian	Research advisor (full-time)	1 analyst, 1 banker (full-time)	None
Theodor	Waltham Forest	Private Rent (2-bedroom)	Male	65	White British	Retired	TFL (full-time)	None

Tom	Oxford	Private Rent (3-bedroom)	Male	21	White British	Student	2 bankers (full-time)	None
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(Piero Corcillo interviews, 2017)

Commentary to Appendix 1

Three social renters, Samira (office manager), Gina (health visitor) and Zoya (interpreter) are in lower professional positions (NS-SEC 2). Samira is in the private sector, Zoya is self-employed, while Gina is in the public sector.²¹ However, Zoya only works part-time, while her husband works as a BBC broadcaster, which is a lower technical occupation (NS-SEC 4). Akmal (legal associate) is in an intermediate occupation. His wife works as a sale assistant (semi-routine, NS-SEC 6) and they have one child. Kinje (Home Office worker) and Margaret (Environmental Health worker) are in intermediate occupations as well (NS-SEC 3). They are both single mothers and have three and two children respectively. Olga (hairdresser) is a single mother too. She is an own account worker (NS-SEC 4). Other single mother social renters, Simona (casino dealer) and Zana (childcare assistant), occupy a semi-routine position (NS-SEC 6). Nonetheless, Simona works full-time and her mother helps her look after her child. Therefore, she is better off than Zana, who has three children, and can only work part-time as she needs to look after them. Mariana, Ode and Jane are unemployed. However, Ode and Jane are single mothers of four children respectively. Therefore, they could never work. Mariana was used to working, but she has not since she has had children, and needed to look after them. Her husband is a railway construction worker (lower technical occupation, NS-SEC 5). Alexandra and Daniel are disabled. Rebecca, who never worked, has a disabled child. These three interviewees obtained a flat in East Village thanks to their households' disability status. They are part of the so called "deserving poor" (Watt and Bernstock, 2017). If we sum up respondents in NS-SEC 2, 3, 4 and 5, and we add the disabled, we find out that 11 out of 15 social rent interviewees are not part of the most precarious fraction of the working-class. In terms of age, social rent interviewees range from 30 to 51, with the exception of Simona who is 26. They are young or relatively young, but tend to be more middle-aged compared to participants in the other housing tenures. In terms

²¹ Like the EVS, the interviewees have been attributed to one of the eight NS-SEC occupational categories (Office for National Statistics, 2011). Because the income and other questions suggested in the NS-SEC User Manual were not asked, Table 10 "Simplified and Reduced Derivation Table" has been applied. Therefore, this information is an approximation.

of ethnicity, Alexandra is the only white British. The other social renters belong to non-white ethnic minorities.

As far as the eight intermediate renters are concerned, two of them, Alexander (legal services), and Rhys (software developer) are in higher professional posts (NS-SEC 1), both in the private sector. The other six are in lower professional occupations (NS-SEC 2). Antonella (administrative professional) and Helen (publisher) are in the private sector; Jade (school teacher) and Zara (researcher) are in the public sector. Finally, Kalidou (entrepreneur) and Susy (researcher) are self-employed. Intermediate renters are all very young. Their ages range between 26 and 36, with the exception of Susy who is 50. With respect to ethnicity, Zara (Asian) and Kalidou (Black African) are the only BAME intermediate renters. The others have white British or other white backgrounds.

The 11 shared owners/leaseholders are young professionals. Five of them, Alan (software developer), Katy (marketing manager), Maria (pharmacist), Marine (school manager), and Thomas (Surveyor) are in higher managerial and professional positions. The other six, Enrique (freelance dancer), Lina (community worker), Taylor (freelance designer), Richard (part-time lecturer), Linda and Nathan (school teachers), are in lower professional occupations. Enrique and Taylor are in the arts sector; while the others in the public. Similar to the intermediate renters, they are very young. Their ages range from 27 to 39, except for Richard who is 44. In terms of ethnic background, Linda (Black British), Lina and Maria (Asians) are BAME individuals. The others are white.

With regards to private renters, three of them, Joseph (project manager), Kevita (doctor), and Stephan (Research advisor) are in higher managerial and professional occupations. Joseph and Stephan work in the private sector, while Kevita works in the public. Four private renters Jack (self-employed estate agent), Josh (school teacher), Magda (quantity surveyor), and Michael (self-employed marketing expert) are in lower managerial and professional positions. Only Josh is in the public sector, whereas the others work in the private. John and Luana (waiters) occupy a routine post. However, John's partner is in a higher managerial position (IT manager). Luana shares the room with her boyfriend, and they live with two other flatmates (both paramedics), which makes an East Village private rent property affordable for them. Moreover, Laura, Mei

and Tom are students in their twenties. Gill (50) is also a student. However, she put her higher professional position (software developer) on hold to move from Jersey to London to study theology. Anna is the only unemployed resident, but she is married to Joseph, a manager in a multinational corporation. Finally, Theodor is the only retired resident, not only in private rent, but in the overall interviewees' sample. Contrary to the trend highlighted in the EVS, the ages of private rent interviewees are more variegated. Nine of them – therefore still the majority - are young. Their ages range from 20 to 39. Anna, Gill, John, Joseph and Michael are middle aged. Their ages range from 46 to 54. Finally, Theodor is 65. The private renters' sample is mostly white. Only Kevita and Mei (Asians) have a BAME background.

If we consider gender, 30 out of the 49 interviewees are female, and the remaining 19 are male. The only housing tenure where the male interviewees outnumber the female interviewees is shared ownership/leasehold (six males and five females). However, the numbers are quite even. With respect to social rent, 13 out of 15 interviewees are female, and only two are male. This was an unwanted outcome, resulting from the fact that more female residents were keen on participating in the interviews than males.

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