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THE SQUARE AND THE GARDENS:
EXPERIENCES OF PUBLIC SPACE
IN GENTRIFYING LONDON

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1. Introduction

This paper examines a prominent aspect of the recent urban political agenda, namely the role of design in producing and enhancing public space (Urban Taskforce 1999, 2005; DETR 2000; CABE 2000). A high quality public realm – from streets and squares to parks and riversides – has been identified as a device to reduce an array of urban ills, including social deprivation, crime and economic disinvestment (ODPM 2002). At the same time as government agencies emphasise the benefits of public space, its provision has become increasingly funded and developed by private agencies, with commentators questioning whether their involvement has come at the cost of public spaces which are genuinely accessible to all social groups (Minton 2006). Yet the provision of public space is heavily mediated by government agencies. By providing public space alongside housing which is mostly built and marketed to attract new types of residents to disinvested areas, public space becomes a vehicle of legitimacy for local authorities, symbolising their commitment to spreading the benefits of urban regeneration to all residents.

It is in this context that my paper looks at long-term residents' reactions to public space in a gentrifying neighbourhood of London. It starts by briefly reviewing the importance of public space to urban life and how gentrification can impact it. It then looks in detail at how long-term residents responded to a new public space in my case study area of Bermondsey, south London. Tabard Square is a recent, high-value housing development which, as part of its planning consent, provided a new, publically accessible open space. As a former brownfield site developed into expensive housing marketed at young professionals, and supported by local planning policies to develop more socially mixed neighbourhoods, Tabard Square displays the characteristics of 'new build gentrification' (Davidson and Lees 2007). Yet despite it being explicitly conceived as a public resource for all neighbourhood residents, the public space is under-used and among long-term residents provoked outright hostility to their limited access to a theoretically public resource. I examine the reasons for the disconnect between planning ideals and lived reality, before concluding by discussing how the patterns of withdrawal from the public sphere exhibited by long-term residents can be conceptualised within gentrification theories of displacement.

2. The decline of public space?

The deterioration in the quality of public space and its impact on city life has become a major strand in urban studies. For proponents of this narrative of decline, the value of public space is as an arena which can bring together disparate activities and inhabitants, and so create valuable encounters which build tolerance and mutual understanding. For Sennett (2000: 261), 'Democratic government depends on such exchanges between strangers. The public realm offers people a chance to lighten the pressures for conformity, of fitting into a fixed role in the social order; anonymity and impersonality provide a milieu for more individual development.' Public space is therefore expected to act as the infrastructure of democratic life in cities. It is in public spaces that we can learn to live with strangers and where a diversity of different interests can co-exist through tolerance. Underlying the potential

for civility is the principle of free access to public space, entailing an everyday aspect of social and political belonging to a city. Spending time in public space is thus an expression of citizenship whereby inhabitants make themselves publicly (and therefore politically) visible (Mitchell 2003).

Sennett's ideal-type public space is based on equality of access; increasingly however access is organised through control and exclusion and its value as a forum of civic exchange has declined. One way access has been restricted is through the privatisation of public space, where the trend towards restricting access is symptomatic of the decline of collectivity at the expense of individuality. For example, policing, private security and defensive design interact to determine the rules of access to public space and the restriction to it of particular social groups. The result is a process of elites' withdrawal from public space into the private realm where interaction with inhabitants from different backgrounds can be avoided or, at least, controlled. This process started as capitalism took hold in Western cities in the nineteenth century but has been exacerbated by recent urban design, most saliently in fortified and securitised urban enclaves for the wealthy such as gated developments. Privacy has become a spatial principle, reflected in the creeping privatisation of urban space. Sennett describes public space which is addendum to private developments as an 'empty civic gesture by developers', and 'dead public space' (1974: 12). This type of privatised space is therefore a product of contemporary urban development processes. As the financing of projects and ownership are increasingly the responsibility of multi-national companies, there is a growing disconnect between those responsible for development and the needs of a locality: 'If particular developments had some symbolic value for their developers in the past, it is now the exchange value and the market that determines their interest' (Madanipour 2003: 215-6). As space has become commodified, a safe return on a developer's investment is secured by responding to future residents' needs, meaning the surrounding community's needs are given a far lower priority.

The trend is most extreme in the types of 'securitisation' which Davis (1990) argues is a dominant force in the design of cities and, at least in Los Angeles, has led to the destruction of 'genuinely democratic' public space. He attributes the destruction of meaningful public space to a conspiratorial 'security offensive' on the part of developers, architects and policy-makers to meet the middle-class demand for increased social and spatial isolation. Gentrification adds impetus to the offensive, as a middle-class return to the inner city needs to be buttressed by efforts to assure new, wealthy inhabitants of their security and limit their interaction with the 'unsavoury' masses of the urban poor. Gentrification shatters public space and creates a 'citadel, separated from surroundings' (1990: 154), which incorporate oppressive, fortress-like architectural designs to limit inhabitants' interactions with surrounding poor neighbourhoods. The programmatic removal of the poor from public space is a way to render them politically powerless, limiting their ability to contest dominant trajectories of change in the city. For Smith (1996), there is an economic imperative to limiting access to public space. He analyses gentrification as a deliberate strategy to reduce the diversity of streets to make the surrounding neighbourhood safe for investment and resettlement by the wealthy. Gentrification is a manifestation of 'revanchist urbanism' (1996), a vengeful reaction against 'undesirable' social groups who contribute to the diversity of public space but threaten middle-class security – homeless, immigrants, young people.

While the 'end of public space' argument has highlighted the often dramatic changes in the social and political lives of urban public spaces, it has been criticised for a nostalgic idealisation of past forms of public space and for failing to recognise the subjective viewpoints from which the users of the space operate (Banerjee 2001; Worpole and Knox 2007). As several writers have asked (Atkinson 2003; Mitchell 2003; Watson 2006; Németh and Schmidt 2011), can public space ever be, and has it ever been, universally inclusive or unmediated? The Greek agora and London coffee house – from which Sennett (1974) and Habermas (1992) respectively developed their theories of public space as a sphere where democracy occurs – were of course heavily gendered spaces accessible only to certain class factions. A space of inclusiveness for one inhabitant may be a space of exclusion for another. As such, Bridge and Watson (2000, 2002) argue that the notion of a single public space is difficult to sustain. Instead it is in flux, representing a multiplicity of publics with inherent ambiguity and complexity.

Critics have also argued that even where a public space is open to all inhabitants, the mere presence of diversity does not imply people necessarily engage with each other (Fainstein 2005; Watson 2006; Amin 2008). For Iris Marion Young (1990: 240) the construction of public space as a realm of unity and mutual understanding does not always correspond to actual experience: 'In entering the public one always risks encounters with those who are different, those who identify with different groups and have different opinions or different forms of life'. Meeting of difference in public space does not necessarily lead to a sympathetic negotiation of difference, rather to more complex forms of toleration and accommodation of difference. Rather than mutual understanding defining the ideal type public space, Young focuses on what she terms 'side by side particularity' (1990: 238) where differences between social groups are maintained but acknowledged within shared public space. Side by side particularity is premised on shared claims to a pluralised public space, in contrast to space where differences as fixed identities can be asserted. Where public space cannot fulfil this role – for example, by being dominated by one group and consequently being alienating to another – the result is that community-based claims over territory develop and the space risks becoming monopolised and homogenous.

The range and consequences of new public spaces is another focus of the critique. Perhaps it is not that public space is in terminal decline, but that the means and ends of public space are being reformulated (Banerjee 2001; Madden 2010). Focusing on often very local levels, recent studies have examined how public space is negotiated and contested in new forms (Kohn 2004, Low and Smith 2006, Mitchell 2003). It has also been questioned whether it is valid to assume that the 'private / market is necessarily antagonistic to civic / collective, that consumption is antagonistic to civic spirit' (De Magalhães 2010: 560). Instead public life can flourish in private spaces – pubs, bookshops, beauty salons can meet our desire for social contact although shaped by consumer culture and the experience economy (Banerjee 2001). In a similar vein, attributes of public space are increasingly played out in non-physical public spaces such as the Internet (Amin 2008). Places of exchange and opportunities for association are not therefore limited to traditional spaces in public ownership. This reconsideration is one reason why a recent review of public space provision in England found that it is not shrinking but expanding (Worpole and Knox 2007).

3. Private Provision of Public Space in London

The ideas around public space are reflected in London's planning policies. For example, Policy 4B.1 of the London Plan sets out twelve design principles for a compact city, one of which is that new developments 'create or enhance the public realm' (GLA 2008: 245). It goes on to require that 'New building projects should ensure the highest possible space standards for users, in both public and private spaces inside and outside the building, creating spacious and usable private as well as public spaces' (GLA 2008: 247). This can either be onsite and as an integral part of a scheme's design, or alternatively through providing Section 106 funds to the local authority to construct or refurbish public space elsewhere in an area. Mayor Boris Johnson's revised London Plan continues the previous mayor's urban policies. The replacement London Plan seeks a 'world reputation for new and improved public spaces that Londoners will cherish for decades to come' (GLA 2009: 6). But a high quality public realm is about more than global image or Londoners' pride; it has 'a significant influence on quality of life because it affects people's sense of place, security and belonging' (GLA 2009: 174). In this policy discourse, public space can bolster London's global economic position, allow a wide range of inhabitants to benefit from intensive development, and finally facilitate encounters between different social groups.

The approach of the London Plan recognises how the provision of public space is increasingly funded and developed by private agencies. While for much of the twentieth century public space was provided directly by democratically accountable local government and managed under their general environmental responsibilities, a range of partners are now responsible (De Magalhães 2010). The trend towards control is the result of two main reasons. Firstly, the change reflects wider transformations in the role of local government during the late twentieth century. For the purpose of the present discussion, this involves the shift of local authorities from 'providers' to 'enablers' of services, collaborating with the private sector through contractual relationships of service delivery. So while local authorities previously controlled, managed and maintained public spaces, there is now a range of public and private agencies with responsibility for different aspects of it, meaning that public space entails different ownership arrangements, levels of management and control over who may use it. At the same time, there has been an emphasis on the role public space is believed to play in economic growth and social regeneration, as described above. Public agencies' options for delivering public space without private investment are constrained. Secondly developers increasingly see the quality of public space as integral to the success and value of a scheme, contributing to a thriving environment which attracts residents and businesses. They have therefore sought greater control over public space management and ownership to add value to their investment, prioritising the demands of tenants and service charge payers over general access to the space.

One argument is that the fragmented ownership arrangements and increased involvement of private management means it is increasingly difficult to access public space for potential users – or at least, for those users whose presence is either not profitable for commercial owners, or may dissuade others from using it (Minton 2006). For example, in London's West End, the New West End Company – which runs the area's business improvement district – has used its collective strength to remove what they

see as undesirables from Oxford Street and Regent Street, lobbying the police to issue anti-social behaviour orders, and calling for the local authority to restrict the number of street traders (Wiseman 2006; Dawber and Benatia 2010). The result is space which is 'public' only in name with rules of access and conduct determined by private interests. It is a concern felt by Mayor Boris Johnson who has argued that past public realm policies have focussed on the quality of the physical design of open space, but less so on the need to make spaces inclusive for all groups. He has registered his concern that a growing trend towards private management of publicly accessible space means that 'Londoners can feel themselves excluded from parts of their own city' (Mayor of London 2009: 8).

However, limiting certain users' access to public space is by no means new in London, nor is it only private agencies which seek to restrict access. For example, residential squares in London historically were privately developed with access restricted to residents of surrounding properties. While many of these squares are now owned and managed by a local authority, they contain restrictions on behaviour, imposed via bye-laws and design alterations (Carmona et al 2008). An elite space has become a shared space but the principle of restriction remains, aiming to curb the excesses of users to whom the space has been opened up. This example is significant not only for underlining the historical parallels over restricting access to public space, but for recalling how a public agency has been responsible for restricting access to certain users through various means. Public ownership has not brought unimpeded access to public space. This suggests that it is not the ownership or management in themselves which affect a space's publicness; it is how varying attributes of publicness are embedded in the space for different users. In other words, what makes a space 'public' derives more from the subjective experience of its users than from its ownership status. Accepting that no space can be universally inclusive or unmediated (Mitchell 2003; Young 1990), what may appear public might feel less public to certain users. So while the ownership and management of space through the models described above condition the potential for publicness, it is the use which determines its actual publicness (Németh and Schmidt 2011). It is to this qualitative dimension of public space – the behaviour and subjective experiences of users – which this paper now turns through the case of Tabard Square, a publicly accessible private space but one where access has been rejected by many long-term residents of the surrounding area.

4. Tabard Square: Rejecting Access to Public Space

On the edge of Bermondsey stands the Tabard Square development (marketed as Empire Square), featuring a 22-storey residential tower and three blocks (figures 1 and 2). The housing is built around a 4000m² public square of soft and hard landscaping and a central two-storey pavilion intended for a cafe or restaurant. Developed by Berkeley Homes and designed by Rolfe Judd Architects, it contains almost 600 apartments with 25% designated as affordable, contained in two of the blocks. When launched, the cheapest one-bedroom flat on the open market started at £385,000 and a penthouse cost £2.5m; it is a scheme aiming to appeal to wealthy incomers to the area. It was completed in 2007 when it won the Housing Design Award and CABE Gold award. As well as housing, the scheme contains a private gym, a small supermarket and a private childcare centre, all accessible from the outside streets surrounding the square.



Figures 1 and 2: Tabard Square Interior

Despite the noisy street which runs along one side of the development, once inside the space it is surprisingly quiet and isolated from the surrounding streets, the traffic unheard and unseen, with few other sources of noise or activity to disrupt the calm. While the weak penetrability from the surrounding streets makes the inner space a type of refuge, it also means it is poorly used. There may be a small group of students from the nearby college having lunch, and a couple of tourists arriving at reception to the serviced apartments; very few people walk through and there are no sign of residents coming and going, as flats' entrances are mainly accessed from the car park underneath the square or from the street. One side of the square is dominated by a large unlet commercial unit on the ground floor, the centre of the square by an empty pavilion. Both add to a slightly desolate feel only increased by the design of the overlooking housing blocks – their tinted glass windows betray few signs of being inhabited and many of the balconies are empty. The scale of the blocks prevents much light entering and the square is partially shaded in the middle of the day, making other patches of open space more attractive for lunching office workers or parents with children. The predominant impression from spending time in the space is of intruding on an immaculately landscaped private courtyard intended to serve as a quiet backdrop to the surrounding apartments. Southwark Council was keen that local residents would benefit from the new development, even if they would be unlikely to afford the housing. To help assuage local concerns, the designation of the square as public space was made a condition of the scheme's planning permission. Access to the square is from each point of the triangular site through large sculpted metal gates which spin on their axes to close off the square at night (Figures 3 and 4). The square is open to the public from 6am to midnight each day, long opening hours aiming for strong pedestrian permeability.

As part of my fieldwork, I spent time at the square at different periods of the day observing how people used it. Its main use was as an occasional pedestrian thoroughfare for rush hour commuters heading to Borough tube station and it was largely quiet throughout the middle of the day.



Figures 3 and 4: Entrances to Tabard Square

This was despite benches, landscaping and a café encouraging more prolonged public engagement. Several factors contribute to the square's under-use. The new internal routes through the square in fact duplicate the surrounding streets so even as a cut-through its purpose is limited. Early designs for the scheme included a pedestrian link from the square to the adjacent Tabard Gardens Estate and so would have connected two open spaces. The link was rejected by the council because of nearby residents' concerns over the loss of six car parking spaces. Furthermore the routes do not have any important uses opening onto them: an onsite nursery faces onto the square but no space is allocated for children's use, while the café is not visible or directly accessible from the surrounding streets so as to bring customers into the square (the café recently closed and the pavilion is currently unoccupied). A row of family-sized houses which make up one edge of the scheme have self-contained gardens and do not open on the square, so children and their parents are not brought onto the square in a way that increase its use.

As a tall building, Tabard Square is required under London Plan Policy 4B.10 to use public space to 'support vibrant communities both around and within the building' and 'where appropriate, contain a mix of uses with public access' (GLA 2008: 254). However there is a question of whether the onsite provision of public space is appropriate to the scheme. Tabard Square is a very compact development and may not be of a sufficient scale to justify such a large open space. The type of residents at which the scheme is marketed may also be less willing to live on a well-used, fully accessible public square. The fate of the square's central pavilion exemplifies this. The scheme lacks sufficient residents who would use an onsite café or restaurant and make it financially viable. At the same time, the square cannot be completely open and accessible to outsiders as potential residents may be dissuaded by the noise and perceived security threats that proximity to the urban public brings. The result is a peculiar compromise – a square conceived as a public space to meet local and regional planning priorities, but one which onsite and surrounding inhabitants largely shunned. So while the square may be an

example of the blank and alienating public space which Young (1990) identified as a threat to urban diversity, it has not succumbed to community-based claims over its ownership as she may have feared.

Although the inclusion of public space at the scheme was at the instigation of the local authority, it was less of a concern for residents of housing surrounding the sites. A planning officer involved with the scheme whom I interviewed said that consultations had identified a large, lower-priced supermarket as the main priority for residents. Only a smaller 'metro' store – which is typically more expensive – could eventually be provided due to insufficient parking spaces underneath the development. Although likely to meet the needs of the scheme's residents, it was not the type of service long-term residents wanted to mitigate the scheme's impact. Certainly the long-term residents I interviewed rarely ventured into the square and described their unease at conspicuous CCTV at entrance ways and dislike of the large gates, which are prominent when open and give the impression of a restricted public realm. The following extract gives a view of the public space from a resident on the adjacent Tabard Gardens Estate:

It's dead, you look at it [Tabard Square] and who'd want to use that? It may as well be private. It looks closed half the time, shut up with those gates you've got to walk through, and then there's nothing in it! Not exactly what you'd call welcoming. No wonder it's empty all the time. [...] It's a wasted opportunity because there was a lot of consultation about what local people wanted from the regeneration and how it wouldn't be like another castle where the ultra wealthy would be looking down over us, but you speak to a lot of people around here and that's what they think it's turned into.



*Figure 5: Tabard Gardens Estate,
with Tabard Square in background*

The neighbouring Tabard Gardens Estate is a large, mainly inter-war estate of three to six-storey buildings in varying scale and design. One of the most notable schemes under Bermondsey Council's slum replacement scheme of the 1930s, its courtyard design and oval entrance is reminiscent of the Marx Hof in Vienna. At the estate's western edge lies open space, Tabard Gardens, which is actively used by local residents and visitors and contains a playground, landscaping, AstroTurf and allotments alongside informal open space. While architecturally distinctive from other social housing estates, like many it is in need of refurbishment and at the time of fieldwork was awaiting upgrading to Decent Homes Standards; the contrast with the new tower at Tabard Square overlooking the estate was unavoidable. Many estate residents had been uneasy about the Square from the start, and during its consultation period had raised concerns over its scale, height and the impact of its high density on local amenities. In 2002 estate residents organised a petition against the scheme, contributing to

an amended planning application which reduced the tower's height and increased the proportion of affordable housing.

Tabard Gardens are bordered by the estate on one side, but accessible from Tabard Street from the other. She described how the use of public space on the estate was an arena of informal encounters – an integral part of living on the estate where she could socialise with neighbours and other local residents and where her children played. The accessibility of the estate's public space strongly contrasted with the apparently deliberately restrictive design of Tabard Square. The public space at Tabard Gardens links the estate to the streets and surrounding neighbourhood, giving scope for interaction between estate residents, and with other inhabitants of the area. In contrast, Tabard Square's inner public space is inextricably part of the whole scheme – it 'belongs' far more explicitly to its residents, emphasised by security features at its entrance and the overlooking apartments providing more informal surveillance. The Square with its onsite amenities is an example of the self-contained form of new-build developments, creating for residents an enclave with little reason to associate with the surrounding area (Atkinson 2006; Davidson 2009). It is in Sennett's term 'dead public space' for other long-term residents living nearby who have little incentive to use it. They were aware of how the distinction between the two typologies of public space represented by the square and the gardens enforced a sense of 'them' and 'us' – wealthier incomers living at the self-contained Square and long-term residents at the Gardens, with minimal interaction between the two. The built environment of new housing schemes such as the Square supported this segregation, despite the benefits of its design being posited in terms of social mixing and interaction.



Figure 6: Play area at Tabard Gardens Estate, with the refurbished Astro turf in background

Additional to the public space within the development, another intended benefit to the wider community was the refurbishment of the Astro turf at Tabard Gardens, using Section 106 funds. The facility had been in a degraded state – the surface torn in parts and missing goal nets – but was well used, particularly by young people living at Tabard Gardens and surrounding estates. It can be characterised as an informal public space where young people met to play football and basketball, walk their dogs and congregate. The refurbishment repaired the surface and goals, and brought floodlighting and fencing. A more fundamental change was the introduction of a booking system whereby teams could hire the facility from the council. Weekly slots were kept free for local people to use, the rest of the time the Astro turf was locked or accessible only to paying users. Most of these 5-a-side teams were from businesses located in the borough or youth teams based elsewhere in London attracted to a new facility in a central location. To estate residents, the implication of the

refurbishment was clear: an informal public space had been privatised and a part of the gardens once 'owned' by the estate's young people had been ceded to new inhabitants to the area. The Tenants and Residents Association organised a protest to highlight their perceived exclusion at the formal opening of the refurbished Astroturf (Figure 5). A few months later, one of the participants described the effect of the new inhabitants on the estate's young people:

I don't think I'm putting it too strongly to say it's had a really negative impact. For a start, there's the noise nuisance of teams using it much more than before, we have to endure screaming, shouting and swearing from the people on that pitch morning, noon and night. [...] There's also nowhere for the kids on the estate to go like they used to. Just speaking to them, there's a real fear which stems from people coming in to make use of the Astroturf from other areas. For our own kids to be afraid to use their own park is a crying shame and I don't know if the council are in any way aware of this situation. We need to support our kids to feel safe and happy in their own environment, and at the moment, I am afraid, this is not happening.



Figure 7: Astroturf Protest
(Southwark News, March
6th 2008)

What the episode shows is how a local regeneration process led by gentrification was perceived by long-term residents to subjugate their needs to those of a wide range of inhabitants moving to the area. The security of long-term estate dwellers has been undermined by the arrival of new inhabitants, in this case 'rival' groups of young people seeking to make claims to the opened up space.

No doubt the financial connection between the Astroturf refurbishment and Tabard Square was another reason the public space there was rejected by long term residents. In these two different examples of privatised public space, long-term residents retreated as a result of their restricted access. In these narratives the provision of public space in new-build gentrification developments such as Tabard Square was a tokenistic gesture of openness but in reality excluded non-residents and was under used by new residents. In the context of a gentrifying neighbourhood, long-term residents emphasised the disruption of public space created by new-build developments and embodied at Tabard Square. They described a more symbolic displacement from these new urban forms and the privatisation of informal space over which they lacked influence in respect of design, management and use .

5. Conclusion

Tabard Square is an example of a space set apart from its surroundings by a system of signification containing codes legible in different ways to different inhabitants. The security gates and CCTV monitoring the public space may be interpreted by its residents as a reassuring contributor to the square's safety; for those living in neighbouring social housing estates it was taken as a tacit indication that non-residents' presence was not welcome. Certainly its design and amenities give little incentive for non-residents to use it. The developer's impulse to provide its clients with a secure enclosure overrides the local authority's intention that surrounding residents should benefit from new high-value housing in their area. The Square represented how gentrification brought few benefits to long-term residents, despite the intentions of policy-makers, and left them restricted to the more established public spaces which predated gentrification, such as the neighbouring estate's gardens. Yet even here, gentrification was interpreted as having a negative effect by contributing to the privatisation of the Astro turf and the exclusion of estate residents from the resource.

What are the implications of the use of public space for our understanding of gentrification? I would argue that, in Bermondsey at least, it is not housing but public space which is the crucible of tensions over the impact of gentrification on long-term residents. Partly this is due to the specific contours of gentrification in the area meaning its impact on long-term residents' residential security is limited. Like other parts of inner London, gentrification in Bermondsey is established through the conversion of former industrial buildings and through new-build developments on brownfield land. It has therefore brought a net addition of housing to the area. The proportion of working class inhabitants in Bermondsey has been reduced by the arrival of wealthier incomers, but their absolute numbers are less affected and the majority of residents still live in social housing. Traditional notions of direct displacement brought about by gentrification – such as rent rises and evictions – are less relevant to an area where social housing with lifelong tenancies continues to dominate the tenure profile. In this respect gentrifiers and long-term residents operate in separate housing markets: gentrifiers living in new developments which can isolate their residents from their surroundings; long-term residents competing for social housing with 'low status others', with whom they lived in close proximity and shared the same space. Another aspect of their segregation is over their different uses of public space. Bermondsey differs from areas affected by the types of regeneration policies where social housing is replaced by market housing to attract gentrifying residents, as has occurred in parts of the US (Smith 1996) and, to a lesser extent, in the UK (Allen 2008, Cameron 2003, 2006). The involuntary relocation of long-term residents to make way for gentrifiers was not part of participants' experiences. The analysis here serves as a reminder of the diverse experiences of gentrification in different cities, and especially between the United States and Britain, where the occurrence of displacement is less common (Hamnett 2009).

Investigations into displacement in contemporary London should not, however, be limited to its direct forms, but should also encompass the indirect, exclusionary pressures which ultimately can have the same outcomes for long-term residents (Slater 2009). So while higher and lower-income groups do not compete for housing stock in Bermondsey, there is competition in respect of consumption, leisure and open spaces – that is, over the more symbolic 'ownership' and occupation of public space. The vibrancy of services in the gentrified parts of Bermondsey contrasted strongly with the decline

of the traditional commercial heart of the area, which has suffered through new competition from elsewhere. The result is a form of segregation within Bermondsey, with public space hosting little interaction between long-term residents and wealthier incomers, and few opportunities for the spontaneous encounters which public space can facilitate.

It is apparent that the focus on involuntary out-movement prompted by a loss of housing does not sufficiently reflect these long-term residents' experiences of gentrification. This is not to discount the relevance of displacement to contemporary accounts of gentrification, but to refine its definitions to account for its effects in areas where high levels of social housing remain around pockets of infill and new-build gentrification. The extent of long-term residents' dislocation from the gentrified parts of Bermondsey can perhaps be described as a form of internal displacement; the upgrading of these areas obliges them to use local services elsewhere and renounce access to its communal life, although their housing status remains relatively secure. Gentrification does not mean they must leave the area, but affects how they are able to use it; the outcome is one of exclusion but not out-migration. Exclusion based on property rights or resource allocation does not tell the entire story of Bermondsey's long-term residents, whose sense of dislocation is linked to a wider realm than the material. What is proposed then is the concept of internal displacement as an additional category to Marcuse's (1985) taxonomy, which can help account for long-term residents' experiences of gentrification in areas such as Bermondsey. Despite gentrification, relatively high housing security remains, but polarised uses of public space segregate old and new inhabitants. The particular unfolding of gentrification in Bermondsey is at times contradictory. It has enlivened the public space of the street and brought new ways of funding public space as a by-product of private housing schemes. Yet the focus on high-end consumption prompts the withdrawal from public space of long-term residents into spaces which can better accommodate their class faction. The struggles over Bermondsey's public space shows how gentrification-induced displacement is about more than material resources or property rights, but encompasses the possession of meanings and memories which help inhabitants feel at ease in their neighbourhood.

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